



SEE FOREVER FOUNDATION  
MAYA ANGELOU  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

middle  
school

# PARENT & STUDENT handbook



## EVANS MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPUS

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*La'Mont Geddis, Principal*

HANDBOOK







## ***Greetings from the Executive Director***

We are so glad that you have chosen to become part of the Maya Angelou Public Charter School family! This handbook will provide critical information about the school and describe the roles and expectations of members of our community. At the end of this handbook, the scholar and parent will be asked to sign the handbook. This acknowledges that you have read the handbook, understand the policies, and agree to support those policies as a part of our school community. Please read through this handbook carefully and feel free to reach out to your principal or any staff member if you have any questions.

We are looking forward to a successful year!

Sincerely,

Lucretia Murphy J.D., Ph.D.

Executive Director

See Forever Foundation and Maya Angelou Schools

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## ***Greetings from the Principal***

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to what I know will be an exciting school year at the Maya Angelou Public Charter School, Evans Middle School Campus (MAPCS-Evans Middle School)! The staff and I look forward to a fulfilling year partnering with families and students in the MAPCS community.

This year, while working to diligently establish routines, our staff will focus on two school goals:

1.) increasing academic performance and 2.) creating a learning environment that is inclusive for all. At our middle school – and at all campuses of the Maya Angelou Schools – our approach to education is called the “Maya Way!” At Maya Angelou, we work to create a safe learning community that meets each student where they are, and provides them with a comprehensive, holistic, and engaging program that helps them to excel both academically and personally. Parents, please partner with me to help our school and our students reach our goals. Research has long proven that parental interest and involvement in a child’s education is the most significant factor in determining student success.

At the MAPCS-Evans Middle School Campus, we are also committed to ensuring that parents are fully connected to our learning community. In fact, I encourage all parents to sign-up for PowerSchool® – our electronic student information system – to have access to your child’s grades 24/7. To learn how you can access this important tool, please refer to page 14 of this handbook.

Through this tool, both you and your child will be able to visit classroom websites to get updates about homework, assignments, test dates, and required thematic projects.

Finally, so that you can support our school through regular visits to the campus, I am sharing here our school's hours of operation. To ensure the continuity of the school day, I ask that you schedule visits during office hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Students are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with the exception of Wednesday's when students are dismissed at 2:30 p.m.

I'm looking forward to a great year! Thank you for your continued investment in your child's education

Yours in Education,  
La'Mont Geddis  
Principal

## **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 reach their potential. At Maya Angelou, our students develop the academic, social and employment skills that they need to build rewarding lives and promote positive change in their communities.

## **HISTORY**

Founded in 1997 by David Domenici and James Forman, Jr., the See Forever Foundation was created to offer a holistic program to teens involved in the juvenile justice system. At that time, court-involved teens told our co-founders that they wanted to earn money, learn marketable skills, and gain responsibility. When they returned to school, they also wanted to attend small classes with teachers who cared about them, and they wanted help making hard decisions.

We opened our doors in 1997 as a comprehensive program for 20 teens, all of whom were committed to the D.C. Department of Youth and Rehabilitation Services or on probation. That year we sponsored a school naming contest. Sherti Hendrix, a member of our first graduating class (Class of 1999), wrote the winning essay, advocating for the school to be named after Dr. Maya Angelou. The Maya Angelou Public Charter School was incorporated in the spring of 1998 as separate nonprofit subsidiary. That same year we purchased the historic Odd Fellows Building at the corner of 9th and T Street, NW. We moved into the building in the fall of 2000, after completing a \$3 million renovation. We grew each year, as students from all over the city and from all sorts of academic backgrounds actively sought admission. Some of these young people were out-of-school, some were doing poorly in traditional school settings and heard about our program and the one-on-one support offered to

students, and others were referred to us by governmental agencies.

To meet the needs of our growing student population, particularly in the Ward 7 and Ward 8 areas of D.C., in September 2004 the See Forever Foundation opened a second campus of the Maya Angelou Public Charter School in partnership with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Our second campus, located in the former DCPS Evans Middle School is located in the 5600 block of East Capitol Street, NE.

We assumed operation of the Maya Angelou Academy (formerly the Oak Hill Academy) during the summer of 2007, and we also operate an affiliated Transition Center in Washington, D.C. Nearly all of the students are years behind grade level academically, many have special needs, and most have experienced significant trauma at some point in their lives. At the Maya Angelou Academy and the Transition Center, we aim to provide these students with the best education they have ever had.

### **DCPS/MAPCS PARTNERSHIP** **Evans Campus**

In 2004, the District of Columbia Board of Education approved the first partnership in Washington, D.C. between a public charter school and DCPS. This partnership enabled us to expand the Maya Angelou school model and serve an increased number of students. This partnership lays the foundation for future collaboration between public charters and the District.



## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

### **Scope and Sequence**

MAPCS-Evans Middle School offers all courses to all students, regardless of their ability or skill level. Each year students take English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies and two electives. All students must take physical education each school year. The courses chosen for the scope and sequence were selected to support and prepare students for the classes that they will take as high school students.

### **Reading/English Language Arts**

#### **Grade: 6**

Students apply the reading and language arts skills they learned in previous grades to make sense of longer, more challenging texts. They identify ways in which authors try to influence readers, and find facts in the text to support their ideas. Students learn more complex vocabulary words, which they use to write stories, reports, and essays, and make well-organized speeches. They know and use English language conventions, including more complex sentences. Students also apply their skills to research projects. They locate and evaluate information from a variety of sources, such as books and the Internet.

#### **Grade: 7**

Students gain advanced skills in reading and writing by focusing on various writing forms and techniques that author's use to communicate a point or argument,

including articles and essays. Additionally, students analyze works of fiction to see how events advance the plot and how an author reveals their characters' thoughts, words, and actions. Seventh grade students learn how to organize and focus their own writing. They will be able to find facts to support their statements and show that the facts are reliable.

**Grade: 8**

Students use thinking skills to analyze, define, explain, and critique. They continue to explore themes in fiction and non-fiction. In grade 8, students build their writing around strong central ideas or points of view and support their ideas with details and other evidence. Their writing is more polished, with careful word choices, smooth transitions, and include a variety of sentence structures. Eighth grade students plan and conduct research projects that include several steps, and they focus on documenting sources.

**Mathematics**

**Grade: 6**

Students compute with different types of numbers, including whole numbers, positive fractions, and positive decimals. They also work with negative whole numbers, such as -1 or -8. Grade 6 students apply their skills to solve abstract and practical problems. They analyze data and decide if something is likely to happen. They understand basic statistical concepts, such as mean, median, mode, and range. They compute percentages and calculate sales discounts, tips, and interest. Exploring algebra, students solve simple equations using models, graphs, and paper and pencil methods. In geometry, they learn about pi and formulas for finding the circumference and area of a circle.

**Grade: 7**

Students learn how to and use different forms of fractional numbers, such as fractions, decimals and percentages. They begin to understand relationships between two or more numbers as expressed by ratios and proportions. They also learn the properties of exponents. Seventh grade students will use the Pythagorean Theorem to find the length of a side of a triangle when they know the lengths of the other two sides. Students will be able to compute the surface area and volume of basic three-dimensional objects, such as spheres and cubes, and will learn how area and volume change when objects get bigger or smaller.

**Grade: 8**

Students become comfortable using numbers, and gain an understanding of the general principles behind their functions. They begin to recognize that mathematics is important to their everyday life – especially solving problems that involve discounts, profits, and interest, as well as other skills needed to manage their money well. They focus on advanced concepts such as ratio and proportion, linear functions, and the relationship between slope and ratio. Eighth grade students will use abstract thinking to solve algebraic expressions, including linear equations. They will learn how to use statistical operations to solve problems, such as analyzing data and sampling processes to identify possible bias and misleading conclusions.

**Science****Grade: 6**

Students will explore how the Earth was formed, how it has evolved throughout time, and how it continues to change today. They will identify and study the Earth's four major systems: geosphere (rocks, soil, and other parts of Earth's crust), hydrosphere (water systems, including oceans and rivers, glaciers, icecaps, clouds, and water

vapor), atmosphere (air surrounding the Earth), and biosphere (living things and their environments). They will learn how these systems work together and how living things support each other. Grade 6 students will also learn about new technologies that are allowing for new scientific discoveries that are helping to change our understanding of how things in the natural world behave.

**Grade: 7**

Students will learn to see living things as part of a system with many connections. They will learn that in human beings and other organisms with more than one cell, that cells work together but look different and have different jobs – for example, skin cells look and do different things than the cells of the eye. Students use their study of life science to make wise decisions about their own health and behavior. Students will learn that organs in their own bodies work together in systems. In the same way, they will see that plants and other living things form systems that draw on the sun for the energy they need to live.

**Grade: 8**

Students will explore how force and energy are related and how energy and matter are related (laws of conservation), how matter is made of atoms and molecules (atomic theory), and how gases are made of small particles that move in random motion (kinetic theory). Students will also learn the basics of chemistry, including the periodic table of elements, chemical reactions, and the chemistry that occurs in biological processes (such as converting food to energy). As they learn to use different tools to make accurate measurements, they will be able to use more data in their experiments resulting in more precise results.

## **Social Studies**

### **Grade: 6**

Students will use maps, globes, graphs, and information technologies, such as global positioning systems, to study geography and patterns of land use and culture around the world. They will learn to think geographically, and will become aware of the locations and special features of different places across the globe. Grade 6 students will learn how people and their activities affect the Earth's surface. They will identify how living in cities or rural areas affects the social relationships of people, and the types of jobs they have. They will study important physical relationships – for example Earth's relationship to the sun, and the relationship of the Earth's climate and ecosystems.

### **Grade: 7**

Students will explore the world outside the United States and North America. They will study the origins of human beings in Africa and will learn how early societies formed in the Middle East (Mesopotamia), India, and China. Grade 7 students will consider how geography affects the human story: how societies in different places developed in different ways. Students will gain a sense of how people lived long ago – their problems, accomplishments, tools, technology, work, and homes. Grade 7 students will also explore world religions, governments, trade, philosophies, and art of these first civilizations, as well as their ideas, which shaped the history of the world.

### **Grade: 8**

Students will learn about our country during the colonial period, and they will explore major events and ideas that led to the Revolutionary War. They will explore the effect that the war for independence had on other nations, and they will examine the basic concepts of American government, such as individual rights and the rule of law. Grade 8 students also will learn how America expanded

into the West, formed political parties, and experienced other economic and social changes. They will learn how conflict between the Northern and Southern states led to the Civil War and how the Civil War led to other changes, including the economic and political punishment of the South during the Reconstruction.

**Grading and Reporting**

All students will be assessed based on the following scale and grade composition:

- **40%**      **Tests/Quizzes/Projects**
- **50%**      **Classwork**
- **10%**      **Homework**

**Grade Scale**

<b>Number Grade</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 or lower	F

**Grading Procedures**

All students are consistently held to high expectations. Grades are based on multiple, varied tasks/assessments, given over time, that provide meaningful data and accurate assessments that reflect student learning. Grading procedures are clear and fair, and they are regularly communicated to both students and families. Grading practices are fair, manageable, and supportive of effective teaching and learning strategies.

### **Failing Policy**

To support student learning and achievement at MAPCS-Evans Middle School, students may not receive a failing quarter or final grade lower than 59 percent. This is designed to prevent grades from having a destructive effect on a students' ability to improve their performance and successfully complete a course.

### **Makeup Work Policy**

**Late work will be accepted from students who have missed school or failed to turn in an assignment on time.** Students have an amnesty period during which they can turn in missing assignments or complete a missed assessment. The assignments given during this amnesty period is at the teacher's discretion. Should the student fail to complete their assignment(s) during the amnesty period, the assignment will be given a zero.

- **Student Responsibility:** Students must schedule a time to meet with their teachers to collect and return their work after an absence. If the work is not turned in by the end of the amnesty period, the student may receive a zero for that assignment.
- **Missing School vs. Missing Class:** This policy only applies to students who are absent from school. This does not include students missing from class for the following reasons: nurse visits, office referrals, counselor meetings, roaming the hallways or being late to class. If students need to visit the nurse, their counselor, etc. – they must go to class first, and then they may receive a pass from their teacher and gather their work for the day.

- **Re-Submitting Work:** Students who wish to re-submit an assignment for a higher grade may do so prior to or during the amnesty period. Teachers will determine which assignments may be resubmitted.
- **Re-assessment/Re-teaching:** Re-teaching and reassessment are an integral part of a rigorous instructional cycle that promotes student learning. Teachers communicate achievement standards to students, plan instruction to meet learning goals, provide timely feedback to students on their performance, and offer additional opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate learning.
- **Student Progress Reporting:** Teachers provide students and parents with information about achievement throughout the marking period through several forms:

**Report Cards:** These quarterly assessments provide families with detailed feedback regarding student progress toward specific learning standards. Report cards allow families/students to clearly understand expectations of students and how to help them be successful in a rigorous academic program. Report cards must be picked up during student/family/teacher conferences each term, with the final report card mailed to families at the end of the school year.

**Progress Reports** will be sent home with students weekly.

**PowerSchool Access:** Parents and students are granted access to view their student's academic progress through the PowerSchool web portal. PowerSchool allows parents

and students access to the student's grades by teacher as well as a detailed view of assignments, absences and other vital information.

The web address is [www.mayaschools.org/public](http://www.mayaschools.org/public). Personal log-in information will be provided within the first week of school and also copied to student's progress and report cards.

*In addition to these formal reporting tools, teachers may also use a variety of informal methods to report achievement and learning to students and families, such as telephone calls, email, observation records, or feedback sheets.*

### **Promotion Requirements**

For promotion from middle school, students are expected to meet mastery in the District of Columbia Learning Standards in all subject areas. Each year we examine multiple measures of performance to determine students' eligibility for promotion to the next grade level. We evaluate student performance based on the following objectives:

- Achieving a passing grade of 60 percent or higher for each core course (English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies), plus one elective course to be promoted to the next grade.
- Attendance: Students must not miss more than 12 days of school.
- Students must achieve a passing grade of 60 percent or higher in their core courses to be promoted. If a student does not meet promotion standards, they will be required to participate in Summer School.

- Students will be promoted from Summer School if they successfully:
  - Meet attendance requirements for Summer School (95 percent attendance), and
  - Meet the academic requirements in the subject area(s) for which they were not promoted.

The principal will make the final decision of the students' promotion based on their summer school performance and recommendations from the summer school teachers. The appeal process on page 42 governs appeals of promotion decisions.

### **Transition to High School and College**

Our transition program reinforces a successful middle and high school experience, ultimately enabling students to succeed in college. The transitional process begins in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and takes place throughout our students' middle school careers. It involves families, teachers, administrators, counselors, advisors, and most importantly, students.

### **Mental Health Counselors**

The goal of the mental health program is to build resiliency in each of our students' social competencies. The mental health counselors reach this goal in a number of ways. For example, each of our students receives group and individual counseling. The focus of the group sessions is to teach social competencies to all students. There are also need-based groups and individual sessions for students as necessary.

### **Inclusive Learning Environment**

Inclusion considers that all students are full members of their school community and deserve the opportunities and responsibilities that are available to all students in the school. In an inclusive school setting, students with disabilities receive specially designed instruction in their least restrictive environment (LRE). LREs vary according to the individual needs and goals of each student as defined by a student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), which outlines how and where the student's goals can be met.

### **Collaborative, Co-Teaching Model**

At MAPCS, general and special education teachers work together to teach students with and without disabilities in a shared classroom. Both are responsible for instructional planning and delivery, student achievement, assessment, and discipline.

Students receive age-appropriate academics, support services, and possibly modified instruction to meet their needs.

### **Major Assessments**

There are several major assessments that students take throughout the course of the school year to measure their academic progress in their core subject areas.

**DC BAS:** Our school will be administering an assessment called the DC Benchmark Assessment System (DC BAS). The assessment is administered to students district-wide in grades 3-10. The assessment is an important component of our educational program. It will provide us with information on how our students are progressing in each of the categories in reading and math that are assessed on the end-of-year state exam, the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS).

**DC CAS:** District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) is created and managed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). DC CAS is taken each April by all D.C. students to measure their knowledge and skills in reading and math (Grades 3-8 and Grade 10). In addition to reading and math, students in grade 7 take a composition test, and students in grades 8 take a science test.

**NWEA:** Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are state-aligned computerized adaptive assessments that provide accurate, useful information about student achievement and growth in reading, math, and science. Students take this assessment four times during the school year.



## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

### **L.I.V.E. - Leaders Initiating Vivacious Energy**

Monday afternoons are set aside for L.I.V.E., where our MAPCS community comes together to celebrate student and staff accomplishments for the week. This meeting includes announcements and recognitions for students. At the beginning of the school year, these assemblies will be conducted by school staff. Students may audition to become L.I.V.E. facilitators and lead the L.I.V.E activities each week.

### **Retreats**

Each year, all students and staff are required to participate in an annual school retreat. The school retreat provides students and staff with a change of atmosphere for a day. It also allows staff and students to build community. Students learn a lot about themselves, their teachers, and their classmates as we all participate in exciting physical and team-building activities as a school community.

### **Electives**

Electives serve three primary purposes: (1) to improve student attendance by increasing student engagement in school; (2) to expose students to a variety of skills and experiences in order to help them discover and cultivate their interests; and (3) to provide time for extracurricular activities that help build school community.

### **After-School Programming**

As part of our after school program, students can participate in variety of optional teams and clubs. These teams/clubs are staffed by teachers, coaches, and volunteers from community-based organizations.

Examples of teams/ clubs that we hope to offer include:

- Arts & Crafts
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Cross Country Track
- Debate
- Drama
- Golf
- Indoor Track & Field
- Outdoor Track & Field
- Softball

### **Children's Defense Fund Freedom School**

The CDF Freedom Schools program provides summer and after-school enrichment that helps children fall in love with reading, increases their self-esteem, and generates more positive attitudes toward learning. Children are taught using a model curriculum that supports children and families around five essential components: high quality academic enrichment; parent and family involvement; civic engagement and social action; intergenerational leadership development; and nutrition, health, and mental health.

### **Family Night**

Family is crucial to student development and success at Maya Angelou Public Charter School. At the Evans Middle School Campus, we set aside four nights during the school year for our students, faculty, staff and parents to celebrate student achievements and encourage

continued success. Our first event, Back to School Night, is a time to welcome and celebrate the start of a new year and new experiences. Refer to your current academic calendar for specific dates and times.

**Family Involvement**  
**Communication with Families**

All staff members are proactive in communication with families about student progress. Families will also have current information on their children's academic progress, attendance and teacher comments from our web-based student information system. The administration sends home a weekly progress report to families. We will also send home family letters outlining important information about our school program, such as schedule changes and upcoming events.



## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Access and Disclosure of Student Records**

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents and legal guardians may review their children's cumulative education records at the school office upon request. If student education records are inaccurate or misleading, the student's parent or guardian may request an amendment by contacting the school principal. Cumulative records are treated as confidential material, and the privacy rights of parents and students are safeguarded. Except as provided by law, no external agencies or individuals may have access to a student's record without the written consent of the student's parent. Parents/guardians have the right to file a complaint with the Family Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education for failure to comply with FERPA. Whenever a student transfers from one school or school division to another, the scholastic and discipline record or a copy of the scholastic and discipline record will be transferred to the school or school division upon request from the school or school division.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend school daily, on time, and for the entire day. Coming to school every day is one of the ways that students demonstrate their commitment to achieving academic success. Poor attendance is a major reason for limited academic progress. It is for this reason that unexcused absences will not be accepted

and repeated unexcused absences are considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Parents/Guardians are expected to provide a written excuse when a student is absent from school. When possible, this note should be provided before the absence; if this is not possible, then the excuse should be brought to school when the student returns. **Any absence without a valid excuse will be considered an unexcused absence.**

Acceptable excused absences include:

- **Doctor's appointments**
- **Court appearances (not to support a family member or friend)**
- **Illness (if more than 3 consecutive days, must have a doctor's excuse)**
- **Death in the student's family**
- **Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by school authorities**
- **Temporary school closing due to severe weather or other emergency conditions as determined by the school**

When a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian is required to notify the Office Manager/Registrar of their student's absence as soon as possible. A message can be left directly with the Office Manager/Registrar during school hours, and/or on the voice mail after hours. When returning to school after an absence, the student must bring a note to the Office Manager/Registrar the day of their arrival. A doctor's note must be provided for medical appointments scheduled during the school day, or for absences longer than two consecutive days. Student attendance records will not be altered to change unexcused absences if the required documentation has not been received upon the student's

return to school. Students shall be referred by MAPCS to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) no later than two (2) school days after the accrual of ten (10) unexcused absences within one school year and completion of the intervention process or immediately at any time education neglect is suspected.

The school staff is committed to exhausting all possible opportunities to assist students and families in improving school attendance. The following chart outlines the interventions that the school staff will provide to address unexcused absences, and consequences for repeated unexcused absences. Students with 12 unexcused absences will be referred for withdrawal from the school's rolls. Students who are withdrawn from the roll for absences may appeal. Please see the appeals process within this handbook for further information.

**School Interventions for Unexcused Absences**

<b>Number of Absences</b>	<b>Intervention(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Person(s)</b>
1	Call home from school	Office Manager/Registrar
2	Call home; Counselor & Administrator informed	Office Manager/Registrar
3	Call home/ Letter home Mandatory parent conference; *SST Referral; Home Visit	Assistant Principal: Call, Conference and *SST Referral  Office Manager/Registrar: Letter for Assistant Principal's signature; Counselor conducts home visit based on SST referral
4	Call home; Home visit, if conference not held; Letter if conference held	Office Manager/Registrar: Call home Counselor: Home visit Office Manager/Registrar prepares letter for Assistant Principal's signature

## School Interventions for Unexcused Absences

Number of Absences	Intervention(s)	Responsible Person(s)
5	Call home; Student presented to *SST; Success Plan developed	Office Manager/Registrar: Call home Counselor: Success Plan
6	Call home; Letter sent; Home visit	Office Manager/Registrar: Call home; Letter home sent Counselor: Home visit
7	Call home; Counselor works with student to develop commitment letter	Office Manager/Registrar: Call home Counselor: Letter
8	Call home; Student presents commitment letter to Discipline Committee	Office Manager/Registrar: Call home Dean: Schedules Town Hall Presentation
9	Call home; Second mandatory parent conference; written agreement developed – If no conference, home visit	Office Manager/Registrar: Call home Assistant Principal: Conference and Agreement Counselor: Home visit
10	Call home – If middle school *CFSA report made; Counselor meets with student	Office Manager/Registrar: Call home Counselor: * CFSA report and meeting with student
11	Call home; Warning letter sent	Office Manager/Registrar
12	Call home; Letter removing student from roster	Office Manager/Registrar prepares letter for Assistant Principal's signature Assistant Principal: Call home

\*SST: Student Support Team

\*\*CFSA: Child and Family Services Agency

When students reach 7 or more unexcused absences, students will be assigned detention to be served during lunch and/or Saturdays depending on the individual situation. A student who accumulates 12 unexcused absences is subject to removal from the rolls for unacceptable absences.

Identified Special Education students require a variation on the chart. These students will have emergency multidisciplinary team meetings instead of parent conferences. Also, exclusion from school will be absolutely the last option. The school recognizes and accepts its responsibility to provide a free and appropriate education with as few interruptions as possible.

Each campus will have a designated attendance subcommittee as a part of its school improvement team. This team will have the responsibility for regularly monitoring and reporting attendance. This team should meet weekly and closely manage attendance issues.

### **Backpacks**

Backpacks, book bags, and oversized purses are to be stored in the students' lockers at the beginning of the school day and retrieved at the end of the school day. Students are not permitted to carry bookbags, backpacks or oversized purses. Students who attempt to enter class with these items will be sent to their lockers to store these items for the day.

### **Building Hours**

MAPCS wants to be open and available to students as often as possible. During the school year, the building will open at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast. **Students may not enter the building before 7:30 a.m. each morning.** Students who arrive before 8:00 a.m. must report to the cafeteria. Students are not allowed anywhere else in the building before 8:00 a.m. unless they are under the direct

supervision of an adult. **All students must be out of the building by 3:00 p.m. unless they are under the direct supervision of an adult.**

### **Cell Phone/Electronic Devices**

At MAPCS, we work to protect our learning environment from interruptions *and* ensure the safety of our students. We understand that these devices provide access to safety for many students. However, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Cell phones/electronic devices must NOT be visible or audible at any time during the school day. They are to be stored out of sight in backpacks or purses.
- Cell phones/electronic devices must be turned off (not on vibrate) in the building during the school day.
- Cell phones/electronic devices may not be used in any manner that will disrupt the educational environment.
- Cell phones/electronic devices cannot be used as calculators. Calculators are available.
- Families should not call students on their cell phones during class time. Parents who need to reach their student can call the main office and a message will be delivered. Students will be held accountable and receive consequences if they are talking with anyone, including their parent/guardian, on their cell phone during/in between classes. Parents should only call the main office in cases of **true** emergency.

**Consequences for cell phone use are as follows:**

If a cell phone is visible or audible, it will be confiscated and a parent conference will be scheduled. The parent can pick up the cell phone after the conference.

*NOTE: The school and school personnel are not responsible for the loss or damage of any electronic device brought onto school property. In addition, the school will not be responsible for the condition of any confiscated device upon its return to the owner.*

**Code of Conduct**

To promote the achievement of all MAPCS students, the school seeks to maintain an orderly environment that minimizes distractions and is highly conducive to learning. The school has a three-fold Code of Conduct to maintain this environment.

The first component of this program is a **Character Development Program** that reinforces positive character traits and encourages students to become responsible citizens of their community, while having respect for others. The character development program is aligned with the school's mission. We believe that character development is an integral part of the academic program at MAPCS, and believe that it empowers our students to fully participate in society and become leaders of tomorrow.

The Character Education Program focuses on monthly character traits, which are incorporated into daily instructional activities. Many aspects of character education are discussed in classes and counseling sessions.

The second component of the Code of Conduct program is the **Maya Mula** system. The purpose of this system is to engage students in our program and reward them for displaying positive behaviors.

This system is a way to reward students, awarding points as they exhibit our target behavioral norms, while instilling self-discipline, confidence, and encouraging good money-management.

Students receive tickets for their success in each of the following categories:

- Attendance
- Uniform
- Homework/classwork completion
- Participation
- Behavior

Based on teachers' observations, students receive one (1) ticket for each area that is successfully completed. Students will redeem their tickets for a Maya Mula Card, which provides students with various incentives based on the level of cards received. Mulu Cards can be redeemed at the school store account, where students will have the opportunity to purchase additional school uniforms, as well as fun clothing items, school paraphernalia, and various other treats.

The third component of the Code of Conduct is **behavior modification**. This aspect of the program is based on clear and high expectations for what students can achieve. As part of maintaining an orderly environment, students' behavior is monitored on a regular basis. Behavior infractions have been developed to identify various types of inappropriate behavior and the consequences that are associated with the infractions.

A system has been developed to identify various types of inappropriate behavior and the consequences that are associated with the infractions. Infractions are accumulated over the duration of the current school year.

## **Behavior Modification Infraction System**

### **10 Infractions**

- Student/Dean of Student Affairs Conference
- Counselor Visit

### **25 Infractions**

- Student/Dean of Student Affairs Conference
- Counselor Visit
- Phone Call/Letter Home

### **50 Infractions**

- Counselor Visit
- Parent Conference

### **75 Infractions**

- Parent Conference
- Weekly Counseling Sessions

### **100 Infractions**

- In School Suspension (1 day)
- Weekly Counseling Sessions
- Parent Conference

### **125 Infractions**

- Weekly Counseling Sessions
- Parent Conference
- Out of School Suspension (2 days)

### **150+ Infractions**

- Student/Dean of Student Affairs Conference
- Weekly Counseling Sessions
- Parent Conference
- Half-day schedule (TBD)

### **School Wide Discipline Policy**

Our mission, as it relates to behavior and conduct at MAPCS, is to strive to assist in creating well rounded, highly accountable, highly respectful and respected individuals to go into the world and continue to flourish as adults who can manage themselves and all situations in which they find themselves. The way we achieve this goal is:

- To have students grow in their level of accountability as it relates to their behavior and socio-emotional evolution.
- To consider the impact of their behaviors on themselves and others.
- To increase his/her commitment to the MAPCS community.
- To grow in self-awareness and use pro-social techniques when managing emotions, reactions to different people, situations, climates and how to apply this knowledge in circumstances inside and outside of MAPCS.
- To help students build confidence in expressing themselves through constructive conversation and making appropriate decisions.

At MAPCS, we work to keep all our students actively and constantly engaged in the learning process, so that we can accomplish all of our academic and socio-emotional goals. We expect students to monitor their behavior closely and hold themselves accountable to each other, and to the adults in the building. Our discipline system works to create a safe learning environment for everyone, **and every adult in the building consistently enforces all school rules, and addresses student misbehavior.**

**At the same time, every adult in the building consistently recognizes and celebrates positive student behaviors that improve the quality of our learning environment.**

We use principles of judicious discipline. Judicious discipline creates a school community that practices democracy, where educators deliberately teach and model principles of civility as the foundation for personal growth and interactions among its members. It is a school in which individual differences are respected and all feel they have permanent value as citizens and students. We use disciplinary strategies as learning tools. Students reflect on their actions, and strive not to repeat the offenses. At MAPCS, we match disciplinary consequences to their infractions. For example, a student who writes on school walls may be required to wash and/or repaint the walls affected. In addition, problem behaviors distract us from our goals of constant improvement and achievement, so students may be required to address a committee of their peers or the entire school community after their infraction.

We will strive to ensure that our disciplinary procedures, norms and guidelines:

- Recognize and respect the individual's human dignity and worth
- Are instructive in application rather than punitive
- Are preventative, eliminating or treating causes, rather than treating results
- Are fair in nature, and are firm and consistent in application
- Afford due process for students
- Are developed cooperatively by the faculty and students

### **Computer Use**

SFF/MAPCS provides computer accounts and e-mail account for middle school and high school students. These accounts are for academic purposes. Access to technology resources is a privilege. All use should be in accordance with the Network Acceptable Use Policy. Any student who chooses to misuse technology and violate the terms of the Network Acceptable Use Policy is in jeopardy of losing their right to use school technology.

SFF/MAPCS strives to protect students from exposure to information that may be considered offensive or inappropriate by school, staff, or parents and guardians by use of content filters and internet restrictions. If such an event occurs, the student should terminate the exposure and report the incident to the teacher in charge. SFF/MAPCS also blocks selected sites which are deemed as distractions to the academic goals at its discretion.

Personal websites, such as MySpace, Facebook, and blogs, are obviously very popular with our students. These websites can be used as excellent means by which to stay in touch with friends or to serve as an evangelical tool for sharing one's faith. However, these sites can also be used to express material that would be inconsistent with the school's guidelines for acceptable student behavior. While the school does not actively monitor student websites, if the content on a student website is brought to the school's attention and deemed inappropriate, the student will be asked to change the content.

### **Early Dismissals**

If students need to leave school early, they must have a written request from a parent or guardian, and it must be brought to the office before school on the day of dismissal.

Early dismissals are permitted for the following reasons:

- Medical Appointments
- Family Emergencies
- Legal Matters

All other matters must be approved by an Administrator. The written request should include the student's name, time of dismissal, and the nature of the dismissal.

Students must stop by the office and check out on their way out of school. Parents/guardians or an approved person recommended and verified by the parent must sign all students out before they are permitted to leave the building. No student is permitted to leave the building without a parent/guardian unless an Administrator speaks to the parent/guardian first.

### **Family Notification**

Families should be notified of their child's whereabouts in all instances when the child is not at school during the school day. The following list of events could warrant notification:

- **Sending a child home unexpectedly during the school day due to illness, an accident or other reasons** - If a student needs to go home unexpectedly due to an illness, accident or other reason, the school will attempt to reach families by phone in order to release students. Please keep us up-to-date with contact numbers.
- **Field trips** - All field trips require teachers to send home a permission slip which must be signed by families in order for students to attend the trip.
- **Unexpected school closures, i.e. snow storms, power failure etc.** If a school closure is unexpected, we will attempt to reach families by phone in order to release students.

- **Planned school closures i.e. administration day, etc.** Planned school closures or early dismissals are indicated on our school calendar. Reminders will be sent home with students.
- **Student suspended/expelled from school:** If a student is suspended or expelled from school, the school will attempt to reach families by phone in order to release students. When one of the principals is dealing with an individual student, the notification can either be face-to-face or by phone to the parent. If notification is not in writing, a note will be placed in the student's file documenting the notice given. Any student suspended or expelled must not return to school without prior approval.

### **Field Trips**

All field trips require a parent signature giving the student permission to attend the trip. If the field trip includes a sports activity, an activity requiring extensive travel or taking place outside of D.C., then the family will need to sign a form which will indicate that they understand and approve of their child's participation in the activity and will not hold the school liable for any accidents, etc. Families will be notified when trips extend beyond regular school hours. When lengthy trips are involved, detailed outlines of plans and activities will be communicated to families. Families should indicate, in writing, any health problems, allergies, recent illnesses, or other special circumstances concerning their child. In case of an emergency, this information, along with telephone numbers of parent and/or relatives (at home, cell, and/or at work), should be in the possession of the supervisors on the trip. Conversely, families will know how they can reach their child in case of an emergency.

## **Health**

### **Medications**

All medications taken during school hours require proper authority and parent/guardian signed permission. This is required for both over-the-counter (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, cough medicine, etc.) and prescription drugs. Any medication taken at school must be kept and dispensed through the nurse's office.

Medication that is supplied by the parent will be administered only with the completion of the required paperwork.

- Medication must be in the original, unopened container with child's name.
- Any change to the medication will require new orders.
- Parent/guardian is responsible to check medicine in and out of school.
- Only medication prescribed to be given during specific school hours will be administered. (Medications ordered three times daily or less will not be given at school.)
- Medication administration forms will be updated at the beginning of each school year and as needed.

### **Communicable Diseases and General Responsibilities**

A student who has been exposed to or is suffering from any communicable disease may be excluded from school until the student presents to the principal (or his/her designee) a certificate stating that he/she is immune to the disease, has had the disease, has been immunized against that disease, or has passed the incubation period specified for that disease.

If a teacher believes that a student has been exposed to, or is suffering from, a communicable disease spread by sneezing, coughing, or other easy means, he/she should

notify the principal. The principal, in turn, must notify local health authorities or the school board if he/she has reason to believe that a student attending the school has been exposed to or is suffering from a serious communicable disease. A “communicable disease, contagious disease” or “infectious disease” as defined by The Public Health Act, means illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products which arises through transmission either directly or indirectly from an infected person or animal. Communicable diseases include such diseases as tuberculosis, hepatitis B, measles, mumps, meningitis, typhus, typhoid fever, malaria, scarlet fever, etc. Schools are asked to remind students to wash their hands after the use of washroom facilities and to ensure that soap and a clean method of hand-drying are available for student use.

The refusal or neglect of parents or guardians to obtain proper treatment (medical or otherwise) for a child who has or is suspected to have a communicable disease is deemed to be a violation to *The Public Schools Act*. This violation is a summary conviction offense and parents/guardians could be fined.

### **Homework and Planner Policy**

We expect all of our students to be prepared to achieve at high-achieving high schools - homework completion is essential to their success. Each teacher will assign approximately 20 minutes of homework per night, even on Fridays. It is important that your child complete homework every night because research shows that students who complete homework regularly attain higher levels of student achievement than those who do not. If your child is absent, please contact your child's teacher(s) or classmate to find out about missing assignments in each class.

## **Steps for Completing Homework:**

**Step 1:** Students must write their homework, projects and other assignments in their **Planner** for every class daily.

**Step 2:** Students must complete their homework daily. Once your child has completed his/her homework, **please check their work, sign and date it.**

## **Lockers**

Each student will be issued a MAPCS locker and lock. Students are not allowed to use their own locks on these lockers. **Each student's locker is school property and may be searched by school officials.** Each student is responsible for any item found within his or her locker. **Students are not permitted to share lockers or give their combination to other students.** Each student is responsible for any items found within his or her locker, as well as any items missing. MAPCS is not responsible for any items lost from lockers. Lockers will be cleaned out on the last day of school each year and any remaining contents will be disposed of. Students are responsible for returning their assigned locks at the end of the school year. **Lost or missing locks will be charged to the student's account.**

## **Public Transportation**

We sell Metro fare cards to our students at the cost as determined by Metro. Students enjoy unlimited usage (in the District only) for the entire month, and purchase new cards at the beginning of each month. Lost or stolen fare cards cannot be replaced and must be purchased again through the school. Our fare cards are for student use only. The Maya Angelou School-wide Disciplinary Code is to be practiced by all students when in transit to and from

school. Eating and drinking is prohibited. Seats designated for the handicapped, senior citizens, and mothers-to-be are not to be occupied by students.

### **Re-Enrollment**

To continue your student's enrollment in the Maya Angelou Public Charter School – Evans Middle School Campus, parents are required to complete and return the following forms each year:

- Documentation verifying the parents/student's D.C. Residency
- Free and Reduced Price Lunch Meals Family Application
- D.C. Child Health & Dental Certificates
- Updated Contact Information Form
- Home Language Survey Form
- Attendance Contract Agreement Form

*NOTE: Parents/Guardians should notify the school of the following: change of home, work or cell numbers, change of residence, change of persons authorized to pick-up their student, and when normal routine known to school is temporarily changed, etc. Please refer to your academic calendar for specific due dates.*

### **Textbooks**

Students will be issued appropriate textbooks for their courses at no charge. Any student who does not return textbooks in good condition before leaving MAPCS will have to pay for the cost of replacing the textbook. Students and parents/guardians will not be able to receive final report cards or transcripts until the final balance is paid.

### **Uniforms**

MAPCS-Evans Middle School Campus has a uniform policy and dress code for all students. Students are expected to wear student uniforms beginning the very first

day of the school year. The uniform must be worn upon entering the campus until leaving school every day. Parents are responsible for making sure their child does not leave home without being in full uniforms. If a student reports to school without his/her uniform, the parent/guardian will be contacted and expected to bring the uniform to school.

**The Uniform Policy and Dress Code follows:**

- **Tops:** The student uniform includes a polo shirt or long sleeved sweatshirt that can be purchased from school. All families will receive one short-sleeved shirt during family night
- **Bottoms:** Khaki-color bottoms (skirts, pants, shorts, capris, etc.) must be purchased by families. The bottoms must be hemmed and worn at the waist with a belt. Shorts and skirts must be at least 2 inches below fingertips to knee, with arms down.
- **Footwear:** Students should wear black colored sneakers, shoes and boots. No open toed shoes are permitted. Open toe shoes make students vulnerable to hazardous incidents.
- **Headwear:** Students may wear hats, caps, beanies, headbands, bandanas or sweatbands **outdoors** only (except for religious/medical reasons).
- **Jackets/Sweaters:** No jackets and sweaters are allowed over the school uniform polo. Students may wear long sleeved shirts under short sleeved polo shirts or wear their school sweatshirt. Only the school sweatshirt is acceptable.
- **Accessories:** Students may not wear oversized belts, belt buckles or jewelry. Single piercings may be worn in the ears only by female students. Tattoos should not be visible at any time.

Uniforms may not be altered or changed from the original appearance unless the child has special needs that have been approved by an administrator prior to alterations.



## **APPEALS PROCESS**

The Division of Academics exists to support the priority goals of Maya Angelou Public Charter School. We believe that all students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning. The Director of Academics seeks to provide the leadership and decision-making necessary to implement policies and school administrative procedures related to its functions.

### **I. The Director of Academics has responsibility for appeals:**

- Schedules, hears, and renders decisions on many types of appeals, including expulsion requests, transfers, tuition waivers, and certain personnel issues;
- Processes requests for rescissions of expulsions;
- Reviews and decides miscellaneous appeals;
- Maintains correspondence, files, and statistics on all cases; and
- Reports resolution of appeals to the Executive Director

### **II. Student Appeals of Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions**

The purpose is to provide procedures for use in student appeals of long-term suspensions and expulsions.

The Director of Academics will hear the presentations from the parties and make decisions on behalf of the

Executive Director and the Board based on the record and findings of fact, conclusions of law and recommendations. The intent is to ensure objectivity and fairness.

*A. Definitions: Filed or filing means received by the Division of Academics/MAPCS*

- Written notice shall be completed upon actual delivery or upon deposit of said notice in the United States mail, stamped and addressed to the addressee at the mailing address provided or appearing on the records of the Maya Angelou Public Charter School.
- Party or parties include each person, group, or entity named or admitted as a party, including a student, a parent, parent surrogate, or guardian of a student, and shall include school officials.

*B. Procedures: Applicability*

- These rules govern appeals of student long-term suspension and expulsion proceedings. Appeal hearings are from a decision of the Principal or Designee who suspends a student for more than 10 days or expulsion of a student is warranted.

*C. Initiation of Appeals or Requests of Hearings*

- All appeals to the Director of Academics shall be from a final action or decision of the Principal or designated representative, which adversely affects the person or persons who are appealing.
- An appeal of a long-term student suspension or expulsion shall be made by filing a notice of appeal with the Division of Academics within ten (10) days after written notice of the determination by the Principal or the designated representative to the student or the parent or guardian. Such notice shall

advise the student or the parent or guardian of the right to appeal to the Director of Academics.

- With the notice of appeal or request for hearing, or in any event, within 10 days after the notice of appeal or request for hearing has been filed, the person or persons filing the appeal or request for hearing must file with the Director of Academics, with a copy to the Principal, the following:
  1. A concise statement of the issues presented by the appeal or the request for hearing for decision by the Director.
  2. A concise statement of the facts on which the person or person taking the appeal or requesting the hearing relies to support their position.
  3. A statement by the person or persons taking the appeal or requesting the hearing that they agree or disagree with the findings of fact set forth by the Principal, or Designee; and, if the person or persons taking the appeal or requesting the hearing disagree only in part with the findings of fact set forth by the Principal, Designee, a statement of the facts with which such person or persons disagree(s).
  4. A copy of all documents upon which the person or persons appealing or requesting a hearing relies or believes is relevant.

*D. Referral to Hearing Examiner*

- Each appeal and request for hearing involving the long-term suspension of a student or an expulsion shall be referred to a hearing examiner for hearing.

### **III. Hearings**

#### **A. Notice**

- The Director shall give notice of hearings to all interested parties not less than five days prior to the hearing.
- Such notice shall state the date, time, and place of the hearing. Any disagreement concerning the charges, issues, or acts shall be resolved as part of the disposition of the appeal.
- All parties appearing at a hearing under these procedures shall have the right to appear in person or with a representative of their choice. All parties shall have the right to be accompanied, represented, and advised by counsel. If counsel is in attendance, the MAPCS representatives must have equal counsel for the meeting to proceed.

#### **B. Records – Transcript**

- The Director shall prepare or cause to be prepared for official records, which shall include all pleadings, exhibits, tape recording and other memoranda or material filed in the proceedings. The Director shall provide the entire record of appeal to the Executive Director. The meeting/hearing may not be taped without the written consent of all parties including the Director and Executive Director.
- The Director shall provide an accurate record of all hearings, disputes, or controversies in order that, if an appeal is taken, the record shall be submitted. The records shall be maintained by SFF/MAPCS central office.

#### **C. Order of Procedure**

- Appellants shall present their case first and carry the burden of persuasion.

*D. Examination of Witnesses and Introduction of Evidence*

The strict judicial rules of evidence shall not be applicable to evidentiary hearings and the test of admissibility shall be whether the evidence is reasonably relevant to a material issue and whether it has substantial probative value with respect to such a material issue. The Director may limit or refuse to admit cumulative or repetitive evidence and may curtail redundant questioning. The hearing examiner shall encourage the parties, where possible, to make stipulations as to matters not reasonably in dispute and to make proffers and stipulations in place of cumulative evidence

- A party, or where a party is represented by counsel or other representative, such counsel or representative may submit evidence that is new and/or different.
- The Principal or Designee shall be accorded the same rights as a party to submit evidence.
- The Director may examine all witnesses. The Director may call as a witness any person whose testimony may be relevant and material

*E. Written Memoranda*

- Each party and the Principal or Designee may submit written memoranda on the issues of fact and law involved in the hearing in such form as the Director may designate. Such memoranda may be submitted at any time prior to the hearing of a matter. With the approval of the Director, and on such schedule as the Director may designate, written memoranda may be submitted after a hearing.

*F. Findings of the Director of Academics*

- In all matters heard by the Director, the Director shall make findings of fact, conclusions of school law, and recommendations. Upon request, the Director shall submit a record to the Board of Directors. The Director shall distribute or mail to all parties and the Board the findings of facts, conclusions of school law, and recommendation of the Director. Such written exceptions must be filed within five (5) business days following the issuance of the recommendation to the Board.

*G. Decision of the Board and Order*

- The Executive Director and/or Board shall render a decision based on the records and the findings and recommendations of the Director. Each decision and order of the Board shall be delivered in writing, with copies to all parties. Each written decision and order shall be accompanied by written findings of fact, conclusions of the Director, and a specific description of the disposition of the case.

*H. Ex Parte Communications*

- While a matter is under consideration by the Director, Executive Director, or by the Board, neither the Director, Executive Director, or the Board shall receive communications from or communicate orally with any party outside the presence of all other parties, or in writing, without supplying copies to all other parties and providing an opportunity for response, as to any matter pending before the Board, a Board member, Director, or a member of the schools' administration unless it is a matter of public record, or unless it is released to a party and copies supplied simultaneously to all other parties.

*I. Time and Notice Requirements: Computation of Time*

- In computing and period of time prescribed by these rules or by any applicable statute, the day of the act or event after which the designated period of time begins to run is not to be included. When the last day so computed would fall on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period shall extend to the first day thereafter one of these days. For filing of documents with the Board of Directors, if the SFF/MAPCS is not open during its regular hours on the last day of the period, the documents shall be filed on the next day thereafter when the office of the Board is so open. For good cause, the Board of Directors, upon its own motion or at the request of either party, may at any time shorten or extend the time provided under these procedures for filing any document or providing any notice.

*J. Filed or filing means received by the Board of Directors*

- Written Notice shall be complete upon actual delivery or upon deposit of said notice in the United States mail, stamped, and addressed to the addressee at the mailing address provided or appearing on the records of the Maya Angelou Public Charter School.



## **Maya Angelou Public Charter School Board of Directors**

### **Geral Bittle**

MAPCS-Evans Middle School Parent

### **Yvonne Brockenberry**

MAPCS-Shaw High School Parent

### **Jane Dimyan-Ehrenfeld**

Deputy Director, Georgetown Center on Poverty,  
Inequality and Public Policy

### **David Domenici**

Founding Principal, Maya Angelou Academy  
Co-Founder, See Forever Foundation/Maya Angelou  
Public Charter School

### **James Forman, Jr., Board Chair**

Georgetown Law Center, Associate Professor  
Co-Founder, See Forever Foundation/Maya Angelou  
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MAPCS-Evans High School Parent

**Dr. Lucretia Murphy**

Executive Director

See Forever Foundation and Maya Angelou Schools

**Jim Ryan**

Professor of Law University of Virginia

**Dr. Edith S. Tatel**

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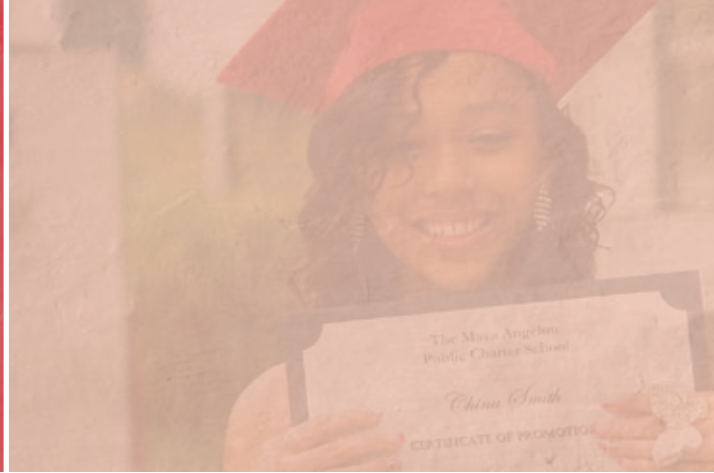
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