

LAYC CAREER ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



Annual Report: 2024-25 School Year
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Board Chair: Lori Kaplan

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I. School Description

A. Mission Statement

LAYC Career Academy Public Charter School's (Career Academy) mission is to engage and empower young people between the ages of 16 and 30 by providing a college preparatory education, career training in high-growth occupations, and/or enrollment in college-credit classes. We envision a future in which all young adults have a successful pathway to college and careers with opportunities for advancement, and where all young adults can become engaged members of the community.

B. School Program

1. Summary of Curriculum Design and Instructional Approach

Career Academy's goal is to help students achieve their college and career objectives through a challenging and relevant curriculum and intensive, individualized wrap-around services and supports that address obstacles that might otherwise derail their progress. Career Academy serves just under 200 students each year and 95% of our students are working or enrolled in college within six months of graduation.



After more than a decade in operation, we have a strong reputation among young adults for helping our students make academic gains, secure high school credentials and college credits, and develop the skills they need for success in high-growth career sectors. The goal from our founding has been for every student to exit the school fully prepared for a career and/or college, and that goal remains the same today. By the time they graduate, students have earned a high school diploma and either a Microsoft Office Suite certification or an Internet Computing & Core Certification. Students have also completed coursework in one of the school's specialized pathways: Medical Assistant (MA), Information Technology (IT), or College Pathway.

In order to meet our students where they are and help them to progress at the pace that works best for them, we have created educational programs that are highly flexible and

personalized. We offer part-time and full-time enrollments. Because Career Academy students are often older than their peers in traditional high schools, they are determined to meet their goals as quickly as possible. At the same time, they are often balancing school with conflicting demands on their time, such as employment or care-giving for a family member. With an evidence-based, personalized learning model, Career Academy administrators, faculty, and staff tailor individual schedules to meet each student's needs, using classroom lessons, one-on-one instruction, and online learning tools to support achievement and keep students engaged and motivated. Crucially, we offer all of our programming at no cost to our students, meaning they graduate debt-free and ready for a sustaining professional career and/or college.



School faculty and staff are also committed to building community and are intentional in creating and sustaining a school environment in which students feel safe and valued. Career Academy students are supported by a team of student support specialists (also known as S3s), who are adviser-advocates helping youth with non-academic issues like the need for clothing and shelter, parenting, or

caring for an elderly relative. Our College and Career Access Department provides comprehensive professional development and works one-on-one with students to ensure that they will be successful in higher education, work, or both. All Career Academy staff have been trained in restorative practices and use those principles to build community in and out of the classroom.

2. Parental Involvement Efforts

As is appropriate and healthy for them, Career Academy staff encourage students to involve their family in their educational growth. Many Career Academy students do not have educational support in their home environments. Eighty-seven percent of our students in the 2024-25 school year (SY) were over 18, and many live on their own or are parenting themselves. Fifteen percent of our students were ages 25-30.

Staff encourage and support students in their efforts to cultivate positive relationships with family and/or other caring adults relationships with supportive adults in their lives, however that looks. During the enrollment process, for example, students can bring a family member or other supportive adult to join the orientation session and provide additional background information on the student's educational and personal history.

Additionally, our S3s work with students on their interpersonal relationships by helping them process any trauma they have from prior negative relationships, giving them tools to repair those relationships if possible and wanted, and/or identifying other adults who can provide support. S3s also conduct home visits and invite adults who play positive roles in our students' lives to school events and activities.

II. School Performance and Progress

A. Mission, Goals, and Academic Achievements

1. Meeting our Mission



Career Academy meets its mission by providing every student with high-quality and accessible academic and occupational programming, non-academic support essential to success, and college and career preparation. Career Academy enables young adults to make significant educational gains while also increasing their confidence; developing critical soft skills; gaining work experience and college credits; and/or securing marketable IT and health care-related credentials.

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive organization dedicated to serving all young adults who are in need of our services, regardless of circumstances. At Career Academy, students benefit from an affirming and inclusive environment that offers job training and educational programs. We also value and support diversity through culturally sensitive programming.

Career Academy's audited enrollment in SY25 was 186 students. Of that, 53% identified as African American, 45% as Hispanic/LatinX, and two percent as Other. Fifty-three percent

identified as female and 47% as male. Our students came from all eight DC Wards, with 42% residing in Wards 1 and 4 and 26% in Wards 7 and 8. Our students also face extraordinary challenges with resilience. One in three students experienced homelessness at some point during the school year, one in six were differently abled with special needs, one in five were pregnant or parenting, and nearly all students qualified for free and reduced meals.

In the classroom, Career Academy students have different needs and goals. Some students come with high school credentials, others wish to earn a GED, and still others want to learn English language skills. Some students want to explore college-level courses, while others are primarily attracted to the MA and IT Pathways. To meet all of these different needs, Career Academy offers students literacy and numeracy classes, a college preparatory education, career training in high-growth occupations, and the opportunity to take college-credit classes. Our model is built on competency-based graduation and promotion requirements, and our curriculum is designed to ensure college and career readiness. Our innovative and personalized design has produced strong student outcomes: 95% of our graduates are working or enrolled in college within six months of graduation.

The transition to adulthood has changed dramatically for this generation as compared to those preceding it. According to the US Census Bureau:

- More young adults are living in poverty and fewer are employed compared with Baby Boomers in 1980.
- Young adults earn \$2,000 less today annually than young adults did in 1980 when adjusted for inflation.
- Unlike prior generations of young adults, the majority of Millennials have never been married.
- More young adults live with their parents as compared to the same age group in 1980. The pandemic has intensified this trend. In July 2022, half of adults ages 18 to 29 were living with one or both of their parents. This is significantly higher than the share who were living with their parents in 2010 (44% on average that year) or 2000 (38% on average).



LAYC Career Academy began by serving 16- to 24-year-old students because our goal was to help young people make a successful transition to adulthood. We raised our age limit to 30 in 2023 because we saw that young people are still trying to establish themselves professionally, personally and academically late into their twenties. We have designed our program to specifically meet the needs of young adults. Our full academic curriculum and students' day-to-day activities are as follows:

The academic year consists of three trimesters, each of which is divided into two sessions of approximately six weeks. Each trimester, students take the CASAS exam in reading and math to assess progress (for returning students) and determine course placements (for new and returning students). Students are placed in courses that align with their levels: for example, students who need support acquiring English language skills are placed in an English Language Learner (ELL) cohort until they earn a score of 228 in listening and 236 in reading on the CASAS exam; students seeking a GED are placed into our GED cohort until they pass the exam.

Based on these assessment results, instructors will decide how to level their courses to best align with student needs. Instructors integrate technology into the curriculum to provide more tailored lessons and assignments for each student. They also connect the curriculum to the health care and IT sectors, as well as students' other interests in order to make the subject matter more engaging. Instruction is provided in small groups, and teachers collaborate across subject areas, often team-teaching or coordinating lesson plans for a more dynamic and contextualized presentation.

High School Diploma/GED Program and ELL Classes:

On average, just under half of our students enter Career Academy seeking a high school diploma or, for immigrant students, stronger English language skills. GED students take English, math, social studies, and science classes. English Language Learners focus on strengthening their reading, writing, and speaking skills. Seventy-nine percent of students overall increased their reading and math skills by two grade levels or more in SY25.

Literacy and Numeracy Classes:

Youth and young adults everywhere need help gaining the skills they need to move into gainful employment post-graduation. According to 2023 data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, math and reading scores are at their lowest points in decades. Locally, Career Academy staff have seen a large number of students enrolling in the school that do not have the literacy and numeracy skills needed to succeed in higher education or a long-term career, causing them to remain in low-wage jobs and/or pay for expensive remedial classes in college.

To address this, Career Academy offers a module one class for both the Information Technology and Medical Assistant cohorts to quickly help students to increase literacy, numeracy, and technology skills needed to be successful in the job market.

Students enrolling in the IT Pathway start by taking the first module, which consists of one class focused on strengthening math skills, Quantitative Methods in IT, and one class focused on strengthening literacy skills, Advanced Seminar in IT & Society. Students also complete their Internet and Computing Core Certification. After finishing module one, students move on to study for the A+ certification and prepare for internships in the field of Information Technology in order to graduate.

Similarly, students enrolling in the MA Pathway start with their first module, which consists of

one class focused on strengthening math skills, Quantitative Methods in Healthcare, and one class focused on strengthening literacy skills, Advanced Seminar in IT & Society. They also complete an Excel certification. After finishing module one, students move on to study for Medical Assistant certifications and prepare for externships in the healthcare field in order to graduate.

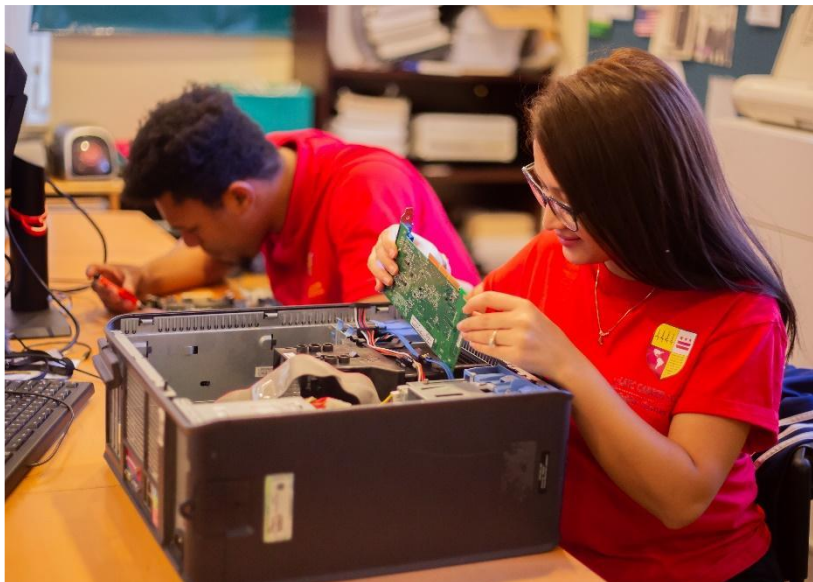
Pathway Programs:

The MA Pathway:

In preparation for work as medical assistants, students learn to provide direct services to patients (e.g., how to obtain vital signs, administer an EKG, and perform spirometry and venipuncture). They master autoclave techniques, become CPR- and AED-certified, and develop basic billing and coding skills. Students then spend their final trimester in an internship at a local healthcare organization, with hosts like MedStar and Johns Hopkins hospitals, A Plus Medical Center, Community of Hope, Mary's Center, and Whitman-Walker Health. Students who complete this pathway graduate as Certified Clinical Medical Assistants.

The IT Pathway:

IT Pathway students learn to install, configure, maintain, and troubleshoot networking hardware, software, and peripheral components of computers and operating systems, including Microsoft Windows. Students graduate with the skills to find successful careers as IT help desk specialists, one of the fastest growing occupations in the region. Like students in the MA Pathway, IT students also complete an internship, giving them the tools to function in a professional environment. IT students are required to pass the IC3 and A+ exams in order to graduate and many elect to earn the Microsoft, Network+, and Security+ certifications as well.



The College Pathway:

Early exposure to college-level classes helps students gain confidence and experience that will enable them to navigate a college campus and complete college-level coursework more effectively. College and Career Access Department staff help College Pathway students research departments and programs within colleges and

universities, arrange individual college visits and group tours, help students apply for

financial aid, develop course schedules, and take dual enrollment classes through a partnership with the University of the District of Columbia. To exit from the College Pathway, students must earn at least six college credits.

To assist our students in reaching their academic and career goals, Career Academy offers a robust continuum of support services that are designed to help students navigate challenges associated with housing stability, food insecurity, caregiving and parenting, mental health, and more. Finally, up to and after graduation, students and alumni receive help with job placement and other transition services.

2. Meeting our Goals and Academic Achievements

Goal	Description	Met or Unmet?
AE PMF as Goals (prior to Policy)	For SY 2021-22 and beyond, LAYC Career Academy Public Charter School will achieve a weighted range score of 65.0% on at least three out of the four Adult Education PMF indicators with no indicator having a weighted range score below 45.0%. For school years, 2017-18 through 2025-26, inclusive, scores for each indicator shall be calculated in accordance with the standards outlined in the AE PMF Tech Guide for SY 2017-18	Met
Mission-Specific Goal: IT Pathway CompTIA A+	Beginning August 31, 2019: Starting with students entering the IT Pathway in SY 2016-17, within two years of entering the pathway, 50.0% of students in the IT Pathway will earn an A + certification.	Met
Mission-Specific Goal: MA Pathway CCMA Credential	Beginning August 31, 2019: Starting with students who entered the MA Pathway in SY 2016--17, within two years of entering the pathway, 50.0% of students in the MA Pathway will earn a certified clinical medical assistant ("CCMA") credential.	Met
Mission-Specific Goal: MA Pathway Internships	Beginning August 31, 2019: Starting with students who entered the MA Pathway in SY 2016--17, within two years of entering the pathway, at least 60.0% of students in the MA Pathway will complete an	Met

	internship in MA.	
Mission-Specific: College Pathway College Credits Earned	Beginning August 31, 2019: Starting with students who entered the College Pathway in SY 2016-17, within two years of entering the pathway, at least 60.0% of students in the College Pathway will earn at least three college credits.	N/A n<10
Mission-Specific: Data & Testing Practices	Beginning in 2018: The school will adhere to the following data and testing practices: a. The school will pre-test every student who meets the SY 2017-18 PMF Tech Guide's definition of enrolled or accept a zero for that student for each applicable measure. b. The school will submit to DC PCSB each student's Pathway designation within 15 days of the student enrolling in the school, or within 15 days of the student changing pathways or transitioning from pre-GED to GED-candidate c. The school will administer at least two Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) subtests, one in math and one in reading, to every student. ¹ d. The school will provide DC PCSB with the student-level data needed to calculate the mission-specific goals in early September, following DC PCSB's Adult Education PMF/ASPIRE timeline	Met

B. Unique Accomplishments

SY24-25 was another successful year of meeting our students' needs both in and out of the classroom. Unique accomplishments of the school include:

A bold vision for the next five years

LAYC Career Academy completed a strategic plan with a bold vision for the next five years where the school will support students graduating from our school and moving into living wage careers where they will not only be able to earn a good income but also build wealth.

¹ LAYC PCS used the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) throughout the review period, until September 2020, when the school adopted CASAS. For details, see Appendix 1.8, p2. Per the SY 2017 – 18 AE PMF Policy & Technical Guide, DC PCSB approves AE schools to use either assessment to measure adult students' reading, math, and language skills.

With support from the school and our partners, graduates and alumni will develop and implement plans to become solidly middle class, including accruing savings and assets. We will accomplish this vision by:

- Expanding and strengthening our current programs and supports;
- Creating a robust alumni network and post-graduation programming to help alumni continue to develop and grow professionally;
- Strengthening internal policies, processes, and procedures to support organizational growth;
- Developing stronger capacity in the areas of marketing, branding, fund development, and partnerships;
- Building capacity to evaluate all current programming, continuously improve our offerings, and widely share best practices in alternative young adult education and career development with educators and business leaders.



A new partnership to help students build wealth

Career Academy began a pilot partnership with the NorthStar Institute in SY25. The NorthStar Institute provides tangible ways to close the wealth gap through direct investment in assets, strategies for upward income mobility, and expert guidance in the

areas of homeownership, entrepreneurship, savings, investments, and legacy planning. Through this partnership, all of our students (and staff) now have access to a personal financial advisor to facilitate student budgeting and financial planning. Students also have access to group instruction and tailored workshops that support financial literacy and practical application of lessons learned.

In addition to the wealth advising, this partnership provides students with monthly stipends to help pay for living expenses while enrolled at the Career Academy. Over the school's 13 year history, the top reason for student attrition was a need to work. Students desperately wanted to finish their education but they needed to support family members and earn money to pay for rent, food and other living expenses. In SY25, Career Academy started offering

students stipends to cover living expenses while they are in school. This program offers full time students \$550 per month and part time students \$350 per month. To qualify, students must maintain an 80% attendance rate and GPA.

Going forward, we plan to expand this pilot into a full program designed to help students and alumni plan for, and attain, a strong financial future.

IT Pathway students continue to excel in the Microsoft Office Skills

Seven different Career Academy students medaled in the 2024 DC Qualifier for the Microsoft Office Specialist U.S. National Championship, earning exceptionally high scores on exams that test skills on applications like Word, Excel, PowerPoint and more. These students were also invited to attend Certiport's 2024 MOS U.S. National Championship, where they had the opportunity to compete with Microsoft Champions from all over the country for scholarships, prizes, trophies, and certificates.

Expanding partnerships to increase opportunities for students and graduates

We added two new externship partners for our Medical Assistant program, Whitman-Walker Health System and the Sibley Hospital/Johns Hopkins Health System. Both are major healthcare employers in the DC area, so in addition to adding more externship opportunities, these partnerships also facilitate employment for students after graduation. At the same time, we expanded our partnership with MedStar Health System to host on-site recruitment events for Medical Assistant students and graduates. As a result, 35% of our SY24-25 graduating class are now employed with MedStar!



We also created a new partnership with National Community Church (NCC) to host internships for IT Pathway students. NCC has a well-established internship program that allows participants to collaborate on projects in various areas of interest, providing our students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience with audio-visual technology, Apple products, network cabling, and other specialties.

College scholarship achievements

Career Academy students were awarded scholarships from New Futures, the Herb Block Foundation, American University, Catholic University, DC Mayor's Scholars, and George Mason University.

C. List of Donors (at the level of \$500 or higher)

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

The Amchaya Fund

American Online Giving Foundation

Capital for Children

District of Columbia Hospital Association

Benjamin Fitzpatrick

The Greater Washington Community Foundation

The Greater Washington Community Foundation Health Equity Fund

Joseph Sellers & Laurie Davis

The Share Fund

II. School Year 2024-2025 Data Report

General Information

Source	Data Point
PCSB	LEA Name: LAYC Career Academy PCS
PCSB	Campus Name: LAYC Career Academy PCS
PCSB	Grades served: Adult
PCSB	Overall Audited Enrollment: 186

Enrollment by grade level according to OSSE's Audited Enrollment Report

Grade	PK3	PK4	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12	Alternative	Adult	SPED*
Student Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	66	120	11

*Note: This field is only filled in for St. Coletta Special Education PCS as it is the only charter LEA that exclusively serves students with disabilities.

Student Data Points

School	Total number of instructional days: 192
PCSB	Suspension Rate: 1.61%
PCSB	Expulsion Rate: 0.54%
PCSB	Instructional Time Lost to Discipline: 0.07%
PCSB	In-Seat Attendance: 76.01%*

PCSB	Average Daily Attendance: The SRA requires annual reports to include a school's average daily membership. To meet this requirement, PCSB will provide following verified data points: (1) audited enrollment; (2) mid-year withdrawals; and (3) mid-year entries. (No action necessary.)
PCSB	Midyear Withdrawals (MYW): Not Applicable
PCSB	Midyear Entries (MYE): Not Applicable
PCSB	Promotion Rate (LEA): Not Applicable
PCSB (SY23-24)	College Acceptance Rate: Not Applicable
School (SY23-24)	College Admission Test Scores: Not Applicable
School (SY23-24)	Graduation Rate: Not Applicable

Teacher and Admin Data Points

School	Teacher Attrition Rate: 22.22%
School	Number of Teachers: 9 To align with OSSE's definition, "Teacher" is defined as a full-time, school-based employee who instructs any core or non-core academic subject. This includes general or special education teachers instructing students in the "core" subject areas of English language arts, math, science and social studies, as well as non-core subjects such as arts, foreign language and physical education. This excludes student support professionals (e.g., speech therapists or social workers, counselors, librarians, coaches, principals, special education coordinators, program coordinators, deans, office staff, custodians, or any other non-instructional personnel).
School	Teacher Salary Schedules Provide schedule by steps and grades, if applicable. If inapplicable, LEAs may provide minimum, average, and maximum teacher salaries and include the link to the webpage this information can be found on your school's website. Note: LAYC Career Academy developed a salary schedule that was implemented in FY25 and can be found here: https://laycca.org/careers-2/
School	Teacher Demographics In a chart, include the racial identity, gender, and years of teaching/education experience for all your teacher staff, using the definition above.

	Teachers By Race, Gender and Years of Experience		
	Race	Gender	Years Experience
	Latino	F	9
	Afro-Latino	M	25
	Latino	M	6
	Black	F	9
	White	F	8
	White	F	9
	Afro-Latino	M	9
	Latino	F	2
	Black	M	1

School	Executive Director: \$170,999.92
	Principal: \$143,033.20
	Director of Academics: \$133,000.00
	IT Pathway Director/Instructor: \$129,610.48
	Special Education Coordinator: \$119,450.08

*Note: The provided in-seat attendance rates align to the in-seat attendance rates available in OSSE's SY24-25 Charter Sector Attendance Qlik application as of October 2025. However, the validated rates that schools will confirm with OSSE during Metric Calculation Confirmation this fall may vary slightly.

Disclaimer: Career Academy acknowledges that DC PCSB's review and publication of this annual report does not imply concurrence or disagreement with the content herein.

III. Appendices

APPENDIX A. Staff Roster for the 2024-25 School Year

Senior Student Support Specialist: N’Kosi Ayize brings a wealth of experience and passion to his role as Senior Student Support Specialist. A third-generation Washingtonian, Mr. Ayize served as Career Academy’s fitness professional for three years before transitioning to student support. He possesses an extensive background in administration, case management, youth programs, and interactive conflict resolution. He is also a certified personal trainer, martial arts instructor (Capoeira Angola), productivity specialist, and Psychodrama TAE in training. Mr. Ayize will complete his TAE Psychodrama certification in November of 2025. In 2022, he was named a Restorative Justice Fellow for DCPCS. An avid origami artist, Mr. Ayize embodies the Capoeira philosophy of approaching challenges with a positive attitude and a smile.

ELL Instructor/Coordinator: Ariel Berroa

Mr. Berroa was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, came to the US at the age of 19, and quickly learned English and earned his GED. While he was an AmeriCorps volunteer from 2013-2015, he worked with middle school students, facilitated health education workshops, coached a soccer team, and provided ELL support. Also during this time, he found his passion for working with youth, using his own experience to encourage them to find their education and career paths. At Career Academy, he teaches ELL students and enjoys working with immigrant populations. Mr. Berroa holds a degree in Business Management from The Catholic University of America.

Student Support Specialist: Aliannys Castellanos

Ms. Castellanos was born and raised in Venezuela. Her passion has always been to be able to help youth and adults in holistic health and make a difference in their lives. She graduated as a Medical Surgeon in 2016 from Universidad del Zulia LUZ, in Venezuela. Ms. Castellanos joined the Career Academy in January 2024. As a Student Support Specialist, she has helped bilingual students in the Medical Assistant and the English Language Learning programs by giving them advice and motivating them to achieve their academic goals.

Director of Academics: Ivette Cruz

Ms. Cruz is a 25-year veteran educator who began her career in K-12 schools and decided to continue growing professionally by entering the field of adult education and bilingualism. She became academic director of Ana G. Mendez University System, where she provided leadership on all academic programs while guiding the implementation of the Discipline-Based Dual-Language Immersion Model. After almost four years in this position, Ms. Cruz decided to join Career Academy as the director of academics to continue helping underserved students in their efforts to pursue a GED or career. Ms. Cruz has a

bachelor's in child development from the University of Puerto Rico and a master's in educational leadership from the University of Phoenix. She also holds a doctorate in education with a specialization in Educational Leadership in Adult Education. She is a former member of Maryland's Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) board, where she was the editor of the newsletter. She was part of DC OSSE's 2019 Title III Advisory Committee, a group of stakeholders from different schools offering their insights on policies and regulations for English Language Learners. She also participated in the first Mentoring and Induction Program Development Professional Learning Community at OSSE in 2020 and served as a fellow for the COABE advocates for adult education fellowship.

ELL Instructor/Coordinator: Jannet Crespo

Ms. Crespo is currently a teacher and coordinator for English language learners. She enjoys her daily work teaching English and Math Fundamentals. Her passion for working with children, teenagers, and young adults has led her to dedicate much of her professional life to this population. Born and raised in Quito, Ecuador, she earned a bachelor's degree in Clinical Psychology from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador and a master's degree in Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology in Educational and Social Contexts from the University of León, Spain. To gain a deeper understanding of the U.S. education system, she completed a Teacher Assistant certification. Throughout her career, she has worked with the United Nations, UNICEF, and HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), advocating for the rights of children and adolescents in human mobility and forced migration contexts. She also taught Neuroscience and Criminal Profiling for promotion courses within the Ecuadorian Armed Forces. Before settling in Washington, D.C. in 2020, she worked as a student counseling and academic coordinator for the Ministry of Education in Ecuador. Ms. Crespo is passionate about nature and enjoys the outdoors as much as possible in her free time.

MA Program Director: Tony Duran

Mr. Tony was born and raised in Alexandria, Virginia. He completed his Bachelors in Science in Health Sciences at Virginia Commonwealth University and a Masters in Education from Liberty University. Currently, he is working towards his PhD in Instructional Design. Mr. Tony serves as the Medical Assistant Program Director at LAYCCA. Prior to working at LAYCCA, he worked with Gastroenterologists editing and designing online curriculum. Mr. Tony has been working in education ranging from K-12 to adult learners since 2017.

Math Instructor: Folly Ekoue

Folly Ekoue Zondodji (Mr. E) serves as a math instructor at the Career Academy. Born in Lome, Togo, Mr. E moved to Virginia in 2005. He received his bachelors in accounting from George Mason University. Mr. E hopes to break down math related anxiety, connect math to

everyday life, and support young adult learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

Principal: Jacqueline Fernandez-Romero

A prominent educator, scientist, and community activist, Dr. Fernandez-Romero taught science at Career Academy for several years and served as its interim principal starting in summer 2017 through April 2018. She became principal in May 2018. She has received honors and awards for her scientific research, community involvement, and mentorship of minority students in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Prior to joining Career Academy, she worked in the Space Biosciences Division at NASA's Ames Research Center as a Microbiologist and as a teacher at schools in DC and New York. Dr. Fernandez-Romero obtained a bachelor's degree in Raza Studies and Microbiology from San Francisco State University, and she earned a master's in education from Lesley University. In 2017, she completed her doctorate in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in STEM education from Texas Tech's University Global PRISE (Pragmatic Researchers in STEM Education) Program.

Student Support Specialist: Daniel Flores

Mr. Flores was born and raised in Northern Virginia. He first attended the University of Valley Forge for Music Production and Youth Ministry and now he is currently finishing his degree in Business Administration at Northern Virginia Community College. Mr. Flores joined LAYC Career Academy in June, 2023 as a Student Support Specialist. In this role, he follows his passion for helping the youth by supporting students in their many struggles of life and connecting them to different resources offered both in and outside of school. Mr. Flores aims to help students to be GREAT in everything they do.

Co-Founder & Executive Director: Nicole Hanrahan

Ms. Hanrahan leads the senior team that manages the school's day-to-day operations and supports the board of directors as it guides the school's overall direction, sets policy, and monitors school performance. Prior to her current role, she was the Chief Operating and Strategy Officer at the Latin American Youth Center where she helped the organization to grow and deepen its impact for youth in Washington, DC and Maryland. Before joining the Latin American Youth Center, she served as a director at Community Wealth Ventures, where she helped nonprofits and foundations build capacity and improve sustainability. Prior to that, she directed workforce development programs in New York, Chicago, and Boston. Ms. Hanrahan is a board member for the DC Workforce Investment Council, a member of the executive committee for the DC Charter Alliance, and a member of Leadership Greater Washington. She holds a bachelor's degree in public policy from Brown University and a master's degree from the Harvard Business School.

Math and Science Instructor: Dieudonna Harris

Mrs. Dieudonna Harris is a passionate educator with over 15 years of experience in secondary and adult education. She holds a B.A. in Mathematics from Albany State University and an Associate's Degree in Drafting & Design from Albany Technical College. Mrs. Harris has taught in both public and private school settings across Georgia and Virginia, where she has consistently improved GED attainment rates and driven student growth. Additionally, helped students improve performance on standardized assessments. Mrs. Harris is known affectionately by students as "Ms. Dee." She brings an encouraging, practical, and student-focused approach to the classroom while blending academic rigor with real-world application. Since joining LAYC Career Academy in 2024, she has focused on GED preparation, curriculum alignment, and differentiated instruction. Mrs. Harris is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success and the Mathematical Association of America. She is dedicated to helping students build the skills, confidence and mindset needed to succeed, both in the classroom and beyond.

Student Support Specialist: Jessica Hernandez

Ms. Hernandez is a first generation college graduate and is from Alexandria, Virginia. She earned a Bachelor's of Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). She always had an interest in helping people in all walks of life, especially in the education system. Ms. Hernandez began as an intern at LAYC Career Academy in the Student Support Department in the summer of 2022 and then joined the staff full time as a Student Support Specialist in June, 2023. She has worked with many students, especially students in the Medical Assistant (MA) Program, to connect them with resources, provide encouragement, and to help them reach their academic and career goals.

Community Engagement Specialist: Kyle Jackson

Mr. Jackson, a native of Prince George's County, earned a Bachelor's degree in Mass Communication with a concentration in Advertising from Towson University in 2020. While at Towson University, he started his career as a Promotions and Events Associate with PepsiCo. After PepsiCo., he then went on to become a Career Resource Specialist where he was able to help people in underserved communities gain employment. In February of 2024, Mr. Jackson joined LAYC Career Academy as the Community Engagement Specialist fusing his passions of mass communication and community outreach. Through this position, Mr. Jackson is able to use his education and people skills to expose adult learners to Career Academy programs and help them reach their goals.

Director of College & Career Services: Erica Lloyd

In her role as Director of College and Career Services, Ms. Lloyd is passionate about helping Career Academy students prepare to make the transition to college and/or the career they wish to pursue. Ms. Lloyd came to the Career Academy with a Bachelors of History and a Masters in Teaching from the University of Virginia, as well as over twenty years of experience in the nonprofit sector. She first served as the Program Director of a youth

development program in Charlottesville, mentoring over 60 youth from the third grade through their transition to college. She then moved to Port-au-Prince to work as the Research Director of a composting program in Haiti. In 2019 Ms. Lloyd returned to the DC area, where she was born and raised, and joined the Career Academy in 2022.

Student Support Specialist: Pedro Luna

Mr. Luna was born and raised in San Salvador, El Salvador and now calls DC home. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and marketing from the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA) in El Salvador. Mr. Luna is passionate about providing support to the immigrant community in the greater DMV area. He joined LAYC Career Academy to continue providing support to our student body and giving back to the immigrant community. He is also an avid soccer fan and youth soccer coach.

Academic Support Coordinator: Nicolas Matheus

Mr. Matheus was born in Maryland and is the first-generation American born to immigrant parents from Venezuela and Italy. He holds an associate's degree from Montgomery College, a bachelor's degree in English with a focus on communication and technology from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and a master's degree in Cloud Computing from University of Maryland, Global Campus, along with several advanced Excel certifications. With close to a decade of experience in educational and administrative roles across Washington, DC, and Maryland, Mr. Matheus has worn many hats at LAYCCA. He developed personalized learning plans and created innovative lesson plans for various classes as an instructor. In his role as the College & Career Coordinator, he guided students in securing internships, jobs, and college placements. He has also coordinated the GED program to help students earn their diplomas since beginning his career at LAYCCA. His expertise in technology and Excel automation enhances operational efficiency and effectively supports both staff and students.

Inclusion Specialist: Yulisa Morales

Ms. Morales is a first generation college graduate who obtained her bachelor's degree in social work with a minor in homefront readjustment for armed services at Virginia State University. She was born in Alexandria, Virginia and her family is originally from El Salvador. Ms. Morales began her journey at the Career Academy in July 2024 supporting students with disabilities who are pursuing their GED. She offers one-on-one and group support in classroom settings and provides resources and guidance for post secondary transition goal planning. Ms. Morales' passion has always been to help individuals see their potential and provide resources along the way. She enjoys seeing people thrive and grow in resilience.

Reading, Writing, and Social Studies Teacher: Christina Perez

Ms. Perez was born and raised in Florida by a single-mother from the middle-east, who succeeded in business, in spite of not learning to read or write. Due to middle-eastern culture, Ms. Perez did not value education until "experimenting" at a local community college. With the

help of patient, inspiring, and FUN teachers, Ms. Perez realized her dreams to positively impact others who faced educational challenges such as ESL or Dyslexia. She graduated in 2003 from the University of Florida with a Masters degree from the highly esteemed College of Education. Teaching in settings from elementary school to community college, hoping to bring equity into the learning environment, with a priority goal to help students love learning in turn, becoming life-long learners (who eventually own their education). Ms. Perez is confident everyone can achieve more than they can imagine and teachers are able to help students find how. For fun, Ms. Perez teaches fitness classes and regularly volunteers with Montgomery Homeless Coalition, Hospice, Night to Shine, and other organizations to learn more about populations and give back to her communities that had been generous to her family. Ms. Perez's favorite pastime is spending time with her three adult children and a sweet dog named Lucy Lui.

Operations Manager: Ericka Rivera

Ms. Rivera is an experienced educator of 18+ years. She began her teaching career by working part-time as a Kindergarten teacher's assistant while she was in college. She soon discovered that her passion was teaching and within a year she shifted career paths and became an early childhood educator. She earned her associate's in Child Development and in 2017 she won the "*Excellence in Care and Education*" award from her company, chosen out of more than 15,000 teachers. She came to Career Academy in December 2020 with a great desire to bring her experience and skill set into helping special education students and to teach science. She is currently in the process of earning a Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and Leadership from Old Dominion University.

Reading, Writing, and Social Studies Teacher: Carolyn Robbins

Dr. Robbins was born in Tennessee and lived most of her life in Texas. She earned her BA in sociology and philosophy and her MA in communication and rhetorical criticism from Baylor University. She earned her PhD in communication with a focus on rhetoric and political culture from the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. Robbins has been teaching in higher education in various capacities since 2016. Her time at the CA began in August of 2024, and she has worked hard to reimagine and redesign the various reading and social studies courses offered here. She enjoys forming relationships with adult learners and helping them achieve their goals and dreams. Dr. Robbins is fluent in English and fluent-ish in Spanish. In her free time, she enjoys reading, going to comedy shows, and forcing everyone she meets to look at photos of her cats.

Special Education Services Instructor/Coordinator: Martha Sanchez

Ms. Sanchez earned a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Trinity University. She later attended The George Washington University and earned a master's degree in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in English as a Second Language and Bilingual Special Education. Ms. Sanchez joined Career Academy in August 2018. She started

her career in education working with DC Public Schools as a special education teacher. Since then, she has worked in the field of special education as a teacher, as a transition counselor and as a consultant for several charter schools in the DC area. During the time Ms. Sanchez has worked in special education, she has found that working with students with disabilities and their families is very rewarding. She understands that the special education process can be an overwhelming experience, and because of this she is committed to ensuring that students and their families receive all the support they need to be successful.

Medical Assistant Paraprofessional: Daniela Santos

Ms. Santos was born and raised in El Salvador and came to the United States at the age of 17 in 2016. Her first language is Spanish and, with a lot of effort and dedication, she has been able to adapt to English. She graduated from high school at the Columbia Heights Educational Campus in 2020 and then enrolled at LAYC Career Academy and graduated in 2023 as a medical assistant. She is currently working at LAYCCA as a medical assistant paraprofessional where she teaches laboratory classes to MA students. Ms. Santos loves helping as many people as she can, especially her Latino community.

Registrar: Monica Santos

Ms. Santos serves as the registrar for the school where she coordinates student enrollment. She is a first generation Honduran-American, born in Virginia but raised in Prince George's County. Ms. Santos graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a bachelor's in Anthropology and Sociology. Upon graduation, she began working at a residential facility providing support to undocumented youth. She joined the Career Academy team in October 2020 eager to be a support system for our students and assist them throughout their journey at the school. Ms. Santos is passionate about helping others, especially children and families, as well as learning about different cultures.

Teaching & Learning Specialist: Milagros Secer

Ms. Secer is a native of Lima-Peru and a graduate of The Franklin Delano Roosevelt American School of Lima in Peru. She was raised in a household with both parents holding postgraduate and fellowship medical degrees. Their example of professional achievement and passion about their fields of interest became a model that she quickly followed. As a National Honor Society member and Varsity Hockey H.S. athlete, she earned a Fulbright scholarship to attend The Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio. She completed a double B.A. degree in Psychology and French. At OWU she became a member of the Phi Sigma Iota Foreign Language Honor Society for her proficiency in French. She further pursued a Master's of Education degree in Special Education at The University of Maryland in College Park. Her work experience includes over 18 years as a special education teacher, case manager, and educational diagnostician in a variety of educational settings. Ms. Secer has also served a variety of roles throughout her career as a self-contained classroom special education teacher, Local Screening Chair & Special Education Lead Teacher, inclusion teacher, hybrid

general and special education teacher, testing WIDA ACCESS coordinator and most recently as the Teaching & Learning Specialist at the Career Academy. Ms. Secer is a mom to a 17 year old with developmental needs with a passion for helping families and students with disabilities navigate the special education process. She shares her knowledge about all the resources available in the DMV to provide advocacy and education to families, students and care-givers of people with disabilities with enthusiasm and care. In her spare time Ms. Secer enjoys cooking, the fine arts, running, and trying new places to visit and eat with her son and friends.

Information Technology Program Coordinator: Abner Soto-Henry

Mr. Soto-Henry started his career as a technology education instructor at the Workforce Development Center (Centro de Formación y Capacitación Portuaria) in Costa Rica, after graduating from Universidad Interamericana de Costa Rica in San José with a degree in Business Administration and Accounting in 1996.

Mr. Soto-Henry has taught information technology education at Career Academy since the school's inception, specializing in Microsoft certifications, IC3 Digital Literacy certifications, and CompTIA certifications. In total, Mr. Soto-Henry has more than 27 years of experience in education. Originally from Costa Rica, he speaks fluent Spanish, English, and Portuguese, enabling him to connect with the students he serves. He has received numerous notable awards throughout his teaching career. DC United Football Club recognized Mr. Soto-Henry as a Community Star in 2013, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation & the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics awarded Mr. Soto-Henry this honor in 2015. In 2016, Mr. Soto-Henry was named Teacher of the Year by D.C. OSSE Career and Technical Education. In 2019, D.C. PCSB awarded him the TIERific Teacher of the Year honors and Certiport named him Teacher of the Month in November. The following year, in 2020, the Washington Post named Mr. Soto-Henry as finalist Teacher of the Year. In 2021, Certiport named him as Educator of the Year and later honored to have served as a CERTIFIED Ambassador for two consecutive years (2022-2023). A former professional soccer player, his passion for teaching is only rivaled by his love of the game.

Data Manager: Erin Tarpley

Ms. Tarpley has spent much of her life living abroad. After returning to the United States, Ms. Tarpley has been involved in education in many forms, including as an assistant, a camp-counselor, a mentor, an instructor, an administrator, or a director. She graduated from the University Of Maryland, Baltimore County with a bachelor's in history and a certification to teach secondary education in the social sciences. Ms. Tarpley later went on to earn a master's from the University of Maryland in human resources management with a focus in adult training and learning. Before joining Career Academy, she served in student support at

Walden University, taught social sciences in Baltimore City Public Schools, and headed the Arts Education department for underserved students in the Brooklyn Park area.

APPENDIX B. Board Roster for the 2024-25 School Year

Kate Brannon, Treasurer (2014 to present)

DC Resident: No

Ms. Brannon is the director of financial planning & analysis at Georgetown University. She provides leadership and strategic direction related to the development of the University's budget. Her expertise includes budget development, strategic planning, forecasting, establishing internal controls, and overall financial oversight. Before joining Georgetown University, Ms. Brannon worked at The George Washington University for more than 15 years. Ms. Brannon holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Elon University and a master's from The George Washington University.

Emmanuel Caudillo, Board Member (2015 to present)

DC Resident: Yes

Mr. Caudillo works for the U.S. Department of Education and is a special advisor to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. In this role, he oversees the operational duties of the initiative, outreach to Hispanic-serving institutions, and youth engagement activities. Previously, he was a policy analyst at the U.S. Department of Education from 2009 to 2012. He has also held research positions at Abt Associates and the National Council on Teacher Quality. Mr. Caudillo holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California and a master's in public policy from The George Washington University.

Dean D'Angelo, Board Member (2021 to present)

DC Resident: No

Mr. D'Angelo is a founding partner of Stellus Capital Management and runs the firm's Private Credit strategy and serves on its investment committee. He has over 30 years of experience in investment banking and principal investing. Prior to forming Stellus, Mr. D'Angelo was a director in the Direct Capital Group at the D. E. Shaw group, a global investment and technology development firm and was a principal of Allied Capital Corporation, a publicly-traded business development company, where he focused on making debt and equity investments in middle-market companies. Mr. D'Angelo received his bachelor's in accounting from The College of William and Mary, his master's in international economics and relations from The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University, and his master's with a concentration in finance, from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Noemí Enchautegui-de-Jesús, Secretary (2023 to present)

DC Resident: No

Dr. Enchautegui-de-Jesús is a Senior Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at American University. Dr. Enchautegui-de-Jesus received her master's and doctorate in community psychology from New York University. She was a postdoctoral fellow with the NIMH's Family Research Consortium III at the University of Michigan. Her research revolves

around a core interest in the stressors that affect the mental and physical well being of people of low socioeconomic status, especially individuals and families of African and Latin American descent. Currently, her research activities focus specifically on stressors related to work and to the balancing act between work and family demands among women who juggle low wage jobs and children/adolescents at home. Furthermore, Dr. Enchautegui is interested in the coping mechanisms and resources women use and/or need to deal with these stressors and buffer their impact.

Ana Hageage, Vice Chair (2018 to present)

DC Resident: Yes

Ms. Hageage served in the Biden-Harris Administration as the Chief of Staff for the Employment and Training Administration in the U.S. Department of Labor. Prior to her appointment, she served as the deputy lead for the Community College Growth Engine Fund, turning community colleges into bridges to dignified work for every American learner and worker, starting with almost 6,000 learners in six communities. Throughout her career, Ms. Hageage has developed a deep expertise in workforce development at the local, regional, and national levels supporting economic mobility for underserved workers. She has led national initiatives aimed at scaling industry partnerships and sector strategies and served as a policy advisor to the U.S. Department of Labor under the Obama Administration. Ms. Hageage also has expertise in youth policy and advocacy and has worked on the ground to deliver adult basic education, job readiness training, sector-focused certifications, employment and wrap-around services to opportunity youth. Ms. Hageage holds a degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Maryland and resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband and two sons.

Lori Kaplan, Chair (2012 to present)

DC Resident: Yes

Ms. Kaplan retired as president & chief executive officer of Latin American Youth Center in June 2018 after leading the organization for 30 years. Ms. Kaplan is continuing her involvement with LAYC as special projects advisor to support the leadership transition. In addition, Ms. Kaplan was the original executive director of the Next Step Public Charter School (PCS), which she founded in 1996, and a major force in the development of YouthBuild PCS and LAYC Bilingual Montessori PCS. She also serves on the board of Youth Radio, an award-winning media production company that trains diverse young people in digital media and technology.

Linda Moore, Board Member (2017 to present)

DC Resident: No

Ms. Moore is the founder of the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS, which opened in 1998 with 35 students in a rented space in a church basement in Ward 1. Today, the school owns its building in Ward 5 and serves 350 students in grades PK3 to 6. It became a Tier 1 school in 2012 and operates with a bilingual education model, with at least half of each students' education conducted in French or Spanish. Ms. Moore has served on the DC Charter School Association board of directors and as the chairperson of the DC Special Education Cooperative. She was inducted into the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' Hall of Fame in 2013.

Juan Carlos Pereira, Board Member (2019 to present)

DC Resident: No

Mr. Pereira is a principal investment officer at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) where he works with private sector clients, governments, local stakeholders, and other partners to promote sustainable economic development and create economic opportunities in developing countries. Before joining IFC, he co-founded and led ProNicaragua, Nicaragua's investment promotion and economic development agency, and worked in M&A advisory and telecommunications in the U.S. and Europe. He holds a bachelor's in economics from Santa Clara University and a master's degree in business administration from Harvard Business School. He speaks Spanish, French, and Italian and is conversant in Portuguese.

Talib Robinson, Alumni Board Member (2021 to present)

DC Resident: Yes

Mr. Robinson works in youth development at Sasha Bruce Youth Work. He is a graduate of the medical assistant and college programs at Career Academy and is working towards a bachelor's degree at the University of the District of Columbia.

Benjamin Ruiz, Alumni Board Member (2022 to present)

DC Resident: Yes

Mr. Ruiz is a graduate of the Information Technology program at Career Academy. He holds an associate's degree and is currently working towards a bachelor's degree from the University of the District of Columbia.

Taylor Whitelow, Board Member (2024 to present)

DC Resident: Yes

Mr. Whitelow is an IT Portfolio Manager with Georgetown University Information Services (UIS), where he brings a commitment to educational impact through strategic technology management and data analytics. With dual master's degrees in business analytics and finance from Georgetown University, Mr. Whitelow began pursuing his third master's degree in business administration at Georgetown in August 2025. His career is built on a foundation of public service and innovation, applying his technical expertise to create accessible and inclusive educational environments. Beyond his professional endeavors, Mr. Whitelow is an avid runner and fitness enthusiast, with a deep passion for music. A former music producer during high school and undergrad, he continues to channel his creative spirit and commitment to growth in every aspect of his work and community involvement.

APPENDIX C. Finances

1. Latest Audited Financial Statements:

Career Academy's latest available audited financial statements may be found at the following link on DC PCSB's Transparency Hub: <https://dcpcsb.org/school-fiscal-audits>

2. Other Financial Information, Including Budgets:

Career Academy's additional financial information, including latest available budgets, may be found in the Financial Oversight section of DC PCSB's Transparency Hub at the following link: <https://dcpcsb.org/transparency-hub>

