

David Evans
Mashapaug Pond Oral History Interview

March 18 2013
1:30pm
Alvarez High School
375 Adelaide Avenue
Providence, RI

Interviewee: David Evans
Interviewer: Irene Rojas-Carroll

Irene Rojas-Carroll: This first part, uh. Today is March 18, 2013, and we're in the faculty lounge at Alvarez High School on 375 Adelaide Avenue in Providence. Um, yeah. Why don't you start by introducing yourself?

David Evans: Ok. My name is David Evans, and I'm a science teacher at Alvarez High School.

Rojas-Carroll: Um. Could you tell me about how your Pond awareness efforts play out in the classroom?

Evans: Sure. Um. Right now, my Environmental Science class is currently working on a project with Holly Ewald and the Urban Pond Procession and Amelia Rose from the Environmental Justice League. Um. Their capstone project is going to be a video related to the Pond and the watershed and the history of the site here where Gorham Industries was. Before that, I was a science teacher at Feinstein High School - this was before Alvarez was built - and I used to take students to the Ponds to do, um, water sampling and to do a natural resources [inaudible].

Rojas-Carroll: Okay. Um. Could you tell me about the school culture here at Alvarez - since you've been working here, what you know about it?

Evans: Uh. Be - be more specific. Like, what are you asking?

Rojas-Carroll: Um. I know that it's a pretty new school and that it's very small, um, and I've talked to a couple people who have told me that the student culture is very disengaged. Um. And I was wondering how that connects to your efforts to raise awareness about the Pond--

Evans: Okay--

Rojas-Carroll: If it's a disengaged culture--

Evans: Right...

Rojas-Carroll: Or what - or if you think that's fair--

Evans: [1:54] Yeah no no no, it's a complicated question, and... So it's gonna be a complicated answer [laughing]. Um. So here's what's going on. This is a city school, and being a city school, we have a lot of kids who don't have very good test scores. Right? So what's been happening in the past set of years with, um, the No Child Left Behind laws, and later the Race to the Top, uh, law, is that our school has to show a certain score. It has to be either - the - you have to meet standards or be showing progress towards standards in order to, um, continue to be funded. And so what has happened to us, is because we haven't shown progress on these scores enough is that um, we've had sanctions put on us. So, we lost our principal, last year, who was a good guy. Um, and I feel he was being sort of, um, made into a scapegoat for the fact that the scores aren't what they should be. And the reason I'm mentioning this is that the culture now among the faculty and staff is kind of about survival. And it's been made pretty clear to us that if we don't show pretty strong improvements in a fairly short time frame, then, um, we can expect other disruptions to happen. I personally don't think it's in the kids' best interests to have a curriculum that is completely oriented around succeeding in assessments in math and ELA [English/Language Arts]. **[3:40]** So I try to find ways to make connections that are relevant to the kids, and I hope that those connections get translated into, um, into better scores. The kids that I'm doing the most work with in terms of the Pond - the stuff with Holly and with Amelia - are seniors currently in this Advanced Placement class. And since they're seniors, um, they're not getting assessed for the purposes of figuring out whether the school continues. So there's less pressure on them to stick to a very prescriptive curriculum. And um, and this isn't only coming from the building, this is coming from the central administration too. There really isn't a good curriculum document for this course. So I have considerable leeway in determining what I present. The kids do take an AP exam, and if they succeed in that that would be really great. Because they could get college credit, they could, I mean, all kinds of good things can come out of that. And I figure the best chance I have of getting those kids to be engaged with that is to have them really feel, uh, a connection between what's being presented in the course and what's going on around them. And it's pretty easy to do, with the whole Gorham story and the whole Mashapaug Pond story, because all of these topics that we deal with in environmental science keep coming up. There's a whole story of this area. **[5:14]** To get back to your original question about culture, I think there is a certain amount of disengagement here. I don't really feel like with the reforms that we've instituted, that there's much that the kids really find enjoyable. I think what - what they sort of see this year is a longer school day, and not a whole lot of stuff that's sort of engaging and interesting to them, that, you know, they could use as a real way to come to school. So I think it is a tough thing. And um, I can't really see a way of substantially improving the culture until we can get the pressure off from us to um, to, to succeed on the tests. The other thing that we have going on is that a lot of the kids that we're getting here, like um, a pretty large number have not had any success academically in middle school. I mean like none. So, you know, we, we have social promotion here in Providence as they have in most districts. So, we have kids that are really underprepared. They don't read well - they're not comfortable with the kind of writing that they need to do in order to, uh, to succeed in the tests, but to succeed in their courses as well. So, there's a real premium to - to get them caught up. And, so the - so the kids feel a certain amount of pressure too, and in certain ways I think they feel inadequate to the challenges that are put in front of them. Um. **[6:50]** We deal with absenteeism that in my mind is unacceptably high. Um. I think there actually - there's a little bit more absenteeism than is specifically reported. You know, we can have eighty-five percent, uh, attendance: that means fifteen percent of the kids are absent every given day, but you could have kids that are, um, tardy and don't come in until like noon,

and they're still counted as being present. So we have a bunch of kids that aren't getting the kind of continuity that they need, and that's a real challenge to get those kids to - to show up. Those kids that are absent the most are those kids that are succeeding least.

Rojas-Carroll: Do you see any difference in performance for the students who are in your AP Environmental Science or do you think that's also kind of self-selected...?

Evans: Well, yeah. These - these kids in the AP class are kinda - they're kinda the cream of the school. You know? The um--

Rojas-Carroll: Are the demographics different? Uh--

Evans: No.

Rojas-Carroll: In any way--

Evans: [8:05] Well actually, there's generally more girls in the class. So the sample size is pretty small. But. Um. This year I have three boys and twelve girls. It was - it wasn't quite that off last time. In terms of other measures of diversity, I don't think you'll really find any differences between the population that take that AP course plus the other AP courses in the rest of the school.

Rojas-Carroll: Ok. I know lots of students also come from outside the area. Um. Do you think, like, how... Hm. Do you - how do you think that affects their connection to Mashapaug Pond and what - and how you're teaching about it in the classroom?

Evans: You know, I don't know the answer, 'cause many kids that live right around here, that live in the Triangle area or South Side did not even know we were on a pond when I first introduced this to them. In my ninth-grade class, in my biology class, I took them outside once during the fall to uh, to show them this little oil boom that had a bunch of - of turtles sitting on it, because I was proving to them that there was wildlife in Providence. They were - they were astonished to see turtles, but the big thing that they couldn't believe as that there was this pond there. And these are kids that are like - I mean, one of these kids, he lives right near Knight Library and he still didn't know that there was a pond there, so. Yeah, I - I don't know, I don't know that I - I don't know that the kids that are from this specific area feel a tremendous amount of ownership of the school, although I suppose it would be easier for them to be here afterwards, you know, they wouldn't have to spend so much time getting home, so maybe - maybe there's a difference but if there is one, I really don't know it.

Rojas-Carroll: [10:04] I also - hm. Seems like with all this about high-stakes and students feeling disengaged from the curriculum ,I'm wondering if organizing around this issue could not necessarily have, um, help them have more ownership of the school but just the area?

Evans: I don't know. I mean, I understand the question, I know what you're getting at, I'm just not sure how much ownership they feel of their own neighborhoods. I'm - I'm not sure. I mean anything, anything that would make them feel, you know, part of the community and belong and

- I think would be good. This isn't for a little while, but you know, in the future they're gonna open up the back, there's gonna be maybe a sports field behind the school, there's gonna be like a park with access to the area, which I think is fantastic. That would make this place more of a magnet, not just for students, but for everybody. I remember years ago they were thinking of putting a YMCA back here. The Y, they - they ultimately backed out, I think because a lot of the environmental concerns. You know, how are we gonna get a permit to do this, will we be liable, I'm not so sure. But when the - the chatter was, this is like maybe I don't know, maybe seven, eight years ago. The - the chatter going around the school was, this is great, we need something like this, and the Y was actually talking about making like trails behind the building and everything and [inaudible] we could you know, because science classes get involved with that, but that was a different school. That was much - that was a project-based learning school, and I could have written something for a bunch of kids to make an interpretive trail and figure out a way to give them credit for that and done something where it would have been really experiential, you know. Right now I don't have the same kind of flexibility, I really couldn't do much like that around here at this point.

Rojas-Carroll: You said it's, it was, you said that was a different school - do you mean just that-
-

Evans: No no, this is a different building. That this - There was this other school - it's kind of that [gestures behind him] - it - it doesn't exist now. It closed, but it was right over, um, where Paul Cuffee [High School] is now. So it's a small building. I think it might've been like a IRS building or something at one time or another. But this was an even smaller school than, than Alvarez. It closed in, um, 2010. And a lot of the population there came over to this building then. So the - their bell schedule is different - [13:00] there was - it was just a different kind of place. And um I think I mentioned it before - there was no fences - there was nothing in this parking lot except for a Stop and Shop and a video store. Back then, I had, you know, these long blocks, these eighty-five minute blocks, I used to uh, I used to take kids back here all the time. These - these kids would be like splashing around the puddles. So now I found out there was like, I don't know, dioxin or [inaudible - PAHs?], like all these - all these horrible mutagenic substances that I was having my kids, like you know, tromp through, and you know, we're like sampling water from the pond and testing it for dissolved oxygen. And now I find out that there are all these barrels at the bottom of the lagoon that are, you know, filled with poisonous this and poisonous that, and uh, and you can canoe on the water but you can't touch it, like that kinda thing. So it makes me sort of - it's kinda funny that here I am working right next to the Reservoir and I'm fenced off from it when before I was working much further removed and I had totally open access.

Rojas-Carroll: So - when was this information made available to you and - um - the school community?

Evans: In terms of what?

Rojas-Carroll: About the pollution.

Evans: Oh I, uh. I just noticed around. I was trying to - I was trying to figure out, um, a little bit more about the history of this site. There used to be this park behind Job Lot, um, where they had a canoe landing and people would go there. They still do certain things there but it's not set up as a big sorta active recreational park. And um. So I remember going there, but um, the information was available, it just, it just wasn't really being disseminated, you know. But you can get online and search Mashapaug Pond and once you figure out how to spell it found all kindsa interesting stuff out there and it maybe made me sort of a, you know, think a little bit differently about - about the ways that we could visit and get stuff out of it. So it - it's just a matter of asking around and it's just such an attractive thing for a science teacher.

Rojas-Carroll: [15:29] I remember hearing that that there were efforts to disseminates information about the Pond through the school, but that was--

Evans: Yeah [inaudible]. And - and - this is kind of hearsay for me, this is a little bit before my time when this started, but you know there was a lot of neighborhood concern about the setting of the school in the first place, and I think they feel - they felt that there wasn't a whole lot of um, opportunities for - for public input, and I think that's probably true. You know, school [inaudible] was really - they - they needed to get a building in and they had a - about a million dollars worth of steel hanging around that was just rusting, so they had to do something about that. So the school got put up quickly. And they didn't do all the permitting that they should've. And it was - it was grass grew - grassroots guys like the Environmental Justice League and other people like them that, you know, made a strong effort to try to get the community more informed. And they were able to get DEM to do certain things, part of it was the signs that are around the chainlink right there that say that it's dangerous, you can't go through. There were a lot of concerns about dust when they were doing the excavation for the site, and when they were doing some of the site improvements this past fall, a lot of people in the community were worried about, um, you know, breathing some of the stuff that would come off so the, uh, Joe Martelli [sp?] described some of the efforts they were doing to reduce - reduce the dust. And the other thing that's going on is this year the school is much more amenable to doing stuff for the community. So we've, um, hosted the stakeholders meeting with the DEM here. **[17:23]** Other community stuff that really wouldn't have been allowed a year ago, two years ago, is happening now. We've got the kids working on a project to make up this beautiful timeline out of ceramic tile that's gonna be in the school. And then like I said the stuff that my class is involved with, making a little video, sort of all comes from the same people that had the concerns about the environmental issues in the community are trying to make ties with the kids and bring them in to do a little [inaudible].

Rojas-Carroll: Can you tell me more about those projects?

Evans: Yeah, um, uh, Holly Ewald is a very good rainmaker [?], you know, she gets grants. And, you know, she's an artist herself, and she's got a lot of connections, but she's working with, uh, an artist who they got, and they got money, I think part of it's from Rhode Island Foundation, part of it's from somewhere else, I'm a little bit foggy on that, but they've got all of Sarah Cappelli's art students working on these tiles. And these tiles are gonna be put up in an installation and it's gonna be, it's gonna be a timeline. So, I've given them a little bit of help about what, you know, species of plants and animals would be found here before there were many white people around from Europe and everything. And they're gonna have, you know, concepts

of that on tile, and you know, and the whole history of the site, which they're pretty familiar with, you know. They've done a lot of research and the, you know, the same oral history people that, you know, you're doing stuff with right now have done a lot of digging in terms of people's connections here, so their job is to sorta bring all that together into this display that'll be here in the school. And then the video that my class is working with, we're still sort of in the formative stages, but it's gonna be related to the Pond, to the school, and I think something related around watershed issues, because that's one of the emphases that the Environmental Justice League has, you know, the big [inaudible] for the Pond are the legacy of this place when it was a factory, and um, runoff stormwater from the entire watershed around Mashapaug, so I know that our class is gonna do something to document it, but we haven't really decided like what exactly that's gonna look like. It's gonna be about eight minutes [laughs], that's pretty much what we know at this point.

Rojas-Carroll: Mhm. And is that with the AP class?

Evans: That's with the AP class, yeah.

Rojas-Carroll: Have you been able to do anything related with your other classes, or..?

Evans: Uh, not with that project specifically, but um, we had done some stuff, we, you know. The curriculum schedules ecology as being the first unit that biology does in the year, and there's some good things about that. One is that it's still warm outside. So I've had a chance to take 'em out and show certain things. [20:20] But the biology curriculum is very prescriptive. And I try to take every opportunity I can and bring in the sort of bigger stuff that's going on around here, but it's easy to do in ecology, it's not so easy to do with how proteins are made, you know, that kinda thing. So, um, I think in an ideal world for me I'd be able to, uh, be outside with the kids for a little bit more.

Rojas-Carroll: It says on here that you worked near the Pond since September 2003.

Evans: Yeah.

Rojas-Carroll: Was that only here, or other places?

Evans: So I was at the other high school, Feinstein--

Rojas-Carroll: Oh yeah.

Evans: From '03 to like, you know, June 2010, and then um. There were a number of us. There were like five of us, or six of us, that um, that were interviewed for open positions here at Alvarez. So the following fall I started teaching here, so I think that it's right, 2010 to, yeah. This is, this is, I'm finishing up my third year here at Alvarez.

Rojas-Carroll: Hmm. What have been some of your greatest joys, um, in your experience here at Alvarez?

Evans: Yeah, you know it's, uh, it's still a work in progress. Some of the kids are terrific, they really are. And I enjoy the diversity of the place, sometimes the kids are really funny. Um. Every once in a while we'll get an exceptional kid who really really gets it and shows lots of ability so that's fun too. I - I don't wanna name specific names, I feel a little weird giving that, but, um--

Rojas-Carroll: Yeah, that's fine.

Evans: There are - there are a number of kids that have gone the program here that I really like, I really like. I'm really enthusiastic about their future, and I hope uh, I hope I keep in touch with them.

Rojas-Carroll: And what happens to them?

Evans: Well, it's - we get, you know, we - we place a good many kids in college, but we don't know enough about how successful they are there. That's one of the fallups [?] that the school department is concerned about too. You know? Like, you know - if we get x percent going to college that's fantastic, but the real thing is like, what percent of those kids get out, and are there things that we could be doing to help them prepare for success after high school, and I think there are. And I think the biggest thing we can do to help these guys is to work more on their reading and writing skills. I think that um, I think that, you know, they definitely make progress, they definitely do it every class, but um. They need to be stronger readers and writers in college than - than they're graduating with now. I'm, I'm uh, pretty settled on that.

Rojas-Carroll: I heard there was no - there are - there are no outdoor sports at Alvarez. Is that true?

Evans: Yeah, well what happens is the kids who wanna play a varsity or JV sport have to go over to Mount Pleasant, which is kind of on the other side of town. So they do do it, but there aren't enough. So that's one thing--

Rojas-Carroll: There aren't enough what?

Evans: Uh, there aren't enough kids. That are willing to--

Rojas-Carroll: To like, have a team to..?

Evans: [23:46] Well, and you know what it is, is the uh, I believe the way the Scholastic League works is, you know, we have a gym and it's fine but we can't just have basketball and not have anything else. So if we were to have, you know, sports that the kids dig, we would have to offer every sport. And we can't sustain that right now because we don't have enough facilities. But maybe if we did get those sports fields that - that something could be done or we could do some kinda deal, or you know, we worked with another school 'cause it gets it done, I mean uh, JSEC [Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex] - that's uh, a school over by Thurbers Avenue - they have a football team, and they have a [inaudible] team where they team up with a couple of private schools. I mean, they do do it. So I'm not as familiar with the rules as I'd like to be, but if we were to get that sports field in, that would help a lot. And if we don't go Scholastic, we could

at least give them more intramural opportunities. You know, we got lots of kids playing basketball in the gym. We got tons of kids in our school community doing baseball. If we would put a baseball field and just have them play for themselves I'd think that would really help things out a lot.

Rojas-Carroll: What do you think about other teachers here, um, and either their efforts to talk about the Pond or efforts to engage students?

Evans: Um, I can't speak much about, um, the connection that other teachers have with the Pond, you know. My interests in the Pond just came - it - it didn't come out of me being a teacher, it came out of me just sorta, you know, seeing this incredible thing behind the school. Um. You know, the fact that the art class is doing stuff I think is gonna help a lot. I think that the interest will certainly grow as, um, as the school gets bigger, and uh, as we open up the back. Um. So that was the first part, but what was the second part?

Rojas-Carroll: Um - about engaging students?

Evans: Yeah. I guess, you know, different teachers use different - different techniques. I know that the math teachers have a real challenge, you know. Their curriculum is more prescriptive than mine. And some of these guys, they get these kids that are behind, so their strategy for addressing that is to double up the classes. And - and and - they're told what they have to teach, you know, and they don't have a whole lot of flexibility to like, you know, slow down their presentation, try to make these real-life connections, because, you know, they're, they're, it's being drummed in - into them that these kids are behind, they have to catch up. So, it's a tough thing. It's it's it's - the end of the day, you know, we have two classes from, you know, like, you know, I don't know, 2:15 to 3:20 it's the last class and then there's an hour before that, so it's long, right? [26:53] And you've got these kids who don't know math and they're getting two hours of math, and they're not getting a whole lot of writing and presentations [inaudible] it's, it's not shocking to find that maybe sometimes they're not wicked engaged throughout the entire time, or maybe that you know there'd be certain behaviors that are a problem. You know, other teachers, they do what they can. They try to come up with stuff that meets with the interests of the kids in front of them, but um, but again it's a challenge - some of that the literature that the kids are being asked to read and understand, I don't think they find to be terrifically relevant, you know, some of the stuff they read is stuff I was reading when I was in high school in the 70s. So, you know, I don't know. I think, um, it's not enough to simply put the, put the material out there. You know, you have to find ways to make it engaging, and there are some kids that, where the challenge itself is gonna be even harder. Making connections to the ponds is, uh, is one way it can help, but it's not - it's not the only way by any means. Um. Some of these kids I could show them an alligator in that pond and it's not gonna make any difference whatsoever, you know? [laughing].

Rojas-Carroll: I was gonna ask something about... Um. Oh. You said the school was getting bigger? It's gonna get bigger, you mentioned?

Evans: Um, I don't remember saying that. I might have been comparing the other school to this one--

Rojas-Carroll: Ok.

Evans: 'Cause this school's got like over 600 kids. The other school has a little over 300. Maybe that's part of it?

Rojas-Carroll: Ok.

Evans: I don't know.

Rojas-Carroll: I don't remember. But, so this school is at - pretty much at capacity right now?

Evans: Pretty much, yeah. I think the actual enrolled number is, you know, 660 or something. And you know, the you know, we're in a teachers' lounge because my classroom is being used. There's pretty much a 100% utilization in terms of rooms, you know.

Rojas-Carroll: Interesting, because it was just built.

Evans: Well, yeah, they - they knew what the demographics were gonna be. It was really, you know, important that they get this in. There's another bulge coming, I understand, of current kids that are in 6th grade. Where, teachers always look at, you know, it's you know, will there be the same number of positions, then what they do is they call it consolidation, you know. If there are fewer, you know, kids in a given year, they'll eliminate certain positions. There's a particular time frame they have to inform you of that. So I don't know, but um, this is a nice facility. There's some things that are kind of aggravating about it, and there's some cheap ways that they cut corners, but I ne - you know, I've got a full science lab, you know, I can do stuff here that, you know, I can't do anywhere else, and I've got a little prep room behind my classroom, I'm - I'm very happy, or I think it's, I think it's a great facility. And uh, I don't mind the size at all, I like 600, you know, it's enough so you get a diversity of kids but it's intimate enough so you get the chance to know all the staff.

Rojas-Carroll: [30:20] Good. Um. Anything else you want to talk about? I don't want to direct the conversation too much...

Evans: You know, I just uh. I like how these connections are building, you know. A couple years ago, you know, the oral history thing, the Reservoir Memories, that's been up forever, but they had nothing going on with Alvarez. So I think it's pretty cool that - that these connections are being made, you know, I hope - I hope they continue, you know.

Rojas-Carroll: Yeah, well I'm really interested in the school, um, and possibly interviewing the students. Have any students shown, like, extra interest?

Evans: I - I could find you some students. I mean, like, what um, what is it you're looking for, like what kind of kid are looking for, would be interested in?

Rojas-Carroll: [31:09] Umm, hm. Probably actually. Like I guess they wouldn't have to necessarily be super interested in the Pond already, but um, but willing to talk about it. Or, really just talk about the school. Um, and just their experiences here.

Evans: Well, it sounds to me like you'd probably want someone who's been here a couple years. Like, someone who's - who's starting out now may not have the same kind of perspective.

Rojas-Carroll: Yeah, it'll probably be 3 or 4, so maybe like 3 who have been here a while and one who's newer?

Evans: Ok. Alright. And when would that work for you, when you want to do it?

Rojas-Carroll: Um, in the next couple of weeks. I - yeah. I'll need to look at my calendar and when the next's interview's due...

Evans: Ok, well, here. Let's, um. Probably the best time to do it would be during my free period. I would just like pull a few kids out of a class, so here's how it works, alright. We have this rotating schedule [shows a printout of the school bell schedule]. So like, here we are today. It went, you know, 4, 5, 6... No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2. So now we're 1.

Rojas-Carroll: That looks really confusing. [laughs]

Evans: Totally confusing. Now here's one that's less confusing. Okay? Now day 2, which is the 26th, the last period of the day is day 1. It goes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1. 2:20 to 3:20. Tuesday the 26th, you come here, I give you three seniors and a freshman and you interview them.

Rojas-Carroll: Sure.

Evans: Let me write that down. I wrote down that you were coming, and I replied in an email, and then I forgot. I'm sure you'll send me an email to confirm, and that way, so that's what I'm gonna do. Oh that's my son's birthday!

Rojas-Carroll: Oh gosh. Actually the, if it's next week I won't be here, because it's Spring Break for me.

Evans: Oh ok, so. We can't do that. How about, um--

Rojas-Carroll: Mondays and Wednesdays are the best.

Evans: Yes, is April 8 too late?

Rojas-Carroll: Um.

Evans: Actually, you know what? No, nevermind, that would be earlier and that wouldn't work. Nevermind. [pause] How about Monday, April 8, how does that work?

Rojas-Carroll: Um, that should work.

Evans: Alright, Monday April 8. And we'll - we'll confirm. I'll ask for volunteers. [pause] So it's going to be period 1, which is the last period, and you want 4 students, 3 - 3 old kids, one young kid.

Rojas-Carroll: Yes, it doesn't necessarily have to be 3 seniors and 1 freshman. Just, a diversity--

Evans: A diversity, yes I understand that. And so what I need to do then is, I'll put out a call and then you will remind me. And that's what we'll do.

Rojas-Carroll: Perfect.

Evans: Good. Cool. Excellent. Very nice. [pause] And you're going to transcribe this?

Rojas-Carroll: Yes I will.

Evans: Yes, you want to send me the transcription?

Rojas-Carroll: Yes, I can do that.

Evans: Cool.

[35:29 - Ended interview here, but resumed when Rojas-Carroll mentioned she went to a high school where the majority of the student population was demographically comparable to Alvarez in terms of race, class, and academic performance. Time markers start again from 0:00.]

Rojas-Carroll: ...and I'm from near Oakland, but it's El Cerrito, and the district is, it's based in Richmond.

Evans: Mhm.

Rojas-Carroll: I don't know if you [laughs] Okay--

Evans: I don't know, I've been to California once. So anyway, as I was saying, um, and I'm clear like, you know, not privy to a lot of information that's out there, but I don't see any real evidence of too much segregation or, or you know, kids treating each other differently or being treated according to their class or race.

Rojas-Carroll: Yeah.

Evans: [0:35] Most of the, you know, our biggest ethnicity is uh, kids from the DR, the Dominican Republic. And there's definitely, it seems like it's sort of in fun, but I don't know, I don't know where it comes from, but kids from Mexico, Central America, they, they get treated from the DR, or kids from Puerto Rico—

Rojas-Carroll: Do you mean, do you mean kind of bullied?

Evans: No, I, see I can't, I – I don't see any evidence of that, but—

Rojas-Carroll: Maybe social circles are just different?

Evans: Maybe – maybe social circles are different, but it's – it's this sort of thing done in fun, you know. You know, I uh, I really can't say. The um, African-American kids in um – uh – you know, the big sorting place is the cafeteria, right. You know, you'll see tables that are definitely African-American kids.

Rojas-Carroll: For sure.

Evans: [1:34] Both boys and girls. But I don't see any evidence of tensions, you know. There are kids who date, you know, there are African-American kids and Dominican kids who date. Some of the gangs are built around that, but it, that's more neighborhood, and so you've got neighborhoods that are like, you know, the West End- the West End will have like um, Hanover Street, which is like in an Asian area [2:00] so the gang is sort of based regionally there, so it's all – it's all Asian kids. But again, it's not – there's not that much of that thing going on here, those kids who are really seriously hardcore about gangs and that kind of thing, they're not really coming to school, it's not really a factor.

Rojas-Carroll: How much does the administration worry about that? Because at my high school, um, when we had like school spirit rallies and everyone was like, class years were supposed to wear a different color we weren't allowed to wear red or blue.

Evans: Right, yeah, they definitely make sure that you don't wear anything that could be signifying everything. Every once in a while you see a red hat coming in here.

Rojas-Carroll: Yeah.

Evans: [2:44] It's not like, the – there aren't the same kinds of things as like, you know, people traditional – I'm a Blood, you better stay away, you know. But it would be naïve to think there's no gang activity. We had a resource officer who got hurt and they haven't replaced her. And I think that's a real shame, because we get kids that get violent, you know, we have kids that get into fights. But it's not a gang-based thing, it's just that they're acting like idiots who are in ninth grade.

Rojas-Carroll: Yes. So the resource officers, I had those at my high school too.

Evans: Sure.

Rojas-Carroll: But how do you think they change the school culture? Or how do you think the kids relate to them?

Evans: I consider them, the ones that I know, I consider them to be a positive influence. They know these kids, they can speak to them on a much more peer-to-peer level. They understand some of the stuff that's going on outside the school community. They are not – they're not - they're not evaluative. **[3:45]** They don't write discipline referrals. I think a – a, you know – a good resource officer is a huge asset to a place like this and I miss the one that we had [inaudible]. I think it's great. I think – I think the kids might miss it too, you know. We do have a couple people that don't get them into trouble, that don't you know, that don't evaluate and that they can talk to, but one more is always good. I think, you know, kids these days like structure, and there's no more structuring influence [laughs] than someone carrying a gun and wearing a blue uniform. **[4:30]**

Rojas-Carroll: Oh wow. Do they carry guns?

Evans: Mhm.

Rojas-Carroll: Really?

Evans: Oh yeah.

Rojas-Carroll: Real guns?

Evans: They sure look like it. Yeah.

Rojas-Carroll: Wow. Yikes.

Evans: Yeah. They do. I know, it's kinda wild. Isn't it?

Rojas-Carroll: Yeah.

Evans: We had this one guy, Jesse Farrell, great guy, totally, totally [inaudible]. He's like 6' 7", total giant, and kids would just mellow right out when Jesse would walk by. [laughs] Alright, so, good to talk to you—

[end of interview – **5:08**]