



Carlos Moreno

Nominated by Stephen Robinson

Biography



Carlos Moreno has been a teacher, a principal, a director, and now a Chief Executive Officer. But through it all he has been and continues to be an observer and a learner. A proud native New Yorker, Carlos is a passionate educational trailblazer committed to supporting school and district leaders to create high-quality, non-traditional schools designed to tackle systemic issues related to equity in education. He currently serves as Executive Director for Big Picture Learning, a nonprofit organization that, since 1995, has developed over 150 such schools in the United States and throughout the world. He also co-founded and leads the Deeper Learning Equity

Fellowship in partnership with the Internationals Network for Public Schools. Carlos holds undergraduate degrees in marketing and business from Johnson & Wales University along with a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. Most recently Carlos was named a Pahara-Aspen Institute Fellow – a fellowship designed to sustain diverse, senior leaders who are reimagining public education.



SCHOOLS, INNOVATION, INFLUENCE

Co-Founders

Dennis Littky, Ph.D.
Elliot Washor, Ed.D.

Executive Directors

Andrew Frishman
Carlos Moreno

Board Chair

Peter McWalters

Board Members

Lorne Adrain
Jody Cornish
Dale Dougherty
David Gersten
Stanley Goldstein
Saul Kaplan
Natalia Marte
Gislaine Ngounou
Andrew Nkongho
Ramona Pierson
Elizabeth Riker
Melanie Tavares
Blair Underwood

Dear Members of the Brock Prize Jury:

I thank you all for your consideration as you determine this year's prize. I'll admit, having found myself in situations like these as of late -- whether it be invitations to keynote, requests to author books, or nominations for prestigious awards such as these -- I sometimes wonder how I found myself here. More to the point, I sometimes wonder whether I'm worthy.

I often tell the story of my ancestral trail to where I am today, a trail that has led my family from the Caribbean to the Bronx and that has led me from being a disaffected New York City youth to the Chief Executive Officer of one of the more prestigious and progressive educational networks in the world today.

Almost 25 years ago, Big Picture Learning was founded by education pioneers and thought leaders Dennis Littky and Elliot Washor. These gentlemen, my mentors, had as their vision a new education paradigm in which learning was personalized "one student at a time". Schools that led with student interests and establishing connections to the community would be essential components of that work. These remain core principles of who Big Picture Learning is today.

This new paradigm was designed for anyone, but not for everyone. As the education landscape shifted to a standards-based, assessment heavy one, the Big Picture model seemed destined for the "alternative schools" heap. But, to some extent, this turned out for the best. We got to, and continue to get to, work directly with students who seek their own path, who forge their own identity. Students who at once seemed lost at sea, but someone found the shore through a local Big Picture Learning school. It won't surprise you to learn that most of these students are so-called marginal, underserved and - yes - minority.

Conventional models of schools and schooling employed for all young people are seriously at odds with what we know about learners and learning. In places where Big Picture Learning schools don't exist, the waste of talent and energy is appalling. We can only guess at the larger number of students who do not drop out but languish in their seats, obtaining a high school or college degree, but end up wholly unprepared for navigating the increasingly challenging workplace and economy. This is at a time of growing recognition that education is one of the essential means of obtaining and securing individual and community prosperity.

Activating the power of schools, systems and communities through student-driven, real-world learning.

Big Picture Learning
325 Public Street
Providence, RI 02905
www.bigpicture.org
@bigpicturelearning

Four years ago, Dennis and Elliot stepped aside and handed the organizational leadership reins over to me and my colleague Andrew Frishman. This was one of the first occasions when I truly wondered whether I was worthy. But I forged ahead. I'm a big guy. 6'8". At times when I'm even the slightest bit insecure, it's fairly easy for me to mask my vulnerability. As one of the new leaders of this storied organization, a primary goal of mine was to find a way to position *my* Big Picture Learning as an organization that had a youthful vibe, but one which could still take advantage of its history and foundation in the progressive education space.

In addition to personalization and community, equity and activism had to become central components to the new organizational identity. In retrospect, those components were always there, but were now pulled to the fore in the face of increasing challenges to the civil liberties of our students. We launched a new mission statement that put activism in education at the center of what we do, founded a fellowship for school and system-level leaders designed to provide deeper learning opportunities to students across the country, and have started initiating powerful and regular discussions about issues that are tangential to education, but shape our world nonetheless, such as a recent five part discussion I conducted on Ava DuVernay's *When They See Us*, a film series focused on the story of the Central Park Five.

But still that question lingered: Am I worthy?

As part of my application materials, you may come across a keynote I conducted at the 2018 iNacol conference when I stood in front of 3,000 people and claimed that "Demography is Not Destiny". I find that statement to ring true every day in my work, in the faces and successes of the students across the Big Picture learning network, many of whom I know by name. But when I say it out loud in front of a faceless mass of conference goers, I take pause and again wonder whether I am worthy. See, saying "Demography is Not Destiny" feels like the right thing to say. It's what we all want to be true, but when you look at the education statistics in our country today, you can't help but be knocked flat by the near constant evidence that suggests that the zip code you grow up in DOES have a statistically significant impact on who you will or will not become.

So why has my experience and the experience of many other Big Picture educators -- whether they be teachers, principals, superintendents, or Chief Executive Officers -- proven to be an outlier? Because we serve.

If you were to visit any Big Picture Learning school in the country -- pick any of the 65 of them -- you'd see that students spend two out of every five school days not in school, but out in the community learning from mentors and professionals. We affectionately call this "Leaving to Learn". This concept, we find, is as important to adult learning as it is to adolescent learning.

Two years ago, Big Picture Learning had its annual conference in Atlanta. As part of my Leaving to Learn experience, I traveled with a group of 40 educators to Ebenezer Baptist Church, the place in which, on February 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, then the pastor of the Church, preached his now famous "Drum Major Instinct" sermon. You can travel to Ebenezer Baptist Church today, sit amongst its pews, and listen to the sound system in the church play this sermon on a loop. And you get lost in time, lost to the words of Dr. King, as important today as they were five decades ago:

If you want to be important – wonderful.

If you want to be recognized – wonderful.

If you want to be great – wonderful.

But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's the new definition of greatness.

By giving that definition of greatness, it means that everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.

I am on a journey. I am a fierce fighter for equity and social justice, but I do not wear it on my sleeve or as a chip on my shoulder. Rather, I attempt to do it gently and firmly. I relentlessly share my stories and those of my students. I attempt to show the world a new form of education, of schools and schooling, based on an informed view of learners and learning. I am dedicated to closing the equity gaps in education by serving the needs of ALL students, particularly youth who have historically been kept furthest from opportunity.

And I do it with confidence because I have recognized the power of vulnerability. Vulnerability is essential pedagogy. Vulnerability allows the voices of my ancestors to tell me why it is that they made sacrifices that have led to my path in this world. Vulnerability is what allows youth, who have trust in no one, to place trust in me. Vulnerability is what allows me to be comfortable constantly asking the question: Am I worthy. And Vulnerability is what allows me to answer:

"Yes, I am worthy."

Thank you for your consideration.

Carlos



Carlos Moreno
Executive Director
Big Picture Learning

CARLOS R. MORENO

Educational Leadership / Global Innovation & Change / Equity & Access

11 Pine Street • Montclair, NJ 07042 • (M) 401.378.1808 •
Carlos@bigpicturelearning.org

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Big Picture Learning *www.bigpicturelearning.org* **2015 - Present**
Executive Director

- Direct the organization's core functions in Finance, Administration, Communication, and Development.
- Managed \$9 million budget for the organization responsible for providing educational services for over 350,000 students worldwide.
- Successfully submitted proposals for core operating support from national and corporate foundations totaling over \$15 million.
- Address program and policy issues in public schools and led discussions in communities across the United States, Canada, The Caribbean and Europe that engaged students, parents, community members and educators.
- Established strategic partnerships with various national organizations dealing with youth development, parent involvement, and student support programs and services.

Big Picture Learning *www.bigpicturelearning.org* **2012 - 2015**
National Director, School Network Support & Innovation

- Manage day-to-day programmatic elements of the Big Picture Learning National Network.
- Design and implement plan for principal leadership and development for Principals in the Big Picture Learning network
- Develop professional development opportunities for network principals including regional convening's, Principals' Conference and Big Bang Summer Conference and other network wide events.
- Provide on-site and virtual coaching to principals on an individual basis
- Coordinate and organize annual Peer Reviews for Network Schools
- Provide guidance to stakeholders in new and existing schools for successful school operation

Big Picture Learning *www.bigpicturelearning.org* **2010 - 2012**
Director of School Innovation & Change – New York & New Jersey

- Manage and oversee the Big Picture Learning work in New Jersey including 6 current schools in Newark, Camden, Paterson & Bloomfield, new districts and new work in already existing districts. Develop new state-level connections; manage existing state-level connections.
- Communicate consistently with all local partner organizations and foundations to keep them in the loop on current events.
- Liaison between New Jersey Schools, school districts, New Jersey Department of Education and Big Picture Learning to direct the implementation of BPL schools by working directly with stakeholders to provide guidance and support for successful school operation.
- Coordinate support of BPL schools including coaching of principals and staff in the Big Picture Learning design, philosophy and implementation; assistance with the recruitment and selection of staff; and assistance with implementation of district and state requirements within the BPL schools.
- Develop professional development opportunities for principals and staff including regional convening's, retreats, and other opportunities as they arise.

The Met High School District, www.themetschool.org

2009 - 2010

Co-Director/Assistant Superintendent

- Supervised seven district Directors whose programs provide indirect student services for all seven Met School Campuses in Providence.
- Lead community outreach and exploration of new and existing opportunities for students including partnerships with the various state universities and private colleges.
- Worked with the Director of Community Engagement/After School Program to improve the district's extended day program and develop national travel opportunities for Met students
- Met with co-founder and co-director Dennis Littky weekly to review the district calendar and address district issues.
- Collaborated with the Director of Curriculum and the Director of Organizational Development and Special Services regularly to plan, discuss, and evaluate staff development days, and overall health of district culture

The Met High School District, www.themetschool.org

2006 – 2010

Principal & Director of Principal Development & Training

- Supported and coached school Principals and Building Leaders as they adjust to the many responsibilities and pressures of supervising a campus
- Planned and lead monthly principal meetings to review whole school goals and priorities
- Held weekly individual meetings with new principals to help personalize the supports needed for each individual school, principal, and set of staff and students
- Supported the school's Co-Director with district mission, vision, and administrative decisions.
- Met regularly with the Co-Directors, Director of Curriculum and Innovation, and the Director of Special Services to plan, discuss, and evaluate staff development days, and overall health of district culture.
- Developed and maintain partnerships with community organizations including local businesses and non-profit organizations.

The Met High School - Unity, www.themetschool.org

2002 – 2006

Teacher/Advisor 9th – 12th grade

- Lead advisory class of 16 diverse urban students throughout their high school career.
- Worked with students, parents, mentors and staff to develop individualized learning plan for each student.
- Coordinated, supervised internship projects to reflect student's unique interests, background, learning style.
- Developed close, long-term relationships with students and families
- Provided counseling, crisis and conflict management, referrals for social work.

Childreach/ PLAN International, www.childreach.org

1997 – 2002

Donor Relations Executive

- Provided expert information to sponsors/donors on program countries
- Strengthened and developed relationships with PLAN through proactive contact with Country Directors and PLAN Management
- Utilize in-house information and interface with field offices, International Headquarters, and other National Offices to respond to inquiries through written and verbal communications
- Promoted a high level of communicative skills by speaking with major donors and accompanied sponsors to visit foster children and projects in Central and South America

EDUCATION & SPECIAL TRAINING

- Pahara-Aspen Global Leadership Network Fellowship**, San Francisco, CA **2017 - 2019**
- Leadership Program designed to strengthen and sustain high potential leaders
- University of Phoenix**, Phoenix, AZ **2004 - 2007**
- M.Ed., Educational Administration and Leadership & *Administrative Credential*
 - *Action Research* – Improving the retention and academic performance of Black & Latino males in Providence Schools
- Brown University**, Providence, RI **2002 - 2003**
- Teacher Credential – Secondary Education Coursework
- Johnson & Wales University**, Providence, RI **1992 - 1996**
- Bachelors of Science – Marketing Major

PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

Sharing The Pulpit. *iNACOL Blog, (September, 2018)*

Equalizing Professional Development: Creating a Community of Leaders of Color. Education Week (August, 2018)

Making Sense of it All. Getting Smart (July, 2016)

Thinking Deeply About Equity. Education Week (March, 2016) with Claire Sylvan

Deeper Learning and Equity: Looks Can Be Deceiving. Education Week (July, 2015)

Another Charlie Brown Election? *Huffington Post, (April, 2015)*

Nurturing Inequality: A Strategy for Achieving Unequaled Accomplishments for Every Learner *Huffington Post, (July, 2014)*

The Fierce Urgency of Now: Black & Latino Men in the Teaching Profession. *Heinemann Publishers. (June 2014).*

There Are Still Some Lights on in Camden! *Huffington Post, (February, 2014)*

The Latest Twist on Spreading Innovation – One School At a Time. *Phi Delta Kappan Magazine (November 2013) with Dana Luria & Charlie Mojkowski*

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Education Reimagined, Washington, DC education-reimagined.org **2019 – present**
Board of Directors - Organization committed to transforming education so that all children experience great learning.

Kenya Big Picture Learning, Nairobi, Kenya kenyabigpicturelearningcorporation.org **2019 – Present**

Founding Trustee – West African based organization dedicated to reshaping the high school learning experience by working with governments, communities and organizations throughout Kenya and West Africa

Institute for Democracy in America, Jackson, MS democraticeducation.org **2017 – present**
Board of Directors – serve as the board secretary for national organization committed to mobilizing action

College Unbound Providence, RI collegeunbound.org **2004 – present**

Founding College Trustee – Newly founded University in the state of Rhode Island focused on adult learners who have faced significant barriers to attending college.

Team Providence, Providence, RI www.teamprovidence.org **2004 – present**
Secretary of nonprofit organization that provides academic support, career exploration, college readiness and athletic opportunities for youth of middle to high school age in the greater Providence area and surrounding cities of Rhode Island.

Alpha Phi Alpha – Providence Alumni, Providence, RI www.alphaphialpha.net **2004 - 2010**

Chapter President – Presided over the organization which is dedicated to scholarship, community service, and brotherhood.

Intercultural Exchange, Colombia, South America **1999 - 2000**

- Engaged in international travel experience in Bogota, Cartagena, Buenaventura and Cali to learn language, culture, educational and political systems, ecology, and other aspects of day-to-day life.

Skills: Fluent in written and spoken Spanish, computer-proficient, engaging public speaker and presenter.

Previous certifications: Basic First Aid, CPR, Lifeguard, Licensed operator of school transit vehicles (RI).

Interests: International travel, fishing, reading, natural history, cooking, basketball, community service, attending church services.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2019 South Bronx Community Coalition – EPIC Heroes Award Recipient - award is to recognize individuals who embody the EPIC values of the community and to honor the path of Bronx-born leaders who continue to uplift impoverished communities.

2017 Buck Institute for Education – PBL Champion Award Recipient - awarded annually to a leader who makes an extraordinary contribution to furthering the use of Project Based Learning across the world.

2010 Providence Business News '40 Under 40' Award Recipient - recognizes young members of the state's business and nonprofit communities for career success, community involvement and a commitment to making a difference.

2009 Arthur D. Wright Award of Excellence Recipient – Awarded for work with young people within the Rhode Island community by the Rhode Island Foundation.

2006 National Pan-Hellenic Council Leadership Award – Awarded for ongoing mentorship of college students of color by the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

1992 & 1994 Most Valuable Player – Johnson & Wales University Men's Basketball Team

Dear Members of the Brock Prize Committee:

As a former recipient of the Brock Prize, I appreciate the focus of the prize on innovative work that moves educational practice forward in tangible ways for young people. I am writing to nominate an inspiring practitioner leader who has made a significant contribution to the spread of a remarkable approach to education that is making a difference in students' lives all over the world: Carlos Moreno, executive director of Big Picture Learning.

Big Picture Learning (BPL) is a network of schools that is grounded in a personalized, interest-based experiential learning – operationalized through internships in the community -- that enables students to acquire 21st century skills of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and an ability to apply knowledge to solve complex problems. The network serves students who often have not succeeded in traditional education settings and achieves noteworthy results in helping these students graduate from high school and go on to college, typically at rates of over 90%. The BPL network does this by working in collaboration with public school districts to help them establish these innovative learning settings.

My organization, the Learning Policy Institute, has just finished a study of the network aimed at understanding how it has managed to spread the innovative practices it has developed to so many other settings where teachers learn to practice in very different ways and succeed with the students they too often would have been unable to reach in traditional school contexts.

Carlos is a key element in this success. He joined BPL after a successful career in the corporate and International non-profit sectors. He understands this work from the inside out, having been a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and interim superintendent, before becoming a regional director and then executive director in 2015.

His work has helped to double the size of the BPL Network from 65 network schools to 135 schools worldwide including schools in Australia, New Zealand, England, Belize, Bermuda, Italy, Netherlands, Canada, India and Kenya. Focused on underserved youth and communities in all of these countries, the network serves over 200,000 students worldwide.

Carlos founded the Deeper Learning Equity Fellowship, a program that provides hundreds of leaders within the network with high-level leadership development and networking opportunities, and the chance to step back from their daily work to reflect and collaborate with their peers on the unique ways that they can strengthen and shape the future of the educational excellence and equity movement. He also launched ImBlaze - a powerful technology platform that enables schools, including non-BPL schools, to curate a set of internships for students to request to pursue. Schools can monitor the search process, track internship attendance and ensure compliance, and ensure student success. Two years in, there are already over 30,000 non - BPL students enabled to experience powerful, relevant real world learning opportunities as a result.

Always innovating on behalf of students, Carlos launched the Harbor Freight Initiative through which Big Picture Learning, with support from Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, has designed a new form of apprenticeship for youths who show significant potential for out-sized

accomplishments in new and traditional trades and crafts. These young people are an enormous, often overlooked, talent pool of future trades and crafts-persons who flourish in apprenticeships that provide deep and sustained relationships with expert mentors and access to communities of practice focused on their interests and talents.

Finally, Carlos is always attending to the development of supports for educator learning. He has led Big Picture Learning in creating a growing set of online professional development resources to bring just-in-time training to school teams in order to facilitate journeys to personalized learning and student-interest-driven internships. The network has refined tools and structures for schools to implement student-centered learning for over twenty years and has streamlined the process of training educators and sharing best practices to bring dynamic online learning experiences to teachers and administrators. The platform, Learning Big Picture, combines videos, classroom resources, research, and best practices from the field to create powerful learning for teachers.

It is not just Carlos's considerable accomplishments that recommend him for the prize; it is also the way he goes about his work. He thinks and acts systemically, seeing education within the larger ecology of community. He seeks collaboration in designing and implementing transformation. He is anchored in the practice community, but reaches out to researchers, policy makers, community members, and others to collaboratively design the schools and schooling we need.

This kind of leadership is essential to creating the 21st century school transformation needed to enable all of our children to succeed in the world they are inheriting.

Please don't hesitate to call on me if I can be helpful in answering further questions.

Best regards,



Linda Darling-Hammond

September 3, 2019

Stephen P. Robinson, Ph.D.
Senior Consultant, Global School Consulting Group
Juror, Brock Prize in International Education

Dear Dr. Robinson,

It is with great pleasure that I write to recommend Carlos Moreno for the Brock Prize in International Education. Carlos is a steadfast champion for young people who have been pushed furthest from opportunity. As Co-Executive Director of Big Picture Learning, he is creating and supporting schools around the world that put kids at the center of their own learning—honoring young people’s voices and stories and enabling them to construct their own lives, rather than accepting the ones given to them.

Big Picture brings an innovative and extremely powerful approach to education. In their schools, the focus is on building strong relationships between adults and students and creating personalized, real-world-based learning pathways that respond to “what [students] want to learn. What they are interested in seeing in the world and in themselves. [And,] what problems they are passionate about solving” (Carlos Moreno, iNACOL “Sharing the Pulpit,” 9/20/2018).

An amazing storyteller and advocate for restoring humanity to our education system, Carlos has been at the forefront of enabling adults to know kids, their stories, and their communities and to create the loving and caring relationships with students that are necessary for great learning.

On stages across the country, he shares passionately that the innovation at the core of Big Picture’s approach is “inequality” as the pathway to equity. Each child is unique. Each child has unique gifts and aspirations. He challenges us to consider what would be possible if we built education pathways with that conviction as the centerpiece, rather than putting all children in a standardized, one-size-fits-all education system. This is what Big Picture and Carlos have been doing for decades.

With this steadfast focus on the dignity, dreams, and self-worth of every child, what are the results? Big Picture schools have demonstrated their ability time and again to produce great high school graduation rates, strong college acceptance rates, and high rates of students staying enrolled throughout their college careers.

But, perhaps more important than any statistic is the aliveness of their students. As the President of Education Reimagined, I have had the opportunity to visit multiple Big Picture

sites across the country—from The Met High School in Providence, Rhode Island to Camden Big Picture in New Jersey to Lindsay Unified School District’s Alternative School in rural California. At each one, it was clear something dramatically different was going. The students were lit up by their learning and were discovering what they were interested in (and not interested in) through internships of their own design. They were talking excitedly about their unique plans for the future and the family-like relationships they had with their advisor and friends. They were not only preparing for life after school but were living it fully now—already making contributions to their each other, their families, and their community. The aliveness of belonging, having a future that you are excited about, and the ability to make a difference now are the results of Big Picture schools and programs.

And, the idea and its results cannot be separated from one of the people championing that idea and bringing it to fruition. Carlos Moreno is a talented, kind, fiercely passionate, and generous soul, and one of the most effective leaders I have had the chance to witness and work with. His strength comes from his integrity. Every day, he lives his belief that every human being is unique and capable of untold greatness.

Moreover, he does not limit his view of human potential to young people; he holds these beliefs about adults, too. Completely consistent with Big Picture’s approach with kids, when Carlos wants to share the possibility of doing education differently, he starts with getting to know the person he is speaking with, starting where they are in their journey of reimagining education. He is patient and understands it is a journey, not a transaction. Even when he is not successful in having people see the reimagined future he does, he leaves allies, well-wishers, and open doors in his wake. And, when he is successful, he transforms the lives of kids and the adults who care about them. I have witnessed this up close as fellow Pahara Fellow in his cohort. Where I would lose hope or patience with people that did not see the power of learner-centered education, he didn’t. To him, it’s not that they couldn’t see a new possibility, it’s just that they hadn’t yet.

Transforming education’s purpose to be that of enabling young people to discover who they are, their unique gifts and passions, and the nexus between those gifts and what the world needs is quite radical and exactly what our young people and society need today. Carlos Moreno is a fierce advocate for this shift. So, it is again with great pleasure that I recommend him for the Brock Prize in International Education.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly C. Young". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Kelly C. Young
President
Education Reimagined



August 29, 2019

Brock Prize in Education Innovation
2021 S. Lewis, Suite 415
Tulsa, OK 74104-5733

Dear Jurors:

I am thrilled with the opportunity to support Carlos Moreno's nomination for the Brock Prize. I know personally, eleven of the those who have been nominated for this prize over the past 5 years. They are of course, very accomplished, with contributions ranging from groundbreaking work on the determinants of the stratification in learning outcomes we observe to research on the factors driving motivation and success in education. Carlos Moreno may not be as far into his career as many of your nominees. But I can see why Carlos has been nominated. Moving through a career in teaching and administration to non-profit management and educational innovation, Carlos has been on a steep trajectory. His central purpose has been to advance the design, illumination and spread of a simple but powerful idea: learner centered education. More directly, the premise is that students are active participants in the learning process. Was this Carlos's idea? No. Some number of past Brock nominees have in various ways, contributed to the idea that educational practice should be student-centered. But no one has been more effective than Carlos in advancing the idea, in recruiting schools and school systems to the idea and in identifying, cultivating and advancing the careers of leaders committed to bring learner-centered practice into the mainstream. Indeed, the ability to take ideas and convert them into actionable practices is surprisingly rare. Carlos had done precisely this, through his steady pursuit of innovations in practice, with an emphasis on transforming the lives of those our education system has struggled mightily to educate.

My comments above frame the broad effect on the field Carlos has had since taking over at Big Picture Learning, which is now, one of the most prominent school design and reform support organizations with both a domestic and international footprint. I have known Carlos for nearly a decade and during this time, have watched him ascend to someone with national presence and reach. As a person, he is humble, warm, genuine and engaging. Professionally, Carlos is a master at helping ideas travel, take root and grow. This skill, all too infrequently noticed, warrants recognition. It is educator-entrepreneurs like Carlos, who figure out how to integrate, in this case, a fundamental idea about how young people learn, into the core design of many schools. Of late, his work on leading for equity, deserves a close look. It is playing out with



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students in Big Picture schools as they are supported to connect their academics to issues in their local communities. It is playing out in a series of fellowship experiences Carlos has designed to identify emerging leaders in the educator sector and develop their skills to foster social justice and upward mobility for students. Fellowship experiences of this sort, pay dividends over the long run as the individuals who participate, move through our education ecosystem from one leadership role to the next.

So, for all these reasons, I can support Carlos Moreno's nomination for the Brock Prize. This year's slate of nominees is strong. Carlos deserves to be among them. He has had a significant impact in a relatively short period of time and he has so much time ahead to magnify his impact and value in the field. This prize, especially the credibility associated with it, would contribute greatly to this outcome.

If I can answer any questions that help you consider his case for the Prize, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kent McGuire
Director
Education Program
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

September 3, 2019

Dear Jurors for the Brock Prize in International Education,

My name is Dr. Lisette Nieves and I am a Full Clinical Professor and Director of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program and the Director and Co-founder of the Ed.D in Leadership and Innovation at in NYU Steinhardt's School of Culture, Education and Human Development. I am writing this letter of recommendation for Carlos Moreno who is a 2020 nominee for the Brock International Prize in Education. I have had the honor of knowing Carlos Moreno for ten years, mostly as a leader in the nonprofit and education/workforce field through Big Picture Learning and most recently as key driver of the of a school and workforce partnership in the South Bronx. Carlos was also one of ten selected cross-sectoral leaders invited by NYU's Educational Leadership program to participate in a Leadership Summit at the NYU campus in Florence Italy in 2018. Carlos is an education leader that not only has impressive intellectual credentials, he is also an ethical and highly respected servant leader who is incredibly self-aware, inspiring and entrepreneurial. Below I will highlight why I view Carlos as an asset, not only to Big Picture Learning, but also to our country.

Carlos, through his role at Big Picture Learning (BPL) has created a wonderful network of 150 schools that understand that education can be individualized and can also support learners who have been turned off of or removed from traditional schooling. It is through Carlos' understanding of young people that he can get the best in teaching talent to create meaningful Big Picture Partnerships. Most recently at a national BPL conference, Carlos spoke vulnerably about what it meant to lose a student to gun violence and made a call for all the BPL partner schools double down on the supports they provide to students. There wasn't a dry eye in the room and yet at the same time – there was a clear call for action. I spoke with teachers and principals afterwards who were eager to speak about what more they could do to support their students. For great leaders like Carlos, their best work happens through others and after that conference, I saw the incredible ripple effect of Carlos' words and actions which I know will lead to increased educational and emotional support for students.

Carlos' positionality is a strength and unifier in diverse circles. He speaks openly about his upbringing and his career path. His authentic voice and keen listening skills make him stand out in group. I have never bucked against ego when working with or talking with Carlos. I have been in rooms with Carlos where diverse voices and visions of what young people need is present. Carlos knows how to bring trust to such rooms and support cross-sectoral communication – this is particular in the workforce field. Employers count on Carlos to understand them and so do high schools and local Bronx communities. Very few people are able to navigate such diverse stakeholders – and yet, Carlos does it with ease.

Carlos is also an Aspen Pajara Fellow and in a group of leaders, he stands out as the leader that reminds the group of what a true equity agenda looks like. So often, we as educators assume that we are speaking the same language, and it is Carlos who asks the group, "What do you mean by equity?" This question has prompted other education leaders to pause and to think about their work. I never doubt Carlos is guided by a strong ethical compass. He is a true servant leader that knows how to support young people in need while respecting their agency and voice and reminding his senior level peers at Aspen to do the same.

I can write ten pages on Carlos but will end my recommendation with an anecdote from the NYU's Executive Leadership Summit. Carlos not only organized the group; he co-wrote a wonderful piece for Education Week on the need to support Educational Leaders of Color and used the Summit as an example of how to provide that support. Through that one written piece, I received hundreds of calls from diverse educational leaders across the country seeking to participate in one our gatherings. His writing made our work that much more visible but also lifted the value of what the need for greater support for Leaders of Color. In closing, Carlos has a wonderful way of always "lifting as he climbs." Carlos is inspiring and reflective of what it means to lead courageously and equitably. I could not imagine a more deserving recipient for the Brock Prize. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisette Nieves".

Lisette Nieves, Ed.D.
Clinical Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
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Brock Prize in Education Innovation
2021 S. Lewis, Suite 415
Tulsa, OK 74104-5733



The Education Trust

Closing the gaps in opportunity and
achievement, pre-K through college.

Dear Members of the Brock Prize Jury:

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of Carlos Moreno's nomination for the Brock Prize in Education Innovation.

I first got to know Carlos during the New York University Executive Men's Leadership Summit in Florence, Italy in 2018. We discovered we have a lot in common. Carlos and I both grew up in New York City; we both started out as teachers and school administrators before working on system-level change; and we both are deeply committed to education as an engine of opportunity and racial equity. What stood out to me about Carlos then, as now, is his tireless commitment to putting students and community at the center of what happens in schools.

Carlos has an unwavering belief in the inherent potential of all children – not only in their potential to become great someday, but to actively shape their own lives, their own education, in the present. While too many adults convey the bigotry of low expectations for students of color and students from low-income families, Carlos views our children and their families as key allies in the work to ensure an excellent education for all and to build thriving communities.

It's not a surprise that, a few years ago, Carlos took the helm of Big Picture Learning, a non-profit organization with a mission to redesign education and embed it in the real world of the community. Carlos, who previously held leadership roles at The Met, Big Picture Learning's first school, is a natural evangelist for Big Picture Learning's "10 Distinguishers," which include personalized learning experiences, parent and family engagement, and real-world internships. At the heart of the model – a model implemented by a network of 135 schools in 26 states and 10 countries serving over 200,000 students – is the same belief in human potential that drives Carlos's work in education, the same commitment to connecting schools with the broader community, the same willingness to challenge routines when they don't work and rigorously evaluate new ideas.

With two out of three jobs requiring postsecondary education by 2020, the Brock Prize is right to point out that education cannot, must not, be "a benefit of a privileged few." The question is: Who will be educated? In the U.S., as in many nations, access to education is constrained for certain students; opportunity is not equal. Here in the U.S., Black and Latino adults are less likely to hold a college degree today than White adults were in the 1990s. That is an immoral reality. It's also a direct threat to the long-term health of our economy and our democracy.

Rewriting our future in the direction of educational justice so that all children – no matter their race, ethnicity, or income – have a fair shot at a great education won't happen by accident or by inertia. It will happen only when people of courage and creativity lead change in a systemic way. I am comforted to know that Carlos Moreno – who champions the idea that "demography does not equal destiny" – is one of those courageous and creative leaders pushing toward justice, and I strongly support his nomination for the Brock Prize in Education Innovation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John B. King Jr.
President and CEO, The Education Trust
10th U.S. Secretary of Education

Sharing the Pulpit

inacol.org/news/sharing-the-pulpit

September 20, 2018

In practice, we at [Big Picture Learning](#) work directly with communities and schools across the country (and really, around the world) who wish to implement a more student-centered learning design – one which is grounded in real-world learning and has the learner’s interests, talents and passions at the heart of their experience.

But beyond that, we at Big Picture Learning proudly, and confidently, assert that our real job is as activists. We are activists in so much as we are constantly and relentlessly seeking out public platforms – like the one which iNACOL is so graciously providing – that allow us to share our message of education equity. Many times it is my voice on these stages – a responsibility that I am honored and humbled by and one, which I take very seriously. But, whenever I can, I look for places where I am able to step aside and create a wake for those voices that don’t always get the spotlight, those of Black and Brown students who themselves have borne witness to the positive impacts of an educational experience that has placed trust in them. That has asked them what *they* want to learn. What *they* are interested in seeing in the world and in themselves. What problems are they passionate about solving. *The simple act of stepping aside can have an extraordinary impact.*



I think we’re finally coming out of an era in which standardization in education rules the day. Please believe, I get the impulse of policymakers to standardize aspects of education. The so-called “achievement gap” has persisted for decades and if any students have been left behind, it is those in traditionally underserved communities and those historically kept furthest from opportunity.

Standardization was a failed attempt to close that gap. Every new movement in education seems to forget the most important thing *about* education: **Relationships matter. Knowing our students’ communities matter. Knowing our learners’ stories matter!**

I often tell the story of my early experience as principal, and a student of mine, Andy. Andy pushed on me harder than any other student I’ve ever had. And I failed to see this pushing as pulling; as reaching out. For an act that I won’t name here, Andy was expelled from my school and part of me was relieved. This pains me. After his expulsion, Andy was the victim of a targeted homicide inside a barbershop. I don’t know if I could have stopped this, but I do know I could have done more. For many of our students – even our most challenging ones – school is a sanctuary, a lifeline. Standardization doesn’t recognize that “real-world” learning means different things for different populations. *Standardization doesn’t recognize that vulnerability is an essential part of pedagogy.*

I keep Andy’s story at the center of my work. The [Deeper Learning Equity Fellowship](#), which Big Picture Learning co-directs along with our partners, the Internationals Network for Public Schools, is all about identifying emerging leaders in the education equity space and giving them the tools to foster inclusive education practices in their own communities. Again, the goal isn’t to empower these leaders (or their students). We believe, that these folks and these communities are already empowered – this is

not something we can bestow on them. But we can turn the spotlight on them and increase the volume by which their voices can be heard.

Again, I am humbled to have found myself being recognized as an important voice in my field. With that recognition has come invitations to speak into microphones previously silenced and keys that open doors that have previously been locked. But, believe that before this rocket runs out of fuel...I'm going to grab as many other people as I can for the ride! #wheelsup!

A proud native New Yorker, Carlos Moreno is a passionate educational leader committed to supporting school and district leaders who are creating high-quality, non-traditional schools. He is a Co-Executive Director for [Big Picture Learning](#), a nonprofit organization that, since 1995, has developed more than 150 such schools in the United States and throughout the world.

Please [join us](#) at this year's iNACOL Symposium where [Carlos](#) will [keynote](#) along with [Phyllis Lockett](#) and [Tony Monfiletto](#) on Leading the Transformation of Education Systems; Dedicated to High-Quality Learning for All.

Equalizing Professional Development: Creating a Community of Leaders of Color



blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_deeply/2018/08/equalizing_professional_development_creating_a_community_of_leaders_of_color.html

By Contributing Blogger on August 31, 2018 9:47 AM | No comments August 31, 2018

This post is by Carlos Moreno, the Co-Executive Director of Big Picture Learning, and Randy Moore, Vice President for Postsecondary Partnerships & Innovation at HERE to HERE.

Leaders of color often devote ourselves to working to dismantle the systems of oppression that block young people who follow in our footsteps from achieving success. Yet though we work in environments that actively challenge the historic and systemic structures that continue to impact society today, we are rarely afforded the space to discuss how these same complex issues affect our lives, our professional development, and our goals. To better serve our colleagues and communities, leaders of color must find opportunities to come together to focus on our own development.

One of the most unique and transformative leadership experiences of our careers was the Executive Men's Leadership Summit held by New York University Steinhardt in Florence, Italy. The summit brought together an intimate group of 10 senior male leaders of color from philanthropic, non-profit, education, real estate, media, and financial services backgrounds to discuss leadership, management, diversity, and new ways to think about creating opportunities for all individuals to succeed. The retreat was specifically for men of color, but there was a refreshing range of diversity in the group, from professional title and work history to sexual orientation, geographic location, age, religion, and personal backgrounds and experiences.

Each participant shared a strong commitment to service, social justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion, which was a common thread uniting the group's focus on leadership. The summit was an opportunity to escape our normal environment, add context to our perspectives, and reflect deeply on our leadership and service to the community.

During the summit, we engaged in rigorous self-reflection and assessment intended to highlight how we could develop our leadership skills and support the strengths of those around us. We took part in conversations with industry leaders of color about the values and tensions that exist in leadership. In a discussion with Kaya Henderson, the former Chancellor of DC Public Schools, we spoke about the unique challenges and successes men and women of color face as leaders. She emphasized that when we accept the role of representing young people in our work, we must also authentically involve the entire community. This, and all, of the workshops led to the same conclusion: by coming together as a community, we can better address the oppressive conditions and policies that exist in the industries in which we work.

In our own careers working to enhance work-based learning opportunities and career pathways exploration for young people in the Bronx and elsewhere at [Big Picture Learning](#) and [HERE to HERE](#), we often speak about the importance of building a professional network that can provide the support needed to succeed in both education and career. We emphasize that mentorship and personal and professional development are crucial to that success. However, as leaders, we are often focused solely on our team members' success, because we are taught that is what good managers do. Since returning from Florence, we have focused on incorporating self-reflection and the professional development tools we learned during the convening into our work back home. Committing time and effort to our own growth ultimately enhances the way we manage and serve our team members.

The convening also spurred our renewed focus on providing space and time to build community within our own teams, organizations, and initiatives. The convening showed us that, as leaders of color, we have an opportunity to create spaces to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion in our workplaces. While we have been conducting programs with this intention, like the [Deeper Learning Equity Fellows](#), the summit provided a focused purpose and toolkit for holding these conversations in our work every day. In doing so, we improve how our teams function and build the trust needed to tackle challenges collaboratively.

What's more, the summit has given us a model to build upon for our own convenings. At this year's International Conference on Student-Centered Learning, held annually by Big Picture Learning, we established a track specifically for men of color, allowing them to engage in the work of building their own relationships and networks of support moving forward.

At the culmination of the convening, our group was given the moniker "The Florence 10." Members took pride in this name, as it resembled other groups in American history uniting to build camaraderie and collaborate to resolve challenges--and it kickstarted a professional network of our own. Setting aside time to come together as leaders provides the opportunity to step back, reflect, explore culture and history in real-world ways and build rich, authentic communities with our peers. These communities are critical to supporting leaders of color and catalyzing the systemic change we pursue in our work. In order to lead effectively, we must seize opportunities to connect with other leaders to learn, grow, and develop a multifaceted network to tackle the challenges we all face.

Thinking Deeply About Equity

blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_deeply/2016/03/thinking_deeply_about_equity.html

By Contributing Blogger on March 4, 2016 10:06 AM | No comments March 4, 2016

This post is by Carlos Moreno, Executive Director of [Big Picture Learning](#), and Claire Sylvan, Founder and Senior Strategic Advisor of [Internationals Network for Public Schools](#)

Undoubtedly, it was a shrewd handicapper who advised, "Bet on jockeys, not horses." A good rider, the thinking goes, can bring even a mediocre steed to a top three finish. And so it is with our most vexing challenges in education: Bet on leaders, not programs. Great leaders will find a way to make even a mediocre program a success.

In the [Deeper Learning Equity Fellowship](#), supported by the Hewlett and ECMC foundations, we have brought together ten superb leaders as Equity Fellows to develop ways to increase access to deeper learning, particularly for learners who have been and are being served poorly by the traditional system of schools and schooling. We undertook this work precisely because we agree with Jal Mehta that [Deeper Learning has a race problem](#) and, we believe, a language and a culture problem.

Who are these Fellows? They are leaders and emerging leaders who work in schools and classrooms, in school district central offices, in higher education, and in national policy and professional development organizations. They come from many places and by many paths to the Fellowship community. Their insights, passion, and commitment to this work have emerged from their personal and professional experiences.

We thought, therefore, as we began our work, that it would be good to have the Fellows record a brief statement about themselves, their work, and the journey that brought them to their well-documented commitment to equity. At our first convening in November 2015, we listened to and used these stories to forge a shared understanding of our mission and to build a group culture that the Fellows perceive as safe for interpersonal risk taking, a critical attribute of successful [teams](#) that accomplish audacious goals such as ours.

We think these stories are worth sharing with the larger community that is forming around deeper learning and particularly around expanding access for all learners to deeper learning experiences and environments. You can hear the Fellows' voices [here](#) and learn how their experiences and insights inform the work they are doing and the impact they wish to have.

Although the stories are varied, there are several common themes. They speak of challenges. They speak of defining moments and experiences, of moral purpose, of social justice, and of motivation and aspiration. They speak of overt and covert race, language, and class discrimination. They speak of sadness and anger, of optimism and love! Their empathy is forged from deep personal and professional experience with challenging the inequities of the system.

One Fellow recalls in her statement the considerable language barriers confronting a young mother and her daughter as they entered their new country. She speaks of the humiliation she experienced as an immigrant because she was not able to express what she knew because she was not able to use the language of her new promised land. "Never underestimate," she advises, "students' abilities based on their language skills."

Several Fellows noted in their stories the failure of many schools to serve as "safe environments for

being oneself," a common lament of young people who have been disadvantaged by the traditional system rather than helped to develop and exploit their talents, interests, and eagerness to learn. Many stories were poignant descriptions of how the Fellows themselves or others close to them experienced race, class, and language discrimination. You can hear in their voices their moral stance--a desire that this discrimination should be called out--and an "obligation" to ensure that the inequities they have observed and often experienced in their personal and professional lives do not continue in schools and classrooms. They just cannot!

To listen to these stories is to understand equity and deeper learning in new ways. The Fellows recognize the essential message of equity as freedom for every single learner to make their way in the world in their own way--to have unconstrained and unleavened access to resources that allow them to develop and demonstrate who they are and what they can accomplish.

The Fellows understand that the same access for every learner does not constitute equity. They understand that merely providing "alternatives" is not enough if the range of those alternatives is narrow and their quality poor. They believe that knowing the learner is essential for providing equitable access, that extending deeper learning opportunities to every single young person requires that we look deeply at every individual student, and his/her family, community, and culture and with that understanding craft appropriate learning experiences and learning environments.

The Fellows will be designing and conducting "capstone projects" as part of their Fellowship. These projects spring from their work and experiences, both personal and professional. The work they do and want to do is connected to who they are and who they have been and who they want to be. Most projects are targeted on impacting challenges that these Fellows have encountered in their day-to-day work. Projects will start in May and continue for about 18 months. By fall we will bring on a new cohort of 20 additional Fellows. We will record and share their stories as well and look forward to sharing their work.

We have no doubt that these leaders will finish strong, providing the education community with several exemplary models that inform and inspire our own work and in the process stimulate their own development as leaders for equity and deeper learning. You can bet on it.

The Deeper Learning Equity Fellowship is accepting nominations for its second cohort between now and May 1. If you would like to nominate someone, please visit the Equity Fellows [nomination page](#). Nomination is required, so if you believe YOU would be a strong candidate, please reach out to a mentor or colleague who might serve as a strong recommendation.