March 12, 2013

Dr. Heather Wathington, Board Chair
Maya Angelou Public Charter School
5600 East Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20019

Dear Dr. Wathington:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document authentic evidence to support the oversight of all PCSB schools. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting student academic achievement expectations specified in the charter granted to such school. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2012-13 school year for the following reason(s):

- o School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal
- o School designated as Focus/Priority by Office of the State Superintendent

Qualitative Site Review Report
On October 4 and October 10, 2012, a Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of the Maya Angelou Public Charter School – Evans High Campus. The purpose of the site review is for PCSB to gauge the extent to which the school's goals and student academic achievement expectations were evident in the everyday operations of the public charter school. To ascertain this, PCSB staff and consultants evaluated your classroom teaching by using an abridged version of the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching observation rubric. We also visited a board meeting, a parent event, and conducted focus groups with a random selection of students, a group of teachers, and your administrators.

Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report is focused primarily on the following areas: mission/goals of the school's charter, classroom environments, instructional delivery, meeting the needs of all learners, professional development, and school climate.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at the Maya Angelou PCS – Evans High Campus. Thank you for your continued cooperation as the PCSB makes every effort to ensure that the Maya Angelou PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Scott Pearson
Executive Director
Enclosures

cc: School Leaders

CHARTER GOALS

This table summarizes the goals that Maya Angelou PCS contracted to in its charter and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review ("QSR") team observed of the school meeting the goal during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Goal	Evidence
Students will demonstrate an improved level of academic achievement in reading, writing, and math.	Intensive classes, such as Achieve 3000 and Read 180, are available to students with chronic reading and math problems. Tutoring is available through a partnership with a local law firm and the school's after school and enrichment programs. For the students on grade level, classes showed a varying degree of rigor, with just over half scoring proficient or exemplary on instructional delivery. The team observed few examples of higher-order questioning and discussion about the learning. Most lessons followed a whole-class format with one-way questioning from teacher to students with sparse participation from the students.
Students will master workplace competencies.	According to the administrator focus group, 11th and 12th grade students are required to complete a paid internship or weekly career preparation course. The QSR did not observe these courses or internships.
Students improve their behavior.	Maya Angelou PCS – Evans HS puts a lot of resources into improving student behavior. All students participate in individual and group counseling through the school's mental health department. The curriculum involves students in problem-solving activities designed to encourage critical thinking and effective decision-making. During the student focus group, several students expressed how the school's residential program has taught them how to maintain a household and be better students. Additionally, the school's mediation program trains students to accept responsibility for their behavior and to anticipate the consequences of their actions.
Graduate to college or full-time skilled positions.	The QSR team did not review data on students' college matriculation or postgraduate employment. However, according to the focus groups, the school has many systems in place to ease the transition to college or career, including "Future Focus" classes, which address college prep and career readiness; internships during 11th and 12th grades; and college and career counselors. The school partners with College Success Foundation, BUILD, DC College Access, and College Summit.
Students will attend school regularly.	The QSR team neither observed nor looked for any evidence related to this goal.

SCHOOL MISSION
This rubric summarizes the school's performance on aligning its operations with the mission and goals of its charter.

School Mission	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
The school's mission and educational goals as articulated in the charter application and subsequent amendments are implemented in the day to day operations of the school.	Limited observations of day to day observations as aligned with mission and educational goals by any school stakeholders.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with mission and educational goals are demonstrated by some staff members.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with mission and educational goals are demonstrated by nearly all staff members.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with the mission and educational goals are demonstrated by students throughout the school building.
The Board and school administrators govern and manage in a manner consistent with the school's design and mission.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate a limited understanding of the school's design. Evidence of its use in the management and governance of the school is substantially lacking.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate an adequate understanding of the school's design. There is evidence that understanding of the design is sometimes used to effectively manage and govern the school.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate a good understanding of the school's design. There is evidence that understanding of the design is used to effectively manage and govern the school.	All key administrators and Board members demonstrate an excellent understanding of the school's design. There is significant evidence that understanding of the design is used to effectively manage and govern the school.
The school's curriculum and instruction are aligned with the school's mission and educational goals.	School curriculum and instruction are not aligned with the mission and educational goals and/or are utilized in limited/no classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in some classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in most classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in all classrooms.
The school has met or is making progress toward meeting the educational goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates limited evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards few of the goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates adequate evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards some of the goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates proficient evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards most of the goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates exemplary evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards all of the goals of its charter.

School Mission Summary

According to the charter application, the mission of Maya Angelou Public Charter School 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 PCS, students develop the academic, social and employment skills that they need to build rewarding lives and promote positive change in the community.

Maya Angelou PCS will achieve its mission through a demanding academic program, socio-emotional learning support, and tiered interventions that focus on the whole child. Maya Angelou PCS expects that their students will leave the school with a foundation to be successful in their pursuit of education and careers. This is what the QSR team looked for when visiting the classrooms, attending a parent meeting and board meeting, and when conducting the focus groups.

The faculty and staff spoke consistently about the school's commitment to seeing each student as an individual and to provide differentiated instruction and services to help the student achieve their potential. Many students were observed as functioning significantly below grade level, requiring the school to provide intensive academic support while concurrently providing grade-level materials, such as Algebra. There was little evidence to support that these students were effectively able to access the grade-level content or that the instruction was differentiated for these students.

The school leaders specifically noted the social and emotional learning support, the use of the Accountability Center rather than out-of-school suspensions, and the regular presence of behavior interventionists as strategies to help provide tiered interventions to the school's students. The Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Component connects the student with the pursuit of success in completing high school and success in a post-secondary career pathway. The school described the SEL as more than counseling, as an approach to serving students in and out of the classroom. Each student, along with their parent or guardian, participates in an intake interview, which includes a review of their educational background and mental and physical health histories. Based on this information, each child receives a Personal Education Plan. SEL also involves individual and group counseling.

Beyond SEL, the College Counselor manages the College Center to guide students through the process of seeking admission into college. A highly specialized mental health team, consisting of a director, seven clinical counselors, and a dean of student support, provides individual and group counseling, modeling, and support to students as they work to stay on track with their personal goals. Teachers receive professional development training on social and emotional learning to assist with incorporating student-centered approaches in their lesson plans.

Minutes from board meetings of the Maya Angelou PCS Board of Trustees showed that the meetings appeared to have a quorum and held at least on a quarterly basis. Records showed that the Board attends to professional development planning, strategies for boosting academic achievement, mental health services and outcomes, building renovations, and other issues relevant to the success of the school's mission, vision and programming. Administration provides school data and program updates to the Board at each meeting. The board sets goals for school improvement and monitors them.

PCSB staff attended a joint See Forever Foundation/Maya Angelou PCS Board of Directors meeting on November 2, 2012. The meeting provided school reports and updates on pertinent issues relevant to each Maya Angelou PCS campus.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environments elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled visits.

Class Environment	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

Class Environment	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
Organizing Physical Space	Teacher makes poor use of the physical environment, resulting in unsafe or inaccessible conditions for some students or a serious mismatch between the furniture arrangement and the lesson activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and essential learning is accessible to all students, but the furniture arrangement only partially supports the learning activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all students; teacher uses physical resources well and ensures that the arrangement of furniture supports the learning activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and students contribute to ensuring that the physical environment supports the learning of all students.

Classroom Environments Summary

Approximately 70% of the classrooms observed scored proficient or exemplary on elements of the Classroom Environment rubric, which includes five elements: Environment of Respect, Culture of Learning, Managing Classroom Procedures, Managing Student Behavior, and Organization of Physical Space.

Student/teacher interactions were generally respectful with rare exceptions where students were disagreeable. Teachers expressed that they work to build positive relationships with students in order to encourage them to raise their expectations about learning. In most cases, teachers led by example with a positive and caring tone, even when correcting students.

Teachers personalized attention to student issues and encouraged students to follow up in private after class. Teachers gave one-on-one coaching and verbal cues.

Teachers organized classrooms with established routines, standards and high expectations for learning with lessons, agendas, objectives, essential questions, and homework. However, the review team observed some students not focused on completing their tasks due to off-topic conversations with other students.

Co-teachers supported students in classrooms and counselors circulated throughout the building and in classrooms to monitor behavior to help students resolve issues and prevent conflict.

Most classrooms were rated as proficient in organizing physical space. Classrooms were effectively arranged for small group work, with small seating clusters, or lectures, with seating arranged in rows so all students could see and hear the teachers. Teachers used technology to enhance the instructional activity in some classrooms.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Instructional Delivery elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled visits.

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
Communicating with Students	Teacher's oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.	Teacher's oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situation within broader learning. Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.	Teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students' knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.	Students formulate may of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.
Engaging Students in Learning	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
Using Assessment in Instruction	Students are unaware of criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and do not engage in self-assessment or monitoring. Teacher does not monitor student learning in the curriculum, and feedback to students is of poor quality and in an untimely manner.	Students know some of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and occasionally assess the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of the class as a whole but elicits no diagnostic information; feedback to students is uneven and inconsistent in its timeliness.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of groups of students in the curriculum, making limited use of diagnostic prompts to elicit information; feedback is timely, consistent, and of high quality.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and standards by which their work will be evaluated, have contributed to the development of the criteria, frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards, and make active use of that information in their learning. Teacher actively and systematically elicits diagnostic information from individual students regarding understanding and monitors progress of individual students; feedback is timely, high quality, and students use feedback in their learning.
Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	Teacher adheres to the instruction plan in spite of evidence of poor student understanding or of students' lack of interest, and fails to respond to students' questions; teacher assumes no responsibility for students' failure.	Teacher demonstrates moderate flexibility and responsiveness to students' needs and interests, and seeks to ensure success of all students.	Teacher seeks ways to ensure successful learning for all students, making adjustments as needed to instruction plans and responding to student interest and questions.	Teacher is highly responsive to students' interests and questions, making major lesson adjustments if necessary, and persists in ensuring the success of all students.

Instructional Delivery Summary

Just over half (55%) of classrooms were proficient or exemplary in areas of Instructional Delivery, which includes: Communicating with Students, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning, Using Assessment in Instruction, and Demonstrating Flexibility.

While learning objectives varied in rigor from classroom to classroom, observers determined that lesson objectives and essential questions were clearly communicated to students in most cases. Although some teachers used projectors, hands-on materials and group projects to engage students intellectually, results were uneven.

Teachers often had difficulty keeping all of their students engaged on the learning tasks, with students not making meaningful contributions to the lesson. Co-teachers varied in the degree of support they gave to students and the teaching role they assumed.

The team observed few examples of higher-order questioning and discussion about the learning. Most lessons followed a whole-class format with one-way questioning from teacher to students with sparse participation from the students.

Most teachers used assessments effectively in instruction. Assessments included strategies to evaluate academic as well as social-emotional goals.

The team observed several examples of teachers' ability to exercise flexibility and responsiveness to students. In one situation, the teacher changed the exit procedure to an oral assessment after running short of time. In another setting, a teacher reviewed a rap taught earlier during the year when students were stuck on recalling the sequence of operations.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the elements of the rubric related to meeting the needs of all learners.

All Learners' Needs	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
The school has strategies in place to meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure.	The school has implemented a limited number of programs to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Resources for such programs are marginal; or the programs experience low participation given the students' needs.	The school has implemented programs and provided adequate resources to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is moderate.	The school has implemented special programs and provided significant resources to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is moderate to high.	The school has implemented research- based and/or special programs and provided a full complement of resources to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is high.
The school has strategies in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners ("ELLs").	The school has a program in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners who enroll at the school. In order to comply with federal regulations, however, the program could benefit from increased staffing, improved staff qualifications and/or additional resources.	The school has a program in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners who enroll at the school. The services are in keeping with federal regulations, which include sufficient staffing with requisite training and resources.	The school has a successful program in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners who enroll at the school. The services are in keeping with federal standards for sufficient staffing with requisite training, qualifications and resources.	The school has a successful program(s) in place to meet the needs of any English Language Learners who enroll at the school. The services are in keeping with, and in some ways, exceed federal standards for staffing with requisite training, qualifications and resources.

Meeting the Needs of All Learners Summary

The mission and goals of Maya Angelou PCS are philosophically and inherently tied to a commitment to meeting the needs of all learners, according to the administration, teacher, and student focus groups. According to the leadership of the school, the school's student population has histories of school failure and significant academic challenges. This school year, Evans High School administered the Qualitative Reading Assessment to all students to determine their need for targeted reading support. The "Achieve 3000" and "Read 180" classes provide intensive support to students who need close monitoring to analyze and treat severe reading problems. Two teachers with special education credentials co-teach the Read 180 class. Math seminar courses and "Understanding Math" are available to address student deficiencies in math. As part of their curriculum requirements, particularly the "Future Focus" class and their 11th and 12th grade internships, students develop personal statements and explore career and college opportunities with their counselors' assistance. Ninth graders use the Success Highways as a social-emotional intervention tool to build non-cognitive skills that increase students' chances of academic success. Students learn how to set goals, manage academic stress (not give up), and overall become better students. A student indicated in the focus group that, "Maya lets you know how ever far down the wrong road you go, it's never too late to turn back around." Tutoring is available through an Extended Day Program and Saturday School. Evans High School employs eight mental health counselors, six special education teachers, and a resource room teacher who give

students one-on-one attention. Students receive daily check-ins to monitor their academic and behavioral progress during the Advisory Period.

There are currently no English Language Learners ("ELLs") enrolled at the school, thus the school's performance on this criterion was not assessed.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Professional Development elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations and as discussed during the focus groups with administrators, faculty and staff.

Professional Development	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
Time is made available throughout the year.	The school offers very few professional development days throughout the school year, and teachers indicate that they do not have enough time for ongoing professional development and planning.	The school offers several professional development activities throughout the school year, although teachers indicate they could use more time for planning.	The school day and the annual calendar reflect a strong focus on professional development and planning. Most teachers agree that they are given sufficient time for professional development and planning.	The school day and the annual calendar reflect a high priority given to professional development and planning. All teachers agree that they are given sufficient time for a variety of professional development opportunities and planning.
Extra support is in place for novice teachers.	The school offers limited formal or informal support and guidance for novice teachers. These teachers do not think that the support is adequate.	The school offers formal or informal support and guidance to novice teachers. These teachers think that the support is adequate.	The school has implemented a support system that is effective in meeting the needs of novice teachers.	The school has implemented a highly structured support system that is highly effective in meeting the needs of novice teachers.

Professional Development Summary

The QSR team reviewed the school's professional development calendar, which reflected an emphasis on improving the quality of classroom instruction and serving students' various needs. The team did not, however, observe differentiated instruction being conducted successfully in the classrooms and noticed students disengaged with the lessons. Professional development includes a summer institute and continues in weekly and monthly sessions throughout the year. The academic dean plans and implements professional development events and coordinates support to teachers based on teacher observations. The administration hired a mentor teacher to support 16 new and struggling teachers. Professional development themes have focused on Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, addressing the whole child/whole adult, and the effective use of data for instructional planning. The high school campus has focused on Reading across the Curriculum on Wednesday afternoons. Instructional staff sets aside weekly blocks of time for coordinated planning and coaching support for targeted assistance. The New Teacher Project monitors support to teachers in the classroom.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the School Climate elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations and as discussed during the focus groups with students, faculty, and staff.

School Climate	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
The school is a safe and orderly learning environment.	The school's discipline policies and practices are not well-articulated or understood by most of the staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices are partially implemented due to the lack of clarity or understanding and, as a result, the learning environment provides limited safety and order.	The school's discipline policies and practices are adequately articulated and understood by the administration and by most of the staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices may not be fully implemented, due to a lack of clarity or understanding. The learning environment, however, is relatively safe and orderly.	The school's discipline policies and practices are clearly articulated and understood by the administration, staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices are consistently implemented, providing for a safe and orderly learning environment.	The school's discipline policies and practices are clearly articulated and understood by the administration, staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices are fully implemented by students and staff, providing for a consistently safe and orderly learning environment.

School Climate Summary

The building facility appeared safe and orderly with human resources deployed appropriately to monitor student adherence to the school's disciplinary guidelines.

Evans High School shares a building with the middle school but follows a separate bell schedule and is housed on a different floor. The QSR team observed a safe and orderly facility managed by a highly specialized staff. The Student Code of Conduct is clearly articulated in the parent/student handbook with incentives for model behavior and consequences for unacceptable behavior. Administrative focus groups indicated that Town Hall meetings and assemblies reinforce school expectations and personal responsibility. The QSR team observed school staff addressing student challenges through application of SEL strategies (e.g. redirection, choice, timeout, brief consultation). Focus groups reported that the instructional program integrates SEL into the curriculum and mental health counselors provide counseling services using evidence-based intervention strategies. Both students and staff are accountable for monitoring classrooms and hallways. According to the principal, administration can assign students to the Accountability Center as a short term alternative to suspension. Classes were, on average, made up of fewer than 20 students. The QSR team reviewed documentation that indicated more disciplinary infractions in the early months of the school year, especially among ninth graders who are new to the school and have not adjusted to the school's standards. Administration held a school-wide retreat for both students and staff to establish expectations for a positive school culture.