



CARROLL '21 - '22

# connection

## A TIMELINE OF TRANSFORMATION: 2005-2021

With visionary leadership, exceptional faculty, and a vibrant, joyful community, Carroll is continuing to grow, evolve, and change lives. In just 16 years, look how far we've come!



02

GIVE EACH CHILD:  
AN ORIGIN STORY

08

EVERYONE@ONE  
BEGINS

12

CARROLL NINE  
LAUNCHES

20

GIVING BACK  
IN GRATITUDE

Message from Steve Wilkins, Head of School

# GIVE EACH CHILD: AN ORIGIN STORY

How Carroll's signature philosophy came to be—and how it continues to change lives.



“Carroll has challenged my thinking as a teacher by reminding me that we all learn at our own pace and our role as teachers is to respect each child's learning process.

*There are so many ways to foster understanding and Carroll's individualized, multisensory teaching approach ensures that each child is getting the most out of their education. This is what "Give Each Child" embraces and this is why GEC works.*

**Martha Lamb '03, 4th Grade Teacher**



Origin stories. Every culture in the history of the world has generated mythology about the beginning of the universe, our time on earth, and human evolution. Iroquois tell the story of The Great Turtle on which humanity emerged, while Zulu culture evokes the image of all life emerging from one planted seed.

Carroll's origin story is a little less fantastical and a lot more recent (1967), yet this school emerged from the vision of a neurologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. Edwin M. Cole, and the parents of children with dyslexia whom he evaluated in the "Cortical Function Laboratory." Today's profound truths about the reason Carroll exists resonate in the phrase "Give Each Child."

"Give Each Child What They Most Need" has become part of the nomenclature of Carroll School. Our shorthand is to write "GEC," and we have introduced a new verb into our parlance called "gecc'ing." I doubt there is a single member of the Carroll community who questions that mantra as a unifying principle that defines Carroll's promise to our students.

The reason why GEC is highly significant is that it marks a major change in the way Carroll delivered education to its students. Prior to the notion of gecc'ing, Carroll had one excellent program for children with dyslexia. Upon the arrival of GEC, Carroll committed to a customized program for

# GEC

each child. The difference is that gecc'ing requires that the needs of each child define the program, rather than fitting the child into Carroll's program. In the words of alumnus David Arrow '79, "I used to think that education was a train I had to try to catch. I learned at Carroll that I was the train!"

The challenge with Carroll's creation story is that no one remembers the moment when GEC came into our focus. There was no memorable "Aha Moment," no "Eureka, I found it." In an electronic community meeting email in 2006, there is a reference to the need for a period in the day that was designed specifically to meet the unique needs of each child. Something called "Friday as One" was mentioned as a means to train faculty to deliver this level of personalization. Somewhere around 2015, the term GEC first appears in Carroll literature, presentations, and blogs. (It is interesting to point out the evolution of GEC even in the course of six years to remove gender-based language.)

Carroll's Creation Story? There is no question that GEC grew out of summertime brainstorming sessions among Sue Kingman, Larry Brown, and Steve Wilkins. We had a routine for many summers where we would meet in the morning to take on the challenges of improving Carroll and readying for the upcoming fall. After those intense and focused sessions, our lunch excursions would often further



“As parents, we love Carroll's unique approach to individualized teaching.

*Carroll was a leader in the 80's when I attended. But today, by far, it is at the very forefront of using learning styles to group children and using data to be able to target what and how they teach each child. It's nurturing approach helps our son feel as if he is in good hands and is among "compadres" on a similar journey.*

**Jeremy MacDonald '89, Parent of a 4th Grader**

develop big thinking, "what if", and dreaming big. Perhaps GEC emerged from a plate of enchilada verdes at some Watertown restaurant that Larry dragged us to. Maybe that's our creation story.

No doubt, the essence of an Orton-Gillingham lesson design contributed powerfully to the emergence of GEC. Our lead trainers in Orton-Gillingham instruction—Alice Garside, Angie Wilkins, and Louise Freese—always emphasized that the lesson for tomorrow is a direct response to the individual student's performance today. That's gecc'ing. Most certainly, the work of Isabel Wesley, Pat McGonagle, and Phil Burling twenty years ago to provide more tutoring and targeted services was a forerunner of GEC thinking.

Modern neuroscience also plays a role in Carroll's commitment to improving the underlying cognitive processes that support academic success (e.g. speed, memory, organization, attention). The miracle of human neuroplasticity makes Gecc'ing not only effective, but it makes it essential.



*The photos you are enjoying throughout this magazine were taken during the sixteen years of Steve's leadership.*



# '05



## A TIMELINE OF TRANSFORMATION AT CARROLL SCHOOL

How Steve Wilkins and GEC have defined 16 years of evolution to Carroll's student-centric approach.

“Steve has a passion for doing as much as we possibly can for our kids, and that passion is at the heart of how GEC came to be.

*A child's struggle isn't their fault, and it's our job to figure out how to change their experience and environment to alleviate that struggle. What more can we do? How can we dig deeper and provide a more specialized approach for that student? We help kids climb the roadblocks in the path ahead of them, and prepare for the next ones to come.*

*GEC has given us a unified language as educators to speak to that passion and commitment. When things are challenging for a particular student, we reflect, we adapt, and we look for another way.”*

**Sue Kingman, Lower School Division Head**



At Carroll, our ability to adapt, evolve, and improve as a community at every turn has played a critical role in realizing our goal of “giving each child what they most need.”

We know that each student is an individual with a unique personality, unique opportunities, and unique abilities that deserve the chance to shine. With that in mind, the interventions, approaches, and programs we develop are designed to be holistic and flexible enough to provide every learner with the skills, techniques, and academic content they need to realize the incredible potential they possess.

As we look at how much we've accomplished together over the last sixteen years, it's clear that GEC is the throughline that connects every innovation, every step forward, and every highlight in our journey together.

We're thankful for Steve Wilkins' leadership in igniting that passion in all of us!

# '21

Carroll celebrates 50 years

Carroll purchases property in Wayland, creating space for the Upper School campus and new athletic fields

Diversity Professional Learning Communities started

Carroll reinvents its programs for remote learning to respond to COVID-19 pandemic



Osa Osagie is hired as Carroll's Director of Equity and Inclusion

“Carroll Courses” launched to train teachers in Carroll's five core teaching strategies

Carroll successfully raises \$32.7 million in its first ever capital campaign: If Not for Carroll

Dr. Renée Greenfield returns to Carroll as Head of School

Carroll starts the Beginning Readers program

Steve Wilkins returns to Carroll as Head of School



Everyone@One launches to provide professional development for teachers

Developmental Cognitive program begins in lower grades

Carroll purchases the Bartlett School in Waltham which becomes the Lower School campus

Carroll Nine program launches (now the Upper School)

Targeted Cognitive Intervention program starts in grades 6-8

Carroll begins 4-year plan to exit from MA Chapter 766 program

Carroll rolls out new class schedule to better meet the academic + social needs of each student

Carroll develops and launches the TCI platform

'05

'06

'07

'08

'09

'10

'11

'12

'13

'14

'15

'16

'17

'18

'19

'20

'21



# CARROLL STARTS THE BEGINNING READERS PROGRAM

Carroll's first early intervention program "made school fun again" for our youngest learners.

By Sarah Wilkins, Led Beginning Readers 2005-2019



“The BR program at Carroll is similar to building a foundation of a house, you need the right mixture of cement to make it strong.

*We are building a foundation for learning with the right mixture of tutoring, language, math, cognitive, executive functioning skills, community building, and a lot of learning how to be a student. Sarah Wilkins created this amazing program and, during my transition into this role, she shared so much wisdom with me that helps reassure me that I'm giving each student exactly what they need each day.”*

**Carol Spooner P'11, Beginning Readers Teacher**



Studies show that kids who have difficulties in 3rd grade often could have been identified as far back as kindergarten, and spared many of the negative side effects of struggling to learn to read. One of the many benefits of early intervention is to prevent negative self-esteem by increasing a child's perception of their ability to learn.

With the support of then-interim Head of School, Phil Burling, Steve and I arrived with the belief that early intervention should be an important focus for Carroll—and that's why we began the Beginning Readers program.

The first few years were not without challenges. First, enrollment was tricky, as many applicants had multiple diagnoses that were not true to dyslexia, and who we could not serve effectively. Alongside the Admissions team, I met with families to help them understand the importance of early intervention and how Carroll would benefit their 1st graders.

Second, we had to put together a learning program that met the unique needs of this age group. We started with a schedule that included an Orton-Gillingham tutorial, two language classes (one literature-based and one an O-G group), a math class, and a class called "The World We Live In," which explored social studies and science.

Through the years, the program evolved to add more social-emotional learning, speech and language, occupational therapy for handwriting, RAVE-O, and the Developmental Cognitive program that helps children understand that challenge is a beneficial part of learning.

Of course, there were many more rewards to leading the BR program over my 14 years at Carroll. With an average class size of 4-6 students, Beginning Readers can easily give each child what they most need through individualized instruction and intervention services such as speech and language, social emotional learning, and 1:1 tutorials.

“Being a student in the first ever Beginning Readers class was memorable.

*Mrs. Wilkins was a kind and caring teacher. I remember her patiently teaching me how to write in cursive and going down to the Wilkins' yard to boat in their pond for a break during the day. Thank you Carroll for providing me the opportunities to grow and build my academic confidence. Without Carroll, I would not be who I am today.”*

**Gwei Strong Allen '14, Beacon College Sophomore**

There is nothing like seeing the light in a child's eye when they read a word, write a letter, or retell a story, or when they have the confidence to share a personal story during a morning meeting. It's also rewarding when parents share how their whole family has changed because of Carroll. Making school fun again for kids who had a negative experience in preschool and kindergarten—that was what motivated me to go to work each day.



- ★ '05
- '06
- '07
- '08
- '09
- '10
- '11
- '12
- '13
- '14
- '15
- '16
- '17
- '18
- '19
- '20
- '21



# 06



“ Like our students, we aim to give each teacher what they most need.

*The biggest change over the last 10 years in how we approach professional development is to create a scenario where everybody feels like they're engaged in a program that's meaningful, that's helping them grow, and is being mindful that teachers are at different places in their careers.”*

**Allison West, Middle School Division Head**

## EVERYONE@ ONE LAUNCHES TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

Carroll’s commitment to professional development sets us apart—and a new approach to Fridays transformed how our teachers learn.

**By Sue Kingman, Lower School Division Head**



When Steve returned to Carroll as Head of School, our goal was to create consistent professional development opportunities for our faculty, and to bring teachers together to learn.

We already had team time and some occasional community meetings and speakers on Fridays, but we made the shift to structure and prioritize that time in a completely different way.

In the beginning, we focused each year’s professional development on a topic, like Orton-Gillingham, executive functioning, social emotional learning, data-informed instruction, or diversity. Rather than a single professional development day dedicated to a topic, being dedicated to one topic for a year allowed teachers to truly practice and integrate training strategies into their teaching.

This helped us establish a culture of professional development that evolved into the current Carroll Courses: five year-long modules that teachers go through during their tenure at Carroll, designed to focus on how each Carroll teacher can enhance their practice to address the needs of each child.

The kind of teacher who opts to join the Carroll community comes with a growth mindset. They strive to learn new skills, and to customize their instruction—not just to “plug and play” every year and teach the same thing over and over again. There is a distinct joy and an intrinsic satisfaction in the hard work that comes with having to be as prepared as our teachers have to be.

As students progress, and as their confidence as learners grow, teachers can see the fruits of their labor—and find their true worth in seeing that progress.

“ There are all kinds of different ways we do professional development at Carroll.

*We get to hear these brilliant speakers that are experts in their fields, such as neuroscience, the science of reading, or diversity and equity. But then every Friday afternoon, we also have a variety of training opportunities, whether it's collaborating with your coworkers, having a meaningful conversation about race, or getting trained on a core Carroll teaching approach.*

**Andrew Nimmer, Upper School Science Teacher**



- '05
- ★ '06
- '07
- '08
- '09
- '10
- '11
- '12
- '13
- '14
- '15
- '16
- '17
- '18
- '19
- '20
- '21



# CARROLL PURCHASES THE BARTLETT SCHOOL IN WALTHAM WHICH BECOMES THE LOWER SCHOOL CAMPUS

Our Waltham campus gave the Lower School the chance to grow a welcoming, tailored community built on ERIK.

By Sue Kingman, Lower School Division Head



I see ERIK in action every single day at the Lower School.

We always greet each other by saying good morning. If someone's struggling with something, we all try to help them. If friends are sad or hurt, we try to make them feel better. The teachers and students are all super nice here which makes Carroll a great place to go to school."

Maddy Khanna, 5th Grade Student



Before 2010, each one of Carroll's grades learned on our Lincoln campus. We knew we needed more room to accommodate all the students who would benefit from Carroll, and we began the process of figuring out how to increase our footprint. Though we had architects trying to figure out how to expand our classroom space, the nature of the campus's topography presented a major challenge.

In the midst of all this, the former Bartlett School went out of business right down the road in Waltham. Though the facility needed some renovations and "Carroll care", it featured intimately sized classrooms—a format that fit our learning model. Plus, they had just built a brand new gym... a huge win for us!

Carroll's Board of Trustees challenged leadership to raise 80% of the purchase price, our largest fundraising campaign to date. With determination and the support of committed families, we raised the money within 3 months. We quickly put together projections, and a five-year plan for how we would ramp up our enrollment to accommodate more kids—ultimately about 100 more students, over time.

With the purchase in hand, we went quickly into action to renovate the building and get it ready to open as the Lower School in the fall of 2010.

The new Lower School building provided the opportunity to build a community more developmentally tailored to children

ages 6 to 11 years old. After a first year of cultivating the space, I started working on developing a distinct Lower School culture, and defining our values. That's when the ERIK principles (Empathy, Respect, Inclusion, Kindness) were conceived as guiding values that kids could easily understand, and that we could use to make cultural decisions and conventions.

After developing these foundational tenets (and a special song, thanks to Patrick Pate!) we worked closely within each grade team to cultivate distinct identities and traditions, such as the 3rd grade Whaling Town project, the 4th grade States and City Planning projects, the 5th grade "Overnight" event and Gatehouse Birdhouse project. Our goal was to create a sense of a flow to the Lower School, so whether a student starts in 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th grade, there are transparent keystone projects and markers that define each grade, and that help students to normalize their experience.

The Lower School building also gave us the opportunity to think intentionally and creatively about physical space, how that impacts programming, and ways that we can provide highly targeted instruction for kids. In the last 10 years, we have broadened those offerings through concepts like the flex block or the focus area, where children are getting even more highly targeted instruction.

We've worked hard to create a culture of teacher collaboration and team-based efforts over the last decade, too. Each team does things in a particular way, but we work together to realize our goals and stay connected to one another—because we understand that a sense of satisfaction amongst our team is critical to the Lower School's success.



"The Lower School is a warm and welcoming community that truly cares about and believes in each person who is a part of it.

It is small enough where you feel that tight knit sense of community yet big enough across three campuses that you feel you are part of something importantly significant. It is a place that takes each person as the individual that they are and meets them where they are at."

Ryan Walker, 5th Grade Math Teacher



10

'05

'06

'07

'08

'09



'10

'11

'12

'13

'14

'15

'16

'17

'18

'19

'20

'21



# 12

## CARROLL NINE PROGRAM LAUNCHES

For students who needed one more year of Carroll to thrive, a new program transformed their learning journey.

**Kurt Moellering,**  
Upper School Division Head 2012-2020



“The evolution of the Upper School is rooted in GEC.

*Our faculty continue to think differently about how to provide students with a rigorous academic model that meets their needs as learners and, this year especially, one that engages them in critical conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion. We want to prepare students for their next academic setting—but also for the world that awaits them.”*

**Kate Collins, Upper School Division Head**

“College prep academics, Carroll School support.” One of our first taglines for the Carroll Nine program defines how the program came about.

After the Carroll high school closed, we had a real gap for our students who needed one more year of Carroll: kids who had come to the Middle School late, or weren't yet ready to go to high school. By providing a college prep academic program alongside Carroll's strong support model, we would (as Steve Wilkins often said) “increase each student's trajectory” to better prepare them for the rigors of high school—and beyond.

Carroll Nine was the brainchild of Steve Wilkins and Larry Brown. In 2011, they repositioned another faculty member, Steve Zimora, to create and run the C9 program. I was also hired that year as both a Middle School teacher, and to work alongside Zimora to put together a program for the 2012-2013 school year.

When Zimora announced he was leaving Carroll, Steve Wilkins and Larry Brown took me out for a beer (as they sometimes did back then) and offered

me the opportunity to lead the program. That first year, it was me, Bob Reid, and Jenny Junkin with 16 students. The three of us taught every class and every focus block, and provided all the social emotional support for our students.

We launched an afterschool study hall that year, providing intensive help in a targeted, non-judgmental way—a model that is still employed today. Around Thanksgiving, we hired a part-time science teacher, and offered a public speaking course led by Shea Schatell.

We also established community-building activities to set the tone for the program, and because we recognized that our kids needed to have fun, too. We held our first Winter Feast that year—a tradition that continues today. We built a complete replica of the Thoreau cabin in Walden Woods. We took a three-day sailing trip from the Cape to Gloucester: a real test of our endurance and ability to work together. Our first graduation was held at a museum in Gloucester and featured the hallmark student journey speeches that define the Upper School graduation to this day.



“Give each child ... It's not just a slogan. They do and it's amazing.

*In our district, we pushed and pushed and only managed to get about two 15-minute reading support sessions twice a week. When Shea started at the Upper School, he had four class sessions a day devoted to reading. And they kept changing his schedule to provide the right support for him as he progressed.”*

**Mary Kate McGowan P'20, Past Parent of Shea Booth '20**



“Let's make a plan” became our internal motto. We structured the program to allow students to make mistakes—an important learning tool—and then worked collaboratively to make a plan to get past those mistakes. Everything about the program was “GEC”—there was no “one approach,” but always what each student needed at that time.

In year 3, we grew to 21 kids, added an 8th grade to the program, and began offering tutoring. By adding an 8th grade cohort, we discovered that we could differentiate by focusing on grit, a growth mindset, and self-reflection over a two-year program, much more so than in one year.

Moving to the Wayland campus as the Upper School in 2017 was a huge milestone. The culture blossomed, in large part, through the efforts of the collaborative, caring, and expert teaching staff. Teachers eat lunch with students, they work with kids during free periods, they teach Multis, they plan and lead field trips, they give parents a detailed picture of what students are doing in each class, they give students accurate and current feedback on their progress... and they know how to have fun.

The intimacy of the Upper School allows it to challenge students who need academic rigors, while supporting students who need support—and nourishing independence, self-advocacy, organization, communication, partnership, and fun along the way.

'05

'06

'07

'08

'09

'10

'11

★ '12

'13

'14

'15

'16

'17

'18

'19

'20

'21

“As a trustee, I have had the pleasure of participating in a fantastic evolution under Steve’s leadership:

*Carroll has transformed from a remedial school that served as a stepping stone for students to return to other schools, into a complete school where students (and their parents!) want to be a part of our community as long as possible.”*

**Richard C. Waters P’11, Chair, Board of Trustees**

# CARROLL BEGINS 4-YEAR PLAN TO EXIT FROM MA CHAPTER 766 PROGRAM

An initially controversial choice enables Carroll to reach more students—and to create more impressive student outcomes than ever before.

**By Steve Wilkins**



At Carroll, our students and their families are at the heart of every decision we make—even the tough ones. We’re committed to their wellbeing above all else.

That’s why our vision of how best to help students with language-based learning differences, such as dyslexia, goes well beyond mainstream views of how best to teach students with learning disabilities—and why our vision didn’t align with the mandates of Massachusetts’ Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

We see the exponential growth in our students each day, and set our ambitious goals for their futures beyond Massachusetts’s basic individual educational plan (IEP) goals—goals that aim no higher than simple grade level performance. It was that gap that led to our decision in 2014 to begin a deliberate withdrawal from the public funding system. And nearly seven years later, we’ve seen that decision bring a stronger sense of social justice to our community, and greater access—across socioeconomic strata—to a Carroll education.

It may seem counterintuitive to refuse millions of dollars of publicly supported tuition, but it’s part of what we’ve achieved together by thinking differently. Here are just a few of the ways Carroll’s decision has benefited hundreds of children across Greater Boston:

- Financial assistance has grown from \$900K in 2014 to \$3M in 2020. A quarter of Carroll families now receive need-based assistance to attend Carroll—dramatically increasing the socio-economic diversity of the Carroll community.
- Carroll’s student population has increased from 400 in 2014 to 442 in 2020.
- Carroll’s educational offerings have expanded to include a focus block for every student, a flex block for all, cognitive development work for each student, expanded use of technology, and creation of STEM design centers on each campus.

- Carroll has developed a more intentional and focused training program that prepares teachers and tutors to work with children with dyslexia, rather than the broader and more generic training required of faculty in “approved special education” schools.

When we first announced our intention to withdraw from state funding, we heard concerns that Carroll was abandoning students who could not afford to pay our tuition. We understood those concerns, but we could see an opportunity to provide even more support for those families.

Public funding was being disproportionately distributed to families who had the financial means to live in wealthy communities, acquire legal assistance, and hire advocates to help them secure funding. The end result was that funding was, in large part, providing access for those who did not necessarily need financial support to attend Carroll.

The toughest part of that equation was that the structure of public funding made it impossible for Carroll to provide sufficient financial assistance to those who truly needed it. Now, in 2020, our approach to providing financial aid has made the school far more accessible to a broad range of families, from a broad range of communities.

We also heard the concern that, without state mandates in place, who would hold Carroll to high standards around teacher certification, class sizes, and individual educational plans?

Today, Carroll is delivering more impressive student outcomes than ever before. We have set the bar higher than state mandates would ever demand. Our accountability comes from our promise to our families that we will deliver an education that gives their child what they most need. Rather than a set of written objectives on a document from the public school special education department,



“My children are living proof in both their remarkable progress and attitudes that Carroll is nothing short of exceptional for dyslexia education.

*Financial aid enables my children to access this extraordinary education. It has made a dramatic difference for our family.”*

**Cindy Morrison, Parent of a 4th and 8th Grader**

we see our responsibility as a contract between our parents and Carroll School.

It is a living, breathing, constantly evolving set of practices that are reviewed with our families at least four times a year. In fact, we track student progress daily and share data with parents as a core practice.

By thinking differently, and holding ourselves to a higher standard, we’ve seen both measurably positive outcomes in our student progress, and an ongoing, strengthened commitment to our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



'05

'06

'07

'08

'09

'10

'11

'12

'13

★ '14

'15

'16

'17

'18

'19

'20

'21



# CARROLL ROLLS OUT NEW CLASS SCHEDULE TO BETTER MEET THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT

Interview with Allison West,  
Middle School Division Head



## WHAT ARE FOCUS AREAS, AND HOW DID THE NEW DAILY SCHEDULE FORMAT OPEN UP THE ABILITY TO GIVE EACH CHILD WHAT THEY MOST NEED?

In 2003, we looked at the latest research in effective reading instruction, and thought about how to complement our robust Orton-Gillingham tutoring program with additional classes to help students become better readers. We started with fluency groups and, over the course of a few years, expanded our offerings in comprehension and vocabulary. At that point, groups met during, or replaced tutoring blocks.

As the programs expanded into written expression and math, we realized that there was an opportunity to redefine the current daily schedule to create dedicated time on students' schedule for focus areas. We also added a flex block to provide additional skill boosters for particular areas of need, and make room for Targeted Cognitive Intervention (TCI). The new schedule provided much-needed time and space for important programmatic initiatives to take place (focus areas, flex, health and wellness) without disrupting the flow of core classes.

The new schedule also included a rotation of class times, providing each student with the ability to have each class at their best time of day for learning. Now teachers can plan their lessons differently, knowing when students will be most ready to learn.

## HOW ARE STUDENTS PLACED IN FOCUS AREAS?

First, we look at data: curriculum-based assessments, formal assessments, and informal assessments. We combine that data with recommendations from the student's team from the previous year: their tutor, ELA teacher, math teacher, focus area teacher, speech and language pathologists, etc. Department Heads start meeting in March to review the data and team feedback for placement in the next academic year.

There is a progression of skills that help us determine the right focus area. If a student is still struggling with decoding and reading, they are placed in an Orton-Gillingham tutorial. Once they've demonstrated a certain level of decoding mastery, that's when we look at other options. If we identify that language is a concern, the next step is to look at fluency. If a student has not demonstrated a certain level of mastery in oral reading fluency, it's highly likely that that's going to be a big part of their focus area class.

Over the years, we've gotten more fluid about the focus area offerings and have been able to combine areas of greatest need. Students may have a focus area class that has a fluency and a comprehension component, or one that has creative writing and written expression components. This year, we added a class on media literacy that builds critical thinking skills by analyzing different types of media.

## ARE ADJUSTMENTS MADE OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR AS STUDENTS GAIN COMPETENCY IN THEIR FOCUS AREAS?

Around the midyear point, we look at the data to determine if an adjustment needs to be made. If changes need to happen, we roll those out after winter break so students start the second half of the school year with their new schedule. Sometimes a focus area class shows progress as a group, and then we add a component that builds on that original focus.

## HOW DO YOU SEE FOCUS AREAS EVOLVING?

We've talked about adapting the curriculum in different ways so it doesn't feel like another language or another math class, such as adding more science or history content. Ultimately, our commitment to building strong readers and math learners has never wavered. Fluency, comprehension, critical thinking, written expression, math fluency ... none of that will change.

“ Teachers before Carroll didn't really understand how to teach me because of my dyslexia.

*Carroll understands me and helps me with the things that I struggle with the most like typing, reading, writing, and spelling. They have made sure there is a Flex block in the day that helps me with typing, which I definitely need, and I'm in Orton-Gillingham tutorial for my focus area and it has helped me improve my reading, fluency, and spelling skills.*

*I feel much more confident in just a few months at Carroll than I did at my previous school.”*

Caroline Atkins, 7th Grade Student



15





# OSA OSAGIE IS HIRED AS CARROLL'S DIRECTOR OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Interview with Micah Wittmer,  
Middle School Integration Specialist  
for DEI, History, & ELA Curriculum

By Osa Osagie, Director of Equity & Inclusion



“You can’t properly give each child what they most need if you’re not also honoring the identities of each and every student.

*Our diversity-focused Professional Learning Community meetings have helped faculty understand and appreciate the importance that every student sees themselves in the curriculum that we’re teaching.”*

Allison West, Middle School Division Head



Carroll’s DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) journey has been organic and beautiful. Our work has been built upon the school’s expert understanding of what it means to support kids who learn differently and applying that understanding to connect with other forms of human difference into our work as teachers, learners, and community members.

Our first few years focused on laying the framework for becoming a more diverse and equitable community through professional development and teacher training. It became evident to me this past summer that now is the perfect time to bring a culturally responsive curriculum into the Carroll classroom.

Fortunately, I have the help and support of my talented colleagues and Carroll’s leadership. Our Middle School Integration Specialist for DEI, History, & ELA Curriculum, Micah Wittmer, spearheaded the process of creating a framework and curriculum called Foundations for Brave Conversations for our Middle and Upper School students.

## WHAT IS THE FOUNDATIONS FOR BRAVE CONVERSATIONS CURRICULUM?

Foundations for Brave Conversations is a curriculum that helps advisors and their students create a community of trust so

that they can be more equipped to have conversations about challenging topics such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and other isms that foster hate and exclusion.

It aims to develop Social Emotional Intelligence (SEI) in a culturally responsive way, allows for opportunities to get to know and celebrate each other’s identities, and helps to develop a shared language to be able to effectively discuss race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.

## HOW DID THE IDEA FOR FBC TAKE SHAPE?

FBC came about after the unrest of the spring of 2020 and the senseless murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. We realized that we needed to allow space for students to process these events and the subsequent protests, yet so few students had the language or the understanding of how prejudice, racism, and injustice manifests in our society. We also wanted all adults to be equipped to have these conversations with students and put into practice what we have been discussing in PLCs for the past three years.

Since Carroll was in the process of reorganizing the school into pods where all teachers would be advisors, it seemed like an opportunity to involve the whole teaching and learning community in an advisory curriculum centered on identity exploration.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOPICS THAT FBC HAS COVERED THIS YEAR AND HOW DOES IT HELP CARROLL TO “GIVE EACH CHILD”?

We’ve discussed what identity means, and the idea that how we see ourselves may not be how others see us. We’ve also been discussing prejudice, stereotypes, “us vs them”, bias, discrimination, racism, and privilege—all of which will help students better understand what is going on in



“During a Foundations for Brave Conversations discussion this year, I learned that everyone has their own story.

*You can’t tell what they are going through by just giving them a glance on the sidewalk.”*

Harry O’Connor, Upper 9th Grade Student

the world today. Because FBC takes place in intimate advisories, teachers are able to tailor the discussions to the needs of their own students.

## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM FBC AND HOW DO YOU SEE IT EVOLVING FOR NEXT YEAR?

I already knew that starting with identity exploration was crucial for this type of learning, but I didn’t fully understand how fundamental it is for adolescents.

Even though their identity and understanding of the concept of identity is rapidly changing, developing the skill of reflecting on one’s identity is essential to engaging in topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As challenging as it is for some students, it is worth the time. Next year, I hope we will be able to devote more time to this curriculum during the school schedule.

As we continue to expand the curriculum, we hope to add the topics of gender, sexism, homophobia, classism, and how to be an upstander.



'05

'06

'07

'08

'09

'10

'11

'12

'13

'14

'15

'16

★ '17

'18

'19

'20

'21



# '20

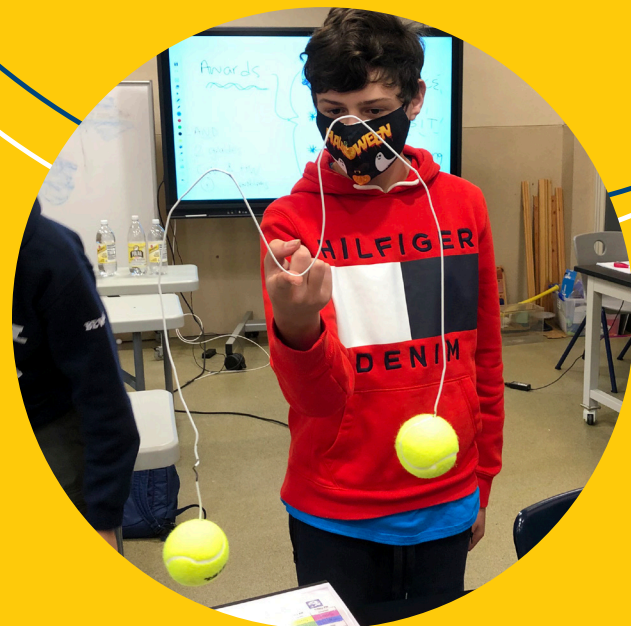
## GIVING BACK IN GRATITUDE

In the wake of a wildly successful capital campaign—over \$32.7 million dollars raised—the future of philanthropy at Carroll is shining bright.



“The confidence and skills I gained at Carroll transformed me literally overnight—I was free to become myself. I’m not sure I even realized how much changed, and how quickly, but it was because of Carroll that I am where I am today. Carroll played a massive role in my transformation, and I want to support that transformation in the lives of other students and families.”

Steve Baldini '90



“We didn’t choose Carroll like you might choose any other school; Carroll chose us, because it was the only place our son could receive what he needed. We feel a responsibility to make sure that Carroll is well-resourced as it can be, and to give back all we’ve received from this community.”

Jessica and Scott Turco



It’s no mistake the theme of last year’s If Not for Carroll capital campaign celebration was, “We Dream Big,” because that’s how Carroll has grown, evolved, and succeeded from the very beginning.

In fact, philanthropy has been key to every big step forward we’ve taken as a community, from our expanded campuses, to the development of critical learning initiatives, to our deep commitment to professional development.

When neurologist Dr. Edwin Cole co-founded Carroll School in 1967, opening our doors to just seven students and three faculty, he reached out directly to parents and friends of Carroll to ensure those numbers would and could grow, because the need wasn’t going away. Now, more than 50 years later, the Cole Society welcomes those who have thoughtfully included Carroll in their estate plans in his name—a true reflection of his visionary legacy.

While we’re relatively young as a school, a strong tradition of giving has already taken root—in no small part because our families feel such a strong sense of gratitude. We hear time and time again how rewarding and powerful it is to give

when they’ve been hoping and searching for the right answer to their child’s needs... and they’ve finally found it.

The same goes for our alumni, their parents, and their grandparents, each of whom has experienced how Carroll can change the learning trajectory of a bright, eager student firsthand. When they think back to what their path might have looked like without Carroll, they are inspired to ensure Carroll is there to support the next generation of students just like them.

All of this is why, with your support, we’re going to keep on dreaming big to accomplish the goals we’ve set for ourselves as a community: better compensating our teachers, broadening socio-economic access to our programs, deepening our understanding of how our students learn, and discovering more ways to build self-confidence and advocacy skills in our students.



'05

'06

'07

'08

'09

'10

'11

'12

'13

'14

'15

'16

'17

'18

'19



'20

'21



# CARROLL GECS ON: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN STEVE WILKINS + RENÉE GREENFIELD



After an exciting 16 years of leadership from Steve, Carroll is transitioning leadership to our new Head of School, Dr. Renée Greenfield, in the coming year—and they sat down to have a chat about what they value most about being at Carroll, and what lies ahead for the Carroll community.

**STEVE:** At Carroll, we use the expression “give each child” (GEC) to describe how we teach and support our students. What does GEC mean to you, as the incoming Head of School?

**RENÉE:** I hear GEC a lot around here, both as a noun and verb! I would define GEC as what educators do after they’ve taken the time to analyze and act on what is best for their students. At Carroll, the teachers are constantly adapting and shifting to match what they’re doing to accommodate the needs of their students—they’re led by how the student learns and how they think.

Most schools have a schedule of what they teach each year for a particular grade or age, and they follow that cycle consistently. A Carroll teacher puts the student at the center of what they’re learning, and when, and how. Teachers are constantly adjusting according to how things are going for them, and Carroll gives the time and space in the schedule to do that work.

I think that ability to adapt comes from the amount of time and effort Carroll has invested in professional development. Our teachers have the knowledge and skills to know what students need, and to respond, because we’ve made it a priority.

**STEVE:** How would you say Carroll uses data to determine how to GEC?

**RENÉE:** We use it everywhere, but I want to say: I remember you early on, 15 years ago, talking about data-

inspired instruction versus data-driven instruction.

**STEVE:** With data-driven, I think you can get pretty boring, pretty fast. Our teachers are actually inspired by their capacity to change a kid’s life, and watching that data go from not too good to quite good... to really good.

**RENÉE:** Exactly! It’s incredible to look at the data we gather with teachers, and map all the ways students are progressing, and make a plan for the future.

It’s like a feedback loop that lets them know where teachers need to change things to meet a student’s needs, and it’s so important to the teachers to have that as a resource for their next step, or how they’re going to adapt. It puts some pressure on an educator to shift what they’re doing, and it’s not an easy job, but that’s the kind of teacher that wants to be here.

**STEVE:** How do you think Carroll can ensure we have the highest quality teachers and tutors who can actually GEC?

**RENÉE:** I talked about how important professional development is before, but I think it’s about teacher induction, mentoring, and coaching, together with the professional development. Research shows, and in all my experience, if you do those things, you support and retain the best teachers. I think Carroll attracts amazing human beings who want to do really meaningful work as educators.

To me, the most important factor in determining whether a teacher is right for Carroll is whether or not that teacher can work in real relationship with kids. Can they convey not just that they’re their teacher, but that they really care about them as human beings? Are they connected? That feeling of connection is the only way a student’s going to learn, or take risks, or be vulnerable.

**STEVE:** So as we talk about “gecc’ing on,” I want to ask: what fires you up about working with students who learn differently?

**RENÉE:** For me, it’s that *moment*. I’m sure you’ve experienced it. I’ve experienced it. It’s also amazing to watch it happen in front of you.

This relational thing happens - between a teacher and a kid or a group of kids where they’re in the flow of learning. It’s like time

doesn’t matter, and something amazing happens - that connection is being made.

This is what fires me up because you can’t learn that in a book—you learn that on the job. It’s what teaching and learning is all about, and it’s why I do this work. The other thing that fires me up is just thinking about what’s to come. What are we going to learn in the next few years in this age of technology that will transform more kids’ lives?

**STEVE:** Well, you are totally coming to the right community if that’s what fires you up! Those things happen at Carroll all the time, and I know they’re going to keep happening.

Kids succeed here where they didn’t think they could—all the time, all over the place.

“Carroll has achieved so much under Steve’s leadership over the last 16 years.

*It is an honor to be involved with such an incredible organization that transforms lives every day. I am excited to see Renée Greenfield build on this great momentum as our next Head of School.”*

**Devin O’Reilly P’20, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees**



- '05
- '06
- '07
- '08
- '09
- '10
- '11
- '12
- '13
- '14
- '15
- '16
- '17
- '18
- '19
- '20
- ★ '21

21





## Carroll School

45 Waltham Road  
Wayland, Massachusetts 01778

# A YEAR REIMAGINED

Every single thing we do has been reimagined this year... and our faculty have shown incredible commitment to giving each child what they most need.



When life became unpredictable for all of us—practically overnight—these passionate educators provided our students with evolving individual plans that they needed to continue learning, growing, and realizing their potential. Over the past year, our faculty has overcome obstacles to ensure our students are equipped and empowered not just to survive, but thrive.

The Carroll Annual Fund supports everything at Carroll—especially our extraordinary faculty & staff!

**Please make your gift to the Carroll Annual Fund today!**

**[CARROLLSCHOOL.ORG/GIVING/GIVE-ONLINE](https://CARROLLSCHOOL.ORG/GIVING/GIVE-ONLINE)**