

# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to create learning communities in lower income urban areas where all students, particularly those who have not succeeded in traditional schools, can succeed academically and socially. At the Maya Angelou Schools, we prepare our scholars for life beyond the diploma.



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MAYA ANGELOU  
SCHOOLS

SEE FOREVER FOUNDATION

## MEDIA/PRESS KIT

Pertinent information regarding  
the Maya Angelou Schools and  
See Forever Foundation.

# ABOUT **US**

## OUR HISTORY

In 1997, David Domenici and James Forman, Jr. founded the See Forever Public Charter School as a program for teens involved in the juvenile justice system. The program offered youth opportunities to earn money, learn marketable skills, and return to an academic environment focused on inclusion and success.

Soon thereafter, in 1998 in collaboration with Reid Weingarten and Eric Holder, See Forever incorporated the Maya Angelou Public Charter School (MAPCS). The new school offered all disconnected youth in the D.C. area a place to engage in full-time, rigorous academic programs with innovative wraparound services they needed to succeed.

Today, the See Forever Foundation is a nonprofit and youth development organization that manages a network of Maya Angelou Schools. We support the Maya Angelou Public Charter School, the Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings (a school for incarcerated young men), and the Young Adult Learning Center (a school for young adults who previously dropped out of high school).

## OUR NAMESAKE

One of the program's first graduates christened us, the Maya Angelou Schools, in a moving essay from our school-naming contest:

*“We have problems in our neighborhoods, our homes, and inside of ourselves. But like Dr. Angelou, the students of See Forever are using hard work and education to create a new future. The Dr. Maya Angelou Charter School will treat people by the way they carry themselves, and not by their history.”*



The first graduating class of the Maya Angelou  
Public Charter School



# SCHOOL COMMUNITIES



**HIGH SCHOOL (MAPCS)**

MAPCS, offers grades 9-12 and is a comprehensive high school program with course offerings that include all core subjects (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies), Spanish and French courses, Advanced Placement courses, and a number of relevant elective courses including field internships and service-learning opportunities across the DC Community.



**YOUNG ADULT LEARNING CENTER**

The Young Adult Learning Center, YALC, provides year-round GED preparation and workforce development for young people ages 17 and up, offers courses in resume development, interviewing, and career preparation, as well as employment placement services for our students. The YALC offers morning and afternoon classes with our GED instructors for students ages 17 through 24 Monday through Friday and a twilight program complete with evening courses for students 17 and up.



**THE MAYA ACADEMY**

Maya Angelou Academy is located in the New Beginnings Youth Development Center (formerly Oak Hill Detention Center) and prepares incarcerated young men to fulfill their academic or career potential. Our school offers two academic programs that can result in a High School Diploma or General Education Diploma (GED.) Programs include graduation-required academic courses, GED Prep courses, and several enrichment and career building courses.



# SIGNATURE PROGRAMS SY 2020/2021

## Residential "Resi" Program

The Maya Angelou Schools and See Forever Foundation have devoted significant resources to provide wrap-around services to students in need of a stable living environment. The Residential "Resi" Program offers 30 slots among six houses located in Wards 6 and 7.

Scholars that are enrolled in the RESI program are under the supervision of Residential Counselors that provide both academic, enrichment, cultural, and life-skills support. The program starts on Monday afternoon through Friday morning before the school day. Passing grades in 87% of their courses where only 67% of non-residential scholars earned passing grades.

## Workforce Readiness Program

The YALC offers several year-round GED preparation and workforce development programs that include Homebuilders Institute (HBI) Certification, Cosmetology, Urban Gardening (Hoop House) Program, and Food/Health Certification.

We encourage scholars to dually enroll in both our GED and Workforce Development Program at the same time since the many industry employers require both a school credential and work experience from candidates.

## Career Technical Education Program

MAPCS has two CTE, programs--the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism and the Business Academy--that provide students the experiences of engaging in intensive industry-specific coursework, which includes a strong work-based-learning component focused on bringing the industry into the classroom and taking students on worksite tours (both virtually and in-person) to learn about various career paths.

Students can enroll in the Business Academy starting in 9th grade and in the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism starting in 10th grade. The CTE academy track is a combination of academic-based courses, worksite tours, job shadowing, and high-level internships locally, regionally, and internationally. College readiness is a key component of the program and includes college tours, financial aid workshops, and assistance with scholarship applications. Both programs are 3 year programs and students will have career and college readiness support through graduation.

# SIGNATURE EVENTS

## Dr. Maya Angelou Birthday Week

The Maya Angelou Schools network hosts several events commemorating and honoring our namesake, the legendary Dr. Maya Angelou, during the week leading up to her birthday on April 4th. The series of events includes a partnership breakfast with a student organization fair, birthday celebration assembly, and the Maya Speaks Writing Competition.

These events are attended by staff and students but are extended to the public by invitation.

## Maya Fest Community Fair

The Maya Fest is an annual event providing health, wellness, and festive carnival-style, family-friendly activities to community members, citywide. Over 50 community partners and organizations such as CVS Pharmacy, Metropolitan Police Department, DC Fire EMS, Howard University, Martha's Table attend, and support the Maya Fest. This event is FREE and open to the public.

## Signature Gala

The Signature Gala is a fundraising event that occurs every five years to commemorate the work and service of the staff members and board members at the See Forever Foundation and Maya Angelou Schools. Proceeds collected to support this event is reinvested into school programming and community efforts. This is an exclusive, invite-only event.



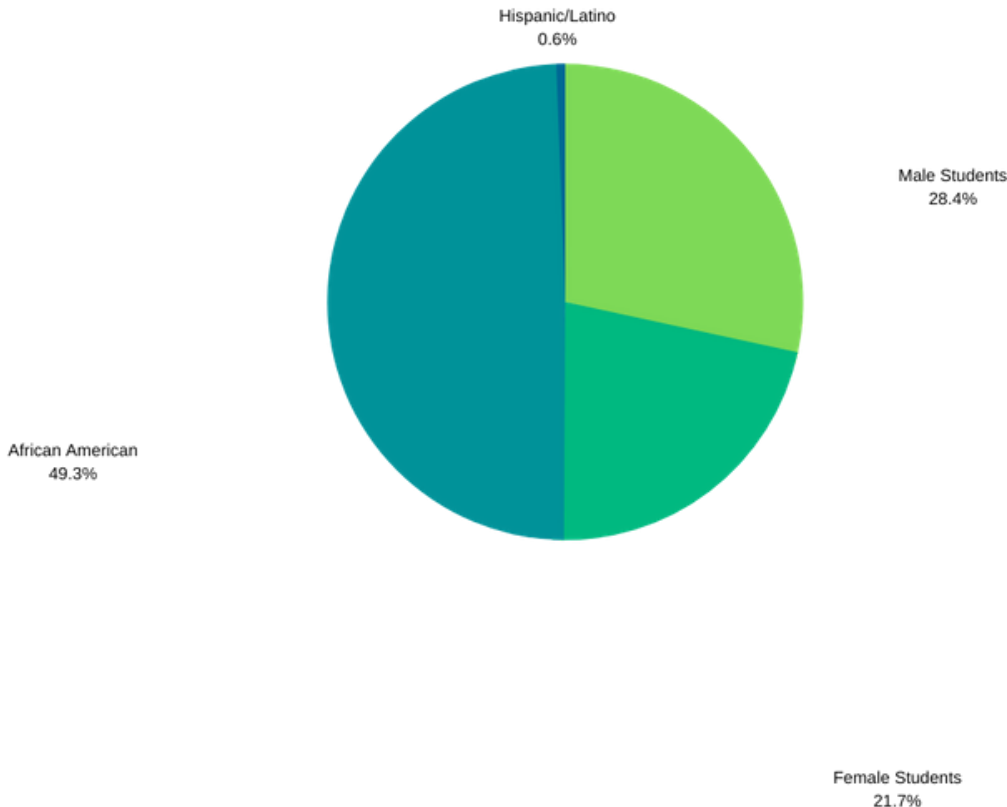


# MAYA ANGELOU SCHOOLS DEMOGRAPHICS

# SY 2018/2019

## TOTAL POPULATION SERVED

In SY 2018/2019, the Maya Angelou Schools network served 352 female scholars and 330 male scholars.



## SCHOLASTIC IMPACT

The Maya Angelou Schools believe in being data driven to inform our practice. Our data practices, like our schools, are designed to support the whole child. We collect academic and non-academic data to provide multi-faceted interventions to best serve our students.

Stay connected on student data at [www.see forever.org/impact](http://www.see forever.org/impact)

Below are findings from our data collected for SY 2018/2019:

- More than 80% of 2018-19 MAPCS students met their annual growth targets in Reading and Math
- 84% of 2018-19 MAPCS graduates enrolled in post-secondary institutions or gained employment within 1 year of graduation.
- 82% of 2018-19 YALC graduates enrolled in post-secondary institutions or gained employment within 1 year of graduation.
- Maya Angelou Academy scholars earn credits at a 79% rate, more than 2.5 times the rate pre-Academy
- 50% of Maya Angelou Academy scholars are positively engaged in education, employment, or a group home 120 days after returning to the community.



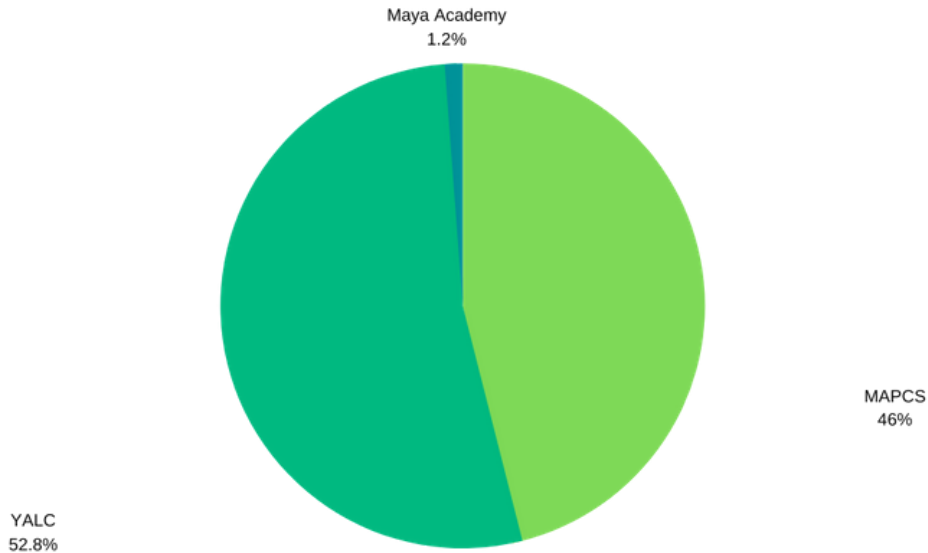


# MAYA ANGELOU SCHOOLS DEMOGRAPHICS

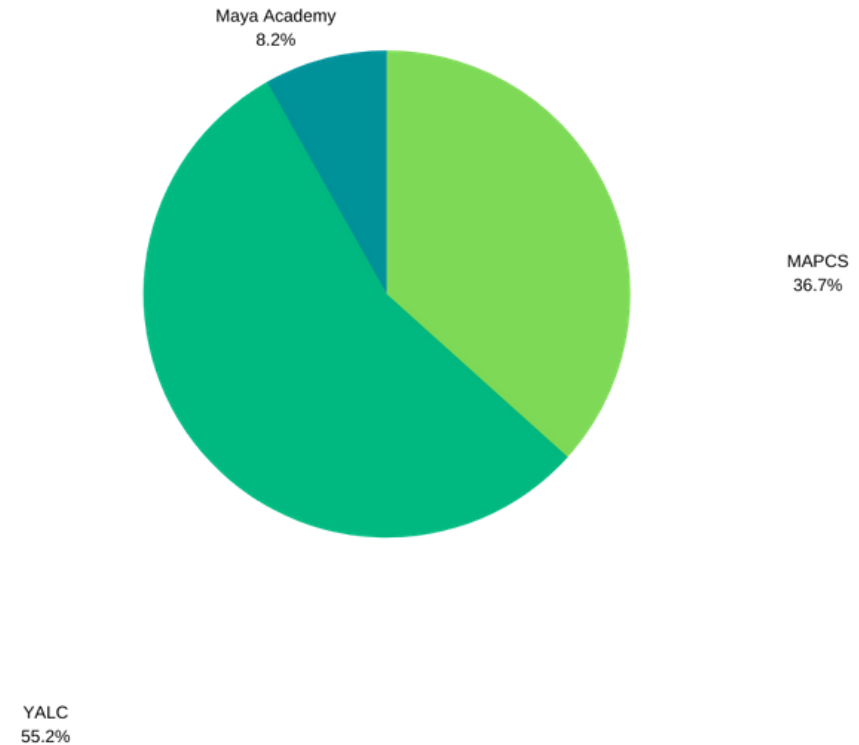
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### TOTAL FEMALE STUDENTS SERVED



### TOTAL MALE STUDENTS SERVED



# OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

## COMMUNITY EATS WEDNESDAY/FOOD PANTRY

Since March, our school leaders, teachers, and staff have been tested like never before to provide critical support to our students and families during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has left many of our families vulnerable, without income, and in crisis. However, as Dr. Maya Angelou continues to encourage us to rise in the face of adversity, we have risen to the challenge and are stronger than ever before.

In just a short period of time, we have distributed Chromebooks and hotspots to ensure that students have what they need to participate in distance learning, and launched a weekly “Community Eats” Program for our school and Ward 7 community, providing hot meals and groceries to families who have been hit the hardest from the effects of the pandemic. Through hundreds of community volunteer hours, donations, and inkind contributions from community partners including Seva Truck and Timber Pizza, we were able to serve hundreds of families in our surrounding community.

## DISTANCE LEARNING FOR SY19/20-20/21

The Maya Angelou Public Charter High School, MAPCS, and Young Adult Learning Center transitioned our academic program to distance learning in March of 2020 through June of 2020. Students were provided with Google Chrome books and work packets aligned to their respective class schedule.

Distance learning for the new school year, 2020/2021 will start on August 31, 2020 for our high school program and September 8, 2020 for the Young Adult Learning Center. More information regarding our response to COVID-19 can be found on [www.seeforever.org/covid19](http://www.seeforever.org/covid19).



Community Eats Wednesdays Food Giveaway



# ORGANIZATION **LEADERSHIP**

**Clarisse Mendoza Davis** currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the See Forever Foundation and Maya Angelou Public Charter Schools. In this role, Clarisse will lead the organization's network of schools with a primary focus on academic performance, long-term planning, and sustainability.

Dr. Mendoza Davis joined our team in 2016 as the Chief of Schools, with over ten years of experience serving students and families in urban schools in both traditional district and charter settings. After teaching high school English in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Clarisse served as Principal of Tindley Renaissance Academy in Indianapolis, Indiana, Chief Operating Officer of the Early Stages Division of DCPS, and Deputy Chief of Schools at the UNO Charter School Network (now the Acero Network of Schools) in Chicago, Illinois.



**DR. CLARISSA MENDOZA-DAVIS**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CEO**



**FOUNDERS**

**JAMES FORMAN JR. / DAVID DOMENICI**

**James Forman Jr.** is the J. Skelly Wright Professor of Law at Yale Law School. Forman is a graduate of Atlanta's Roosevelt High School, Brown University, and Yale Law School, and was a law clerk for Judge William Norris of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor of the United States Supreme Court.

In 1997, along with David Domenici, he started the Maya Angelou Public Charter School, an alternative school for school dropouts and youth who had previously been arrested. In 2017, he released his first book, *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*, that won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for General non-fiction. In 2019, James alongside David Domenici was inducted into the DC Charter School Hall of Fame.

**David Domenici**, is the Director of the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings and a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress. In 1997, he quit his job as a corporate lawyer, and along with James Forman Jr., started the See Forever Foundation and the Maya Angelou Public Charter School. Over the next 10 years, David served as the organization's Executive Director, as well as the Principal of its initial campus.

David left the Maya Angelou Academy in the fall of 2011 to start the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings. David left the Maya Angelou Academy in the fall of 2011 to start the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings. In 2019, David alongside James Forman Jr. was inducted into the DC Charter School Hall of Fame.

# KEY STAFF MEMBERS

## SEE FOREVER FOUNDATION BOARD

David Domenici, Chair

James Forman, Jr.

Cheryl Mills

Reid Weingarten, Emeritus

## MAYA ANGELOU SCHOOLS BOARD

Peter Leone, Chair

David Domenici

Darren Cambridge

Lewis Goss II

Alise Marshall

Tanji Reed Marshall

James Forman, Jr.

Julie Johnson

Benjamin Safran

Michael Vu

Ross Weingarten

Thomas White

Board meetings information can be found at  
[www.seeforever.org/public-information](http://www.seeforever.org/public-information).

Additional staff information can be found at  
[www.seeforever.org/staff](http://www.seeforever.org/staff)

## SEE FOREVER FOUNDATION AND NETWORK LEADERSHIP

### **Dr. Clarisse Mendoza**

Chief Executive Officer

### **Azalia Speight**

Chief of Schools

### **Leah Lamb**

Chief Officer of Institutional Advancement

### **Marvin Harden**

Deputy Chief of Operations

### **Dr. Kamal Wright-Cunningham**

Managing Director of Clinical Services and Research

### **Katia Jones**

Director of Post Secondary Transitions

### **Dean Weeks**

Principal, Maya Angelou Public Charter School

### **Dr. Sean Yisreal**

Director Young Adult Learning Center

### **Dr. Felecia Hayward-Lawson**

Principal Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings

# PRESS MENTIONS

*“What works is an intensive, holistic approach like the one used by the Maya Angelou Charter School in Washington.”*

**-NEW YORK TIMES**

*“In the District of Columbia, Maya Angelou Public Charter School reaches out to students who have experienced substantial trauma in their lives by maintaining contacts with probation officers, social workers, special education advocates, and community groups.”*

**-WASHINGTON POST**

*The passion, dedication, and expertise of the leadership at See Forever and the Maya Angelou Public Charter School takes student learning to the next level, and their whatever it takes support of their students means dreams come true no matter how many obstacles exist.”*

**-VENTURE PHILANTHROPY PARTNERS**





# KEY CONTACTS

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www.seeforever.org  
Facebook-- @SeeForeverFoundation  
Twitter/Instagram-- @MayaSchoools



MAYA ANGELOU  
SCHOOLS

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MAYA ANGELOU  
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SEE FOREVER FOUNDATION

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MAYA ANGELOU  
PUBLIC CHARTER  
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SEE FOREVER FOUNDATION

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MAYA ANGELOU  
ACADEMY

SEE FOREVER FOUNDATION

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**THANK** **YOU!**

*Mural pictured above is located on the high school entrance of the Maya Angelou Schools education campus. Mural was designed and painted by artist Eric B. Ricks and sponsored through Department of Public Works, DC Mural Project.*