

Equity and the College-for-All Promise: Implications for School Design & Leadership

Wednesday, November 29, 5:30 to 9pm

Impact Hub Seattle

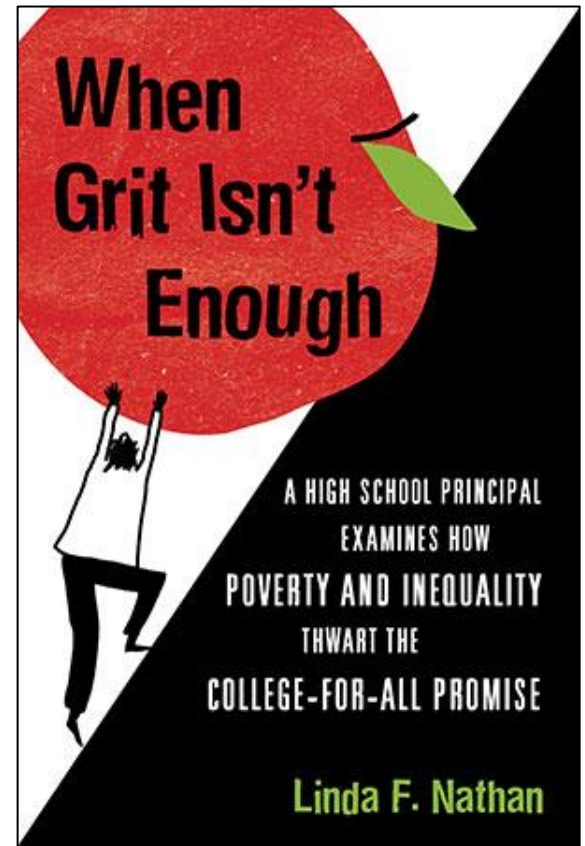
(light food and beverages provided)

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When Grit Isn't Enough examines major myths informing education and explores how educators can better serve students, increase college retention rates, and develop alternatives to college that don't disadvantage students on the basis of race or income.

In this book, Linda Nathan, founder and co-headmaster of the urban high school, Boston Arts Academy (BAA), reflects on the assumptions she herself has perpetuated about education: that college is for all, that hard work and determination are enough to get you through, that America is a land of equality.

Seeing a rift between these false promises and the lived experiences of her students, she argues that it is time for educators to face these uncomfortable issues head-on and ask the tough questions: How can colleges better acknowledge and address institutional racism and increase retention rates? And for those who sought a career without college, how could high school have paved an alternate path to success?



5:30 – 7:00 Network and meet with the principal leaders in School Foundry's first cohort to learn about their emergent school designs in Tukwila, Seattle, and Renton, as well as work under way to redesign alternative programs in rural districts across central Washington.

7:00 – 8:30 Panel: **Equity and the College-for-All Promise**, featuring Linda Nathan, author of *When Grit Isn't Enough*. (Book-signing before and/or after the panel.)

Panelists



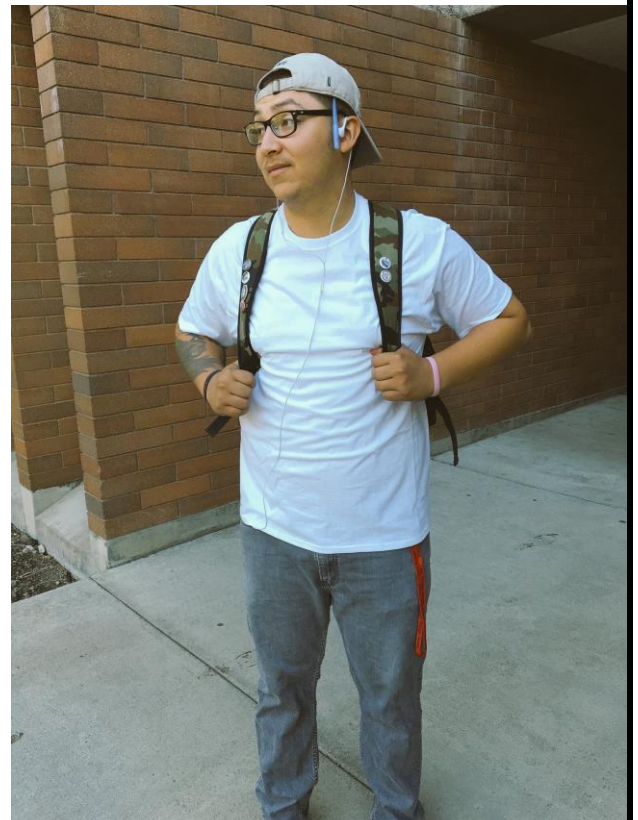
Linda Nathan, EdD is the first Executive Director of the Center for Artistry and Scholarship (CAS). In this role, she oversees key programs including the Creative Learning Schools Project as well as the Perrone-Sizer Institute for Creative Leadership (PSI) in partnership with the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Linda also works closely with the leadership of Conservatory Lab Charter School to support its development as a national model of project-based learning and arts immersed education.

Linda is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she teaches a course called “Building Democratic Schools: Studio Design Workshop”. As an experienced leader in education, she actively mentors teachers and principals, and consults nationally and internationally on issues of educational reform, leadership and teaching with a commitment to equity, and the critical role of arts and creativity in schools. Linda also facilitates workshops and conversations about issues of race, equity, and culturally relevant pedagogy for school leaders, teachers, parents, and students across the nation. She blogs about many of these issues at www.lindanathan.com.

Linda also serves on numerous nonprofit boards both locally and nationally, and is an advisor to the Puget Sound Consortium for

School Innovation. Her widely praised book *The Hardest Questions Aren't on the Test*, about teaching and leadership in urban schools, was published in 2009 in both English and Spanish. Her latest book, *When Grit Isn't Enough*, was released by Beacon Press in October of 2017.

Armando Tibursio Ortiz was raised in White Center, WA. He attended Highline Big Picture High School, where he graduated with the class of 2013. He first attended Lewis & Clark College to further his athletic career but later transferred to his alma mater Central Washington University. At CWU, Armando became one of the main advocates for students of minoritized backgrounds by organizing protests, workshops, & becoming civically active as the Student Government President. Here Armando along with the Center for Diversity & Social Justice worked to ensure plans and blue prints for a multicultural resource center will be on the 5-10 year plan for Central Washington University. Currently in his first year attaining his Masters of Education at Loyola University of Chicago in Cultural & Educational Policy Studies, Armando continues to work with community organizations to better the lives of young Black & Brown communities. While in high school, Armando was a 2012 recipient of the Princeton Prize in Race Relations, and he recently received Big Picture Learning's Alumni Action Award for his persistent and effective activism and leadership.





While in high school, **Sandy Zimmermann** struggled with poverty, displacement, and the substance abuse of loved ones. This made focusing on school and her future difficult at times, and she was blessed (her words) to find a school that allowed her to learn with a balance of autonomy and support. She attended Highline Big Picture High School, where she was able to develop strong relationships with several positive mentor influences, and take control of her learning. Her unique internship experiences as a ninth and tenth grader and her ability to articulate her learning to an audience (thanks to the school's "exhibition" approach to assessment) enabled her to land a coveted internship at the Port of Seattle. During this time, she gained the passion for business that led her to intern at Starbucks Coffee Company her junior year, in the central invoice auditing group. She also was encouraged and supported to strive for a post high school plan. This led her to attend Seattle Pacific University, where she graduated with honors. Sandy is now a full time Business Analyst at Starbucks Headquarters and still learning new things every day.

Bennett Taylor was born in San Diego and raised between Seattle's Central District and Capitol Hill. He studied English Arts and ran track at Hampton University, where he graduated in 2013. Since then he has engaged in various resistance work around trying to survive and build community in a transformed city that seems to have less and less space every day for people who have been pushed to or beyond the margins. He currently lives in South Seattle and works as an EMT in South King County.



Ravan Nahal is a first-generation college student attending Western Washington University, where she is pursuing a major in Psychology and a minor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She graduated last year from Highline Big Picture School, where she began as a 7th grader as part of the school's first middle school cohort in 2011. During her high school career Ravan consulted to numerous schools and districts on issues such as personalized learning plans, assessment by exhibition and portfolio, facility and program design for Gibson Ek High School in Issaquah, and implementing Restorative Justice practices to reduce out of school suspensions in large comprehensive high schools. She has served as a panelist for screenings of *Most Likely to Succeed* and provided design feedback to developers of some of Washington's first charter schools. In addition to her extensive advocacy work outside school, Ravan also was consistently active in her school's Student Leadership Forum throughout her time at Big Picture.



As a School Design Coach with Big Picture Learning, **Loren Demeroutis** gets to combine his passion for interest-based learning with a mission to sustainably undo systems of oppression. Loren is an experienced administrator and educator who has worked with numerous schools and districts to develop context-sensitive strategies serving the interests of students, staff, families, and community. These strategies include: restorative practices, developing non-cognitive competencies, personalized learning plans, internship-based learning, project management, and ways to authentically increase student, staff, family, and community voice.

In 1999, Loren began his career as a middle school teacher in Los Angeles. While the experience was often magical, Loren found himself losing too many students to a poor education paradigm. In

2005, and as principal intern, Loren joined the founding team of Seattle's Highline Big Picture High School. He committed to three months and found himself often emphatically criticizing Big Picture's approach to learning. Loren kept asking: "*How can we tolerate so much ambiguity? How will students learn the standards?*" Lo and behold, after three months – and despite his reluctance to an uncomfortable teaching and learning design, Loren started witnessing profound changes in the ways students and staff, walked, talked, worked, and envisioned their futures. Leaving was no longer an option. Ten years later, Loren was principal of the school and had added a middle school to Highline's campus.

Loren currently resides in Seattle and enjoys the 'wonder and awe' that his two daughters bring to the world. He holds Bachelor's Degrees from Stanford University in Psychology and Political Science and an M.Ed. from the University of Washington in Education Leadership and Policy Studies.

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If you have questions or would like to help sponsor this event, please email jeff@pscsi.org.

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