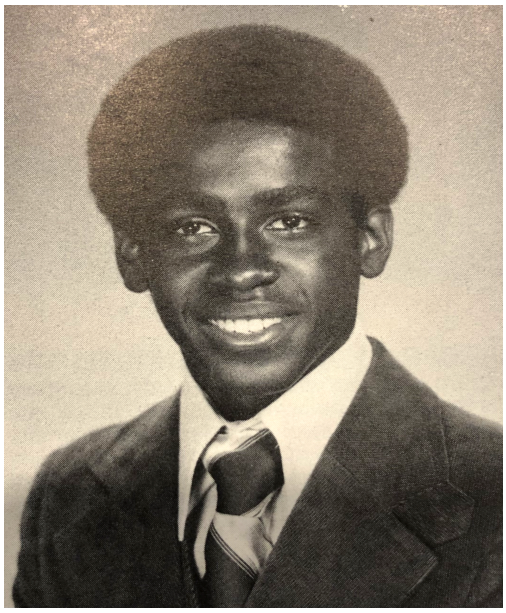
Dover-Sherborn Alum Returns to Support Inclusivity Efforts

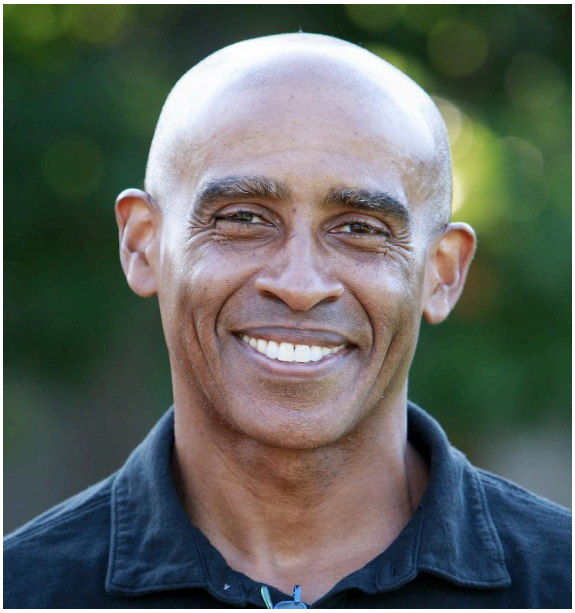
Carlos Hoyt, PhD, LICSW, DSHS class of ’78 comes back to give back to his alma mater.

1978



Leaving DS

2022



Returning to DS

We’re delighted and excited to welcome Carlos Hoyt back to the Dover-Sherborn Public Schools! Having lived the DS experience from junior high through high school and gone on to do decades of meaningful work helping schools achieve diversity without divisiveness, Carlos is eminently qualified and prepared to support us in our efforts to translate our equity audit findings into actions that realize our aspirations and reflect our upcoming strategic plan priorities.

You can learn all about Carlos and his work by exploring his website where you’ll find his CV, descriptions of his published work, videos and podcasts, and much more. Two quick windows into Carlos’s work and perspective are provided by his TEDx talk *Charting a Course Beyond Racism*, and his essay *Empathy in the Service of Intra- and Interpersonal Peace*. In addition to the information on his site, a brief chronicle of Carlos’s journey to, experience during, and life since his DS years, along with a Q & A about his initial thoughts around supporting our inclusivity efforts can be found below.

Carlos's Journey To, Experience During, and Life Since His DS Years

Born in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, Carlos immigrated to the United States in 1963 at age three and lived in the Boston neighborhood of Dorchester with his family. Attending grades one through six in the Boston Public School systems, Carlos excelled academically - so much so that his parents became concerned that he was not being challenged at a level commensurate with his ability and not gaining the depth and breadth of education that would prepare him to realize his full potential.

In 1972 Carlos entered the Dover-Sherborn Public School System as one of eight students in the inaugural group of students transported to and from school by the Metropolitan Council on Educational Opportunity (METCO). For the next six years he woke early every weekday morning, boarded a wood-paneled station wagon in the first years, a mini bus after that, and finally, in the latter year of his DS tenure, a full-size school bus that carried the original eight plus many other students lucky enough to receive the transportation support offered by METCO.

Every morning he left a region where nearly one hundred percent of people were black-identified to arrive about forty-five minutes later in a place where nearly one hundred percent of the people were white-identified. A recipe for disorientation and/or disaster? Quite the contrary. When asked how his years at DS were, Carlos evokes the movie *High School Musical* as an apt comparison. His years there were transformative, magical. He got the academic challenges he needed and rose to them. He was welcomed with open arms and hearts by his "host family," and then by family after family of great friends made along the way, often staying overnight or nights during the week and over weekends to play sports, to take in an event, to get a project done, to go to Putt-Putt golf course, to enjoy meals with his adoptive DS families, and/or to devour a Bailey's container-runneth-over hot fudge sundae.

As a result, Carlos's horizon of possibility expanded beyond boundaries of region, beyond restrictive constructions of social identity, beyond narratives of *us* and *them*, and towards infinite possibilities. Possibilities that materialized into Wesleyan University after DS (recommended to him by a DS teacher) where he studied psychology and philosophy, the University of Chicago after Wesleyan, where he flirted with becoming a philosopher (Hume and Wittgenstein, and elbow patches and all) until his then girlfriend and now wife (of thirty-five years) helped him to see that while is head might have been quite at home in ivory towers, his heart was drawn to serving society's marginalized members. After a year at UChicago, Carlos came back to Boston and earned his master's degree in Social Work from Boston University. That led to a PhD in social work from Simmons College (now Simmons University), teaching posts at Lesley College (now Lesley University), Boston University, and Simmons, a private practice in psychotherapy, service at elite independent schools and struggling publics school, and work in what has become known as the field of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Q&A with Carlos about the work he looks forward to doing with us

1. Q: What are you most looking forward to in supporting DS' inclusivity efforts?

   A: I'm happy and honored to have this opportunity to serve as a DEI consultant for the DS community.

   I've had the good fortune of working with a wide range of school communities, including Phillips Academy Andover, the Chestnut Hill School, Belmont Day School, and Concord Academy, Arlington Public Schools, the CREST Collaborative, and other organizations such as the Boston College Lynch Leadership Academy, UCSF, and Grub Street Writing Center. I'm always drawn to support communities with sincere intentions to create optimally welcoming, safe, collaborative, and joyful environments – environments in which diversity is valued and common ground is created.

   To be able to do this work in a community where I experienced proof that this is quite possible is like a dream come true. It won't come without challenges. Getting along – which is essentially what diversity, equity & and inclusion (DEI) work is about is never accomplished without sustained, caring, and compassionate efforts. I'm confident from the talks I've had with DS leadership that this community is already doing this work and ready to deepen and strengthen it in ways that will benefit every student.

2. Q: What kinds of challenges are you used to seeing and helping folks address?

   A: I've never met anyone who's against the idea of welcoming diversity in principle. After all, the human condition includes curiosity about and attraction to (if also sometimes wariness of) difference. It's also been conclusively established that diversity enhances all sorts of aspects of human interaction and outcomes. But the truth is that the more variables of background, culture, worldviews, etc. the more likely it is that without efforts to create harmony among all voices, discord can occur.

   Is one way of living more "centered" or dominant than another? Do we have to walk around worried about saying the wrong thing? Do we have to change some traditions that are very important to us? Will my kid be taught things that I'd prefer they not learn about at school or not learn about so early in life? Should kids be divided into separate identity groups for learning or discussion? Am I expected to give up or hide parts of who I am in order to fit in? Does spending time, energy, and resources on DEI compete with or detract from the school's primary purpose of providing academic excellence? Am I safe here? Am I truly welcome here? Am I respected, embraced, and loved here? How do we measure this? How do we respond when it seems we're falling short?

   These are all reasonable and predictable questions.

3. Q: How can we effectively meet such challenges?

   A: Together. With humility, empathy, compassion, courage, compromise, grace, and good humor.

4. Q: Do you have any requests as you return to DS to do this important work with us?

   A: Yes. Please let's talk. Please let's talk about your excitement about this work. Please let's talk about your questions. Please let's talk about your apprehensions, your concerns, and even your objections. Please take the virtuous risk of trying to talk about all of it. You can reach me at hoyt.carlos@gmail.com.