

**THURGOOD MARSHALL ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WASHINGTON, DC**

Overview

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School (TMA) opened in Ward 8 of southeast Washington, DC in 2001 with the mission to prepare students to succeed in college and to actively engage in our democratic society. TMA was the first non-boarding charter high school to open east of the Anacostia River and remains the only law-themed public charter school in Washington, DC.

Thurgood Marshall Academy has achieved remarkable results over its seven year history: 100% of the first three graduating classes have been accepted to college; the school ranks 2nd District-wide on the state standardized exam in both reading and math when compared to other high-poverty, open-enrollment high schools; TMA successfully funded and managed the renovation of an abandoned building into a state-of-the-art educational facility; and it has raised over \$6 million in private or competitive funds over the past seven years to support the Thurgood Marshall Academy learning experience. TMA was the first high school ever to receive *full* continuance of its charter from the Public Charter School Board. The school is no longer a start-up organization but a cherished institution in the heart of southeast Washington, DC.

Thurgood Marshall Academy seeks an Executive Director to respect and build upon the successes of the past seven years and to lead the school into the next phase of development. S/he will refine systems to institutionalize programs, management, and governance practices and lead strategic planning initiatives to ensure long-term academic success and financial sustainability.

The successful candidate will be a proven leader with a commitment to TMA's mission and to advancing educational opportunities for youth in under-served communities. This candidate will be an accomplished manager and fundraiser with an entrepreneurial spirit and a true collaborator committed to leading the high performing staff of a school with an excellent reputation.

About Thurgood Marshall Academy

Thurgood Marshall Academy serves 360 students in grades 9–12 including 39 special education students (11%). One hundred percent of the students are African American, ranging in age from 13 to 19 years old. Sixty-nine percent of TMA students qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Meal program. Students enter TMA with reading and math skills averaging at 5th and 6th grade levels. The school is located in the heart of Ward 8, the community with the highest rates of poverty (36%) and child poverty (47%) in Washington, DC, as well as the lowest rates of high school (33%) and college (5%) graduation.

The school's relentless determination to help students close often stark educational gaps and prepare themselves for college remains at the heart of its program. TMA grew out of the experience of law students and professors in the DC Street Law clinical program at Georgetown University Law Center who, while teaching at neighborhood schools, witnessed how limited opportunities negatively impacted the academic and social development of students. They also saw an opportunity to use innovative teaching practices to educate and empower the students they encountered.



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TMA's mission is to prepare students to succeed in college and to actively engage in our democratic society. The school helps students develop their own voice by teaching them the skills lawyers have—the ability to solve complex problems, think critically, and advocate persuasively for themselves and their communities.

Every member of TMA's first three graduating classes was accepted to a two- or four-year college or university and received some form of financial assistance to defray the cost of college. The school has graduated 85 students since its first class received diplomas in 2005; one hundred percent have been accepted to college and the current college enrollment rate is 69%. (Financial hardship is a common reason that graduates have not remained in college and the school has developed an extensive Alumni Support Program to address this issue.) Students attend schools including the University of Rochester, American University, the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, Lincoln University, and Xavier University.

With the current national focus on test scores, the school must also measure itself by student performance on standardized exams. All 10th graders take the DC CAS (DC Comprehensive Assessment System). In 2007, the school made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in math and missed the target for reading by less than 1%. TMA exceeded average standardized test scores city-wide by 8% in reading and 18% in math. It exceeded the average scores of all DC open-enrollment high schools by 17% in reading and 26% in math. Of open-enrollment high schools in which 70% or more of students qualify for federal Free and Reduced Meal programs TMA ranks 2nd District-wide in both reading and math. Its students consistently outperform students attending neighborhood high schools (2007 scores are more than 6.5 times higher.)

Thurgood Marshall Academy's 70-person staff includes diverse professionals who work in key areas to ensure that students receive a first-rate education. The teachers bring a range of experience to the classroom—many are veteran educators with years of teaching experience while others, like the Teach For America corps members, are just beginning to apply their intellect and passion for educational equality in a classroom setting. All teachers participate in a comprehensive professional development program that begins for two weeks in the summer and is integrated weekly throughout the year. Other staff members work in such areas as academic and disciplinary support, after-school programming, college and clinical counseling, fundraising and partnership development, building safety and security, and front office operations.

Core Program Components

Thurgood Marshall Academy's program components are modeled after researched best practices and refined based on continued evaluation and analysis.

Rigorous Curriculum—TMA's standards-based curriculum is designed to prepare students with varying academic needs for success in college and beyond. The staff works diligently throughout the school year to address the sometimes significant remedial needs of students while also providing rigorous college preparatory coursework with a significant law theme. The school currently offers three Advanced Placement courses and seven honors courses to ensure that students are prepared for the rigor of higher education.

Data-Driven Instruction & Assessment—TMA uses a benchmark assessment system to provide its teachers with the quantitative data they need to create lesson plans based on objectively identified student needs. The

system has been continually enhanced and refined to successfully assist teachers in planning and executing the curriculum as well as tailoring instruction to students' individual needs. All teachers receive extensive training on the benchmark assessment program.

Portfolio Assessments—One of the hallmarks of a Thurgood Marshall Academy education is the Portfolio Program, a performance-based assessment system of self-assessment, goal-setting, and accountability that embraces every aspect of student life. Building a portfolio is a year-long process that reinforces the study habits that lead to academic excellence. The Portfolio Program requires students to set personal goals for academic and civic achievement and to present and analyze their work before panels of reviewers. Students use established rubrics to continually measure, evaluate, and reflect upon their performance.

College Access Programming—The College Access Program provides intensive guidance services that prepare our students to apply to, be admitted to, and succeed in college. Key components of the program include Senior Seminar (a year-long course that walks seniors through the college application and financial aid process), an SAT Prep course, college-focused advisory sessions for lower-grade students, parent workshops, and partnerships with the Hi-SCIP program, the DC College Access Program, and the DC College Access *DC Achievers* scholarship program. One hundred percent of the school's graduates have been accepted to college.

Family Involvement—A full-time Family Involvement Coordinator engages parents and guardians in a variety of activities; parents are encouraged to participate in the Parent Teacher Organization, and several parents serve as active members on the Board of Trustees, the School Improvement Plan Committee, and the Accreditation Planning Team. All parents are asked to sign a Parent Compact, which outlines the roles of the school, the student, and the student's family in academic success.

After-School Enrichment

To provide the absolute best chance of success in college and beyond, Thurgood Marshall Academy's program design includes continued instruction and remedial support outside of regular school hours.

After-School Tutoring—Volunteers from the Washington, DC professional and university communities, trained by school staff, help students to improve reading, writing and math skills, develop positive study habits, and complete homework assignments successfully and in a timely manner.

Law Firm Tutoring—This program involves six participating firms who take responsibility for supporting 11th graders as they prepare for graduation and college. Each law firm provides one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, dinner, and transportation. TMA partners with the following firms: Clifford Chance US LLP, Crowell & Moring LLP, Jenner & Block LLP, Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP, Vinson & Elkins LLP, and Williams & Connolly LLP.

Law Days—Law Days give 9th grade students their first formal exposure to the world of law. Led by volunteer attorneys and legal professionals once a month at the offices of partner law firms, Law Day introduces students to specific legal principles. Over 200 attorneys, legal professionals, and law students participated in the Law Day Program in the 2006–07 school year.

Personalized Mentoring—Over the years, more than 300 volunteers, drawn largely from the District’s legal community, have dedicated a portion of their lives to serving as mentors to our students. They model work- and life-skills and guide students in personal and behavioral decision-making. To become a mentor, volunteers commit themselves to monthly group “Mentor Days” at which mentors and students visit museums, colleges, and recreational sites. In addition, mentors are required to make weekly telephone calls and coordinate an additional, individual outing each month with their students.

Community Service—Community service is a required component of the Thurgood Marshall Academy experience and plays a significant role in helping students become active participants in a democratic society. The school offers a comprehensive service-learning program called Teen Action that combines a series of community service activities with instruction and reflection. Students also participate in annual Days of Service.

Summer Prep Program—This five-week summer program prepares incoming students for the academic and behavioral expectations of a college preparatory high school. Moreover, students need extended instruction to bridge their current skills with those necessary for success during freshman year and to prevent summer learning loss. Summer Prep provides incoming 9th grade and 10th grade transfer students with an introduction to the behavioral demands of succeeding at a college prep high school and intensive classes to improve their reading and math skills. Computer classes and cultural and athletic enrichment activities are also offered. To encourage parental involvement, Summer Prep also holds workshops for parents on supporting their child’s education and financing the cost of college.

Responsibilities and Challenges Facing the Executive Director

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Trustees and is responsible for the entire operation of the school. The Executive Director will directly manage a leadership team comprised of academic, operations, and fundraising administrators, but s/he is ultimately responsible for the 70-person staff.

The Executive Director will work with the administrative team in the following areas:

Leadership and Management—

The Executive Director is the chief executive and head of the school. The Executive Director holds responsibility, accountability, and authority for the school’s overall performance and success in achieving key targets and goals. The position is also responsible for ensuring the school’s long-term sustainability. Specific challenges include, but are not limited to the following:

- Honor the legacies of the founding vision while articulating a strategic vision that brings the school to the next level of success
- Inspire and nurture a “no excuses” culture that embraces accountability and results
- Diagnose the gaps between where the school is versus where it aspires to be, and ensure that strategies and practices are implemented to continually understand and close these gaps
- Facilitate strategic planning with the Board of Trustees
- Attract diverse teachers and staff who are passionate about the school and its students

- Develop and retain high-performing individuals to ensure long-term staffing and sustainability

Fundraising—

Thurgood Marshall Academy recognizes that the uniform per-pupil funding formula does not provide adequate resources to truly prepare its students for college. The school currently spends an additional \$4,419 per student to offer comprehensive youth development programs, extensive counseling, and top-quality faculty and staff. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure the organization meets annual revenue goals and generates an appropriate surplus without compromising the quality of the program. Specific challenges include, but are not limited to the following:

- Ensure that the annual \$1m+ fundraising target is met to fund expanded operations as well as additional funds to ensure long-term financial sustainability
- Develop and maintain relationships with philanthropic, business, and public sectors to increase awareness of the school and increase its donor base within a competitive nonprofit (specifically charter school) funding environment

Operations and Finance—

The Executive Director holds ultimate responsibility for all of the school's operations—from school safety to performance management for staff to financial planning. This individual must ensure that Thurgood Marshall Academy remains in strong financial standing and that the school is in compliance with various laws, regulations, and requirements. Specific challenges include, but are not limited to the following:

- Oversee and manage a \$7.5 million operating budget
- Oversee a \$24 million gymnasium project (Phase 2 of the school's facility project)
- Oversee school compliance with all applicable charter laws, regulatory reporting, contractual obligations, and donor restrictions
- Ensure that an effective performance management system is in place for all staff

Communications and Marketing—

The Executive Director is the primary external champion for Thurgood Marshall Academy and must represent and advocate for the school in various settings. The Executive Director is also responsible for ensuring accuracy and consistency in the school's messages, both internally and externally. Specific challenges include, but are not limited to the following:

- Represent the school as a leader of DC's education community in all advocacy efforts (e.g., legislative efforts to sustain charter school funding levels) as well as a community leader to maintain support from the Ward 8 community
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with the Public Charter School Board, local leadership, school faculty and staff, students, parents, community members, partner businesses and organizations, and current and prospective supporters

Academics—

The Executive Director will work with administrators to ensure that the school continues to strengthen its academic program and advance student achievement both inside and outside of the classroom. Specific challenges include, but are not limited to the following:

- Maintain a 100% college acceptance rate and increase college retention rate for a population of students with significant educational deficits
- Ensure that the school meets federal and state requirements and, specifically, makes AYP as defined through No Child Left Behind legislation
- Maintain commitment to a higher order/critical thinking cognitive environment for students while balancing the growing need for test preparation to meet state standardized testing goals and requirements
- Strengthen and expand the school's law theme throughout the curriculum and program

Qualifications

Management and Leadership Experience

The ideal candidate will have extensive management experience with a record of success in leading and sustaining a reputable organization, fundraising, budgeting, government relations, and marketing. The effective leader will be focused on performance and results as s/he envisions the next phase of the school's evolution. S/he will have the ability to inspire excellence from a diverse staff and to leverage the talents of the Board of Trustees. S/he will be a confident decision-maker and possess the ability to facilitate collaboration and teamwork.

As the K-12 education landscape is changing quickly, there will be many opportunities to take a leadership role in shaping the educational opportunities for the students of Ward 8 and the city through partnering, innovation, and persuasion. The ideal candidate will have experience forming, cultivating, and expanding partnerships within the public and private sectors.

A Masters degree and seven to 10 years of relevant management experience are preferred.

Passion for Educational Equality

While experience in educational leadership and, specifically, in the charter school movement are pluses, they are not required. However, the candidate must demonstrate a strong passion for advancing educational achievement in low-income communities as well as embody the mission/vision of Thurgood Marshall Academy. Knowledge of the Washington, DC, education, government, and nonprofit funding environment would be valuable in this position.

Resource Development/Fundraising Experience

The Executive Director must be able to make a compelling case for resources in an increasingly competitive environment. S/he must see building and maintaining relationships with individuals, foundations, members of the private sector, and government grant makers as an essential part of his/her role. Staying abreast of changing funding opportunities and challenges and working them to the school's advantage will be a critical

component of this position. The ideal candidate will demonstrate significant past success with fundraising.

Personal Qualities

A successful candidate will possess the following qualities:

- Business-savvy
- Strong strategic thinking/planning skills
- Perseverance
- An entrepreneurial spirit
- A problem-solving approach to obstacles
- A team-building, facilitative rapport with peers and staff
- The humility to honor the school's successes to date and to look outside of him/herself for answers from other high performing institutions
- Exceptional oral, written, listening, and interpersonal skills
- A sense of humor

To Apply

Qualified candidates are invited to submit two documents: a resume and a cover letter, the latter to include, in part, how a candidate's background and experience supports his or her application for the position of Executive Director of Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School. Please send all materials to:

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For more information about Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School please go to:
www.thurgoodmarshallacademy.org

Thurgood Marshall Academy is an equal opportunity employer.