

Board of Trustees Meeting September 29, 2026 (Virtual)
Marion P. Thomas Charter High School of Culinary and Performing Arts
125 Sussex Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

September 29, 2026 | 6:00 PM ET

Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87205682710?pwd=dWh4bE5qWCtkWk9PcThPSWdLbVZZUT09>

1. CALL TO ORDER – Open Public Meetings Act - 6:05 PM

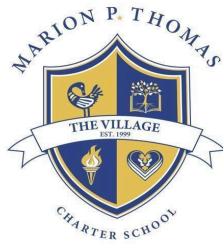
- The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act ("Act") was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Marion P Thomas Charter School Board of Trustees has caused notice of this meeting to be advertised by having the date, time, and place there of posted on the district's website (www.mptcs.org), in the office of the Clerk of the City of Newark, and was published in the Star-Ledger in June 2026.

2. ROLL CALL

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☐	Toni Ince	☒	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☒	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☒
Allan Boomer	☒	☐	Kristine Baffo	☒	☐
Anthony Covington	☒	☐	Andre Speight	☒	☐
Vincent Rouse	☒	☐	Sha'Dira Slater	☒	☐
Dr. Princess Towe	☒	☐			

Non-Voting Board Members Present	
MaLiyah E. Griffiths (Board Secretary/Administrator)	Tina Jalloh (Board Attorney)
Angela Mincy, Chief School Administrator/Superintendent	Rick Pressler (School Business Administrator)

** Motion Seconded



3. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

- Chairman Gilchrist gave an update.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

- Ms. Mincy and team gave a presentation update.

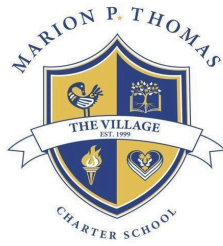
6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Operations & Finance Committee

- Good evening, everyone. I've been told I have 90 seconds, so feel free to put the timer on. First, we talked about enrollment. I know we had an enrollment update from Mr. Shankar. I'll just give the numbers that we discussed. The numbers we... I'm about to report out are for the record. They do not include the pre-K. Just from kindergarten to 12th grade. Our enrollment number is 1,111, and that's as of last week. Versus our budgeted target of 1,100, so we are about 11 students over budget. Our stretch goal is \$1,160. That would allow us to break even financially, and so we're a little bit below that. This year, we've added 306 new students. We also had a really high retention rate. We looked at the retention rates per grade. Some were better than others, but overall, it was a really high retention rate. We did review our tech and our facilities and things that have been done and need to be done. And then finally, we spent a lot of time on our finances. As you all know, we have a new SBA who started July 1st. Their first task was to complete the closeout of the books for the month of June. They've now completed those books. You see financial reports that we're going to vote on today. We also invited our auditor to come to that meeting, and we held a special meeting with the auditor at the end of the committee meeting, just to, alert them to the fact that as a new SBA is coming on, we really need them to be vigilant just to make sure that there are eyes and ears to see if there's anything with this transition that may have gotten messed up, or if there's anything that we need to be aware of, so the auditor is doing some special work for us as well. And just to... you see the financial reports, things that I want to highlight, Our cash balance is down about \$2 million over where it was just a month ago. The cash balance we have today, while it's strong. It's among the lowest numbers that we've had in a few years. Our finances are strong, but you know, we had a deficit last year. We potentially have a deficit again this year and we are starting to dwindle down our cash. So we did have to make some budget adjustments and I do feel like we're in a strong position, but just want to highlight that it has gotten a little bit weaker. As we go to vote today. I... the committee only reviewed the June books, and also the full bill list. We did not review the July financial report, so when we go to vote, I will ask that we focus on just June for now, and we'll do July, and August, in the next board meeting. That's the conclusion of my report. (Boomer)

Personnel Committee

- Thank you all. The committee met on September 17th. We had a robust discussion. We actually went over time a little bit, but in the interest of the village, we discussed payroll providers. And we talked about a significant incident. Additionally, we, talked about our, vacancies per campus actually, very excited to say that we're actually, only have a total of 4 vacancies, and we just had some other, items that we pushed to next meeting, because the time went over, but, everything is tracking. In terms of vacancies, it seems like it's trending down from the previous month, and that is positive. I think I'm at 90 seconds, so I'll end my time there. (Covington)



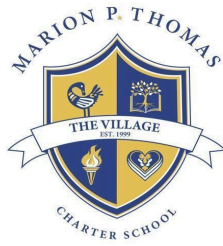
- The committee discussed teacher certification requirements and efforts to reduce provisional certifications. Teacher retention data was also requested but had not yet been received, and the matter was brought to the Executive Committee's attention. (Valdivieso)

Curriculum & Instruction Committee

- Well, good afternoon again, everyone. We have several resolutions that would need to be approved tonight. Our home instruction, as usual, for those students who will be receiving services at home for any allotted time, according to the documents that would support their being on home instruction. We have approval of several field trips coming up. And I'm not going to go through them all, but they are across the district for the high school and for a couple of the other campuses. We have an approval for the use of Turnitin.com contract. We are... Contracting with to use In our district, and for those of you who may not be familiar with that particular program, it deals with having students submit their written work through a program that identifies plagiarism or use of AI without documentation and so forth. So we're looking forward to that, so... we can begin to hone in this, you know, this artificial intelligence and help our students use it wisely. And in addition to that contract, we will also include the proposed policy for the high school, and that's on the user end. And so, we will be... so that everybody knows, you know, what they're doing and what this means in terms of using this software. And then we have approval of Sankofa academic contracts, and there are a few of them that deal with specific areas at the Sankofa campus where students, where we're including, I think physical education, which is one thing. extracurricular activities and pending, and maybe Mr, can help me with this pending. Golf... I think, program for our young people, which I think is excellent. That might be explained more fully, but that's not yet something that we are looking at today as a contract. It is pending. And number K, the approval of... the Insight Health contract, which deals with mental health and supplying services to our campuses, I guess, for our adults and for our children. And finally, we have the approval of kindergarten interest policy, which is based on state-approved policy, and basically it deals with age-appropriate. So, students can be... Or only will be. accepted into our kindergarten if they reach the age 5 by, I believe it's October the 31st, and those who do not, I'm not sure if there's a way that that can circumvent the law, but that is the law, and Marion P. is looking to make sure that we are carrying out the law. And then it moves also to almost on the same level of entrance into first grade, and those students in first grade will have to have reached the age of 6 by October the 31st. So basically, those are the resolutions coming out of our committee, and we ask that, I believe, to package these items or if we need to do any of these separately. (Towe)
 - Just for a point of clarification, yes, the golf contract will be pushed to next month as it wasn't received for legal and finance review. (Griffiths)

Culture & Climate + Alumni Committee

- Good evening, everyone. The committee met on September 15th. Starting with the School Climate Committee. We had the opportunity to welcome both. Parent Representative Slater and Trustee Slate to the committee. We discussed the opportunity of having a student representative on the board, which is currently in process pending the approval of the advisor for the, for the city representative, however, the administration has done a great job in terms of putting together the job description, and once elections take place, we'll then be able to have the student join us on the board. Other than that, the majority of the meeting was focused on some upcoming policy that will



be passed. Hopefully next meeting, including, formalizing the alumni committee, by detailing some of the core responsibilities so that we can start tracking against ways to engage the the larger alumni population, a grievance policy, and also looking into how we can formalize some procedures around creating surveys for the school and, some of the report outs that would be helpful to the board that will conclude my report. (Baffo)

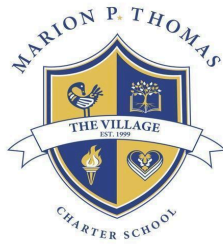
- When are student elections? (Validvieso)
 - I believe that was coming after the approval of the advisor, but I know that they were looking originally at the October timeline, but that is still pending. (Baffo)

Safety Committee

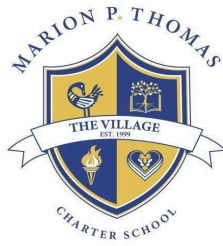
- Hi, everybody. We met and had a very good, productive meeting. Actually, we had to have two this month to get some of the business done. Still, there's still some things we had to table. So first, we have approved in the past, this board approved a contract to service the AEDs that we have in place. These are the defibrillators that we have throughout the school, so we got a report back from Mr. Williams saying that every AED has been checked and is functional. The ones that are older are still getting replaced, because a couple of them are on backorder, but every one is functional and works. We also approved, you might remember a contract to have, A with a company that basically will have a satellite imaging of the school to allow in case of an emergency emergency services to get here early and access parts of the building they need to access quick, so the site visit's complete on that and we're just in the final stages of getting the satellite imaging sent to the appropriate parties. The active shooter blinds that we had ordered, that whole process is complete. Let's see... we talked about, just so y'all know, we have these kind of discussions, we talked about, you know, Newark has a detention facility here, and law enforcement in its most threatening forms is a thing in this community, so we're trying to stay abreast of that. That's constantly on our watch. Just know that... ICE and those other agencies, we're definitely trying to keep abreast of what's going on in this area in the vicinity, so that's something that the Oversight Committee asked about, and Mr. Williams is on top of. Lastly, we spent a lot of time talking about suspensions. As you know, the suspension rate has been something that the state monitors closely, and they mentioned in us getting off probation. So we've been taking a hard look at how we track those, what the policy is, and in fact, the thing that we had to vote on today is the suspension and expulsion policy. For those of you that voted to move it to this... for the board, Ruby may have seen a couple of additional changes once it went through legal review. Nothing substantial. We did add expulsion to the name, so it was suspension policy, but since we talked about expulsions, just to not be confusing, we added suspension and expulsion. policy and everything else, they're... they're little small changes that I don't think are so substantial that they spend... they're worth the time to go into at this point. So, with that, I ask you to vote for that resolution, and that concludes my report. (Valdivieso)

Executive Committee

- Good evening. The Executive Committee has a lot of resolutions. The Executive Committee did meet, and some of the resolutions that we have coming out of the Executive Committee for this session will be our updates to our Standing Committee roster. We have new board members, and with such, we, you know, one thing that we've done since the reorganization meeting in May, we've been really strategic about making sure that we're dotting our I's and crossing our T's. There was some things that we needed to do, especially after becoming a certified Master Board, we realized



that we had some gaps. And so we've been working really hard to kind of refill some of those gaps so that we can move forward. And just quickly also just saying that a part of being on probation, the board was held accountable because they said that we didn't hold our leadership accountable. And so everybody... was... on the fire for probation. And so everybody had to step up to the plate and really get to work. And with that in mind, we've made some major changes, some of which you've already begun to see, and then some I'm going to explain right now. So you guys know that we are a master board, we are continuing to do that training, we continue to try to show up and make sure that we're all present in the community. In addition to that, we've made some changes to our standing committees, we've made some updates to our mandated board policies that we're actually now going to start moving through committee, so that we can actually make sure they're more up-to-date and more current with the needs of the community. And so this is just a passing about that master list, and then we're gonna put them through each committee and do a deeper dive so that all the stakeholders can be present as we begin to fully design these policies. Another thing you're gonna see up here is an approval of our board management software. Again, we're trying to do things more efficiently, and with a lot of people on our board, we have to make sure we have the appropriate software. And so at the last meeting, we voted in Asana. This meeting, we're trying to find another software so that we can be able to properly store our data and documentation so that we can continue to improve our onboarding and offboarding process. You know, Ms. Carter, you did speak to your offboarding process. I was not aware of that, but I'll tell you what we have now, an onboarding and offboarding process. And so, thank you for your service, and that won't happen to anybody else again. Another thing you will see is that we're also empowering our CSA to create some regulations around the significant incident report policy that we drafted. And so, continuing to show that partnership there, and then some other things, we need to get ready for our board retreat. So, that's the gist of all the resolutions coming out of the Executive Committee, and... I ask that you vote in the affirmative. (Gilchrist)



6. RESOLUTIONS

I. [2026-9-29-A: Approval of the September 29, 2026 Regular BOT Meeting Agenda](#)

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington*	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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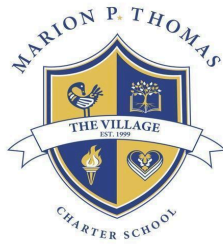
II. [2026-9-29-B: Approval of the August 10, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes](#)

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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**: Motion Seconded



III. *PACKAGE C - E1: Motion: Boomer - Ince** | Approved*

[*2026-9-29-C: Approval of September 26' Finance Report \(Strike July & August Standard Reports\)*](#)

[*2026-9-29-D: Approval of Grant\(s\) Approval/Accepting Funds*](#)

[*2026-9-29-E: Approval of Newark Common App MOU*](#)

[*2026-9-29-E1: Appoint Glenn Richardson as Assistant School Business Administrator*](#)

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington*	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

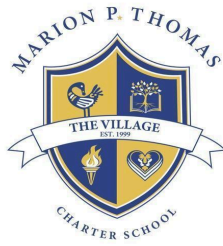
- Mr. Covington expressed concern regarding the school's declining cash reserves and indicated that he would have additional questions at the next board meeting. Mr. Boomer acknowledged the concerns but emphasized that the school maintained a strong cash balance despite recent deficits. He noted that budget adjustments had been made and that increased enrollment could help the school maintain a larger balance.

IV. [*2026-9-29-F: Approval of September 26' Personnel Report*](#)

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo*	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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- V. PACKAGE G - L: Motion: Towe - Ince** | Approved
[2026-9-29-G: Approval of Home Instruction Students](#)
[2026-9-29-H: Approval of Field Trips](#)
[2026-9-29-I: Approval of the Turn It In Contract & Proposed Policy \(High School\)](#)
[2026-9-29-J: Approval of Sankofa Academy Contracts](#)
[2026-9-29-K: Approval of Insite Health Contract](#)
[2026-9-29-L: Approval of Kindergarten Entrance Policy](#)

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince**	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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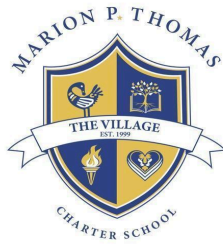
VI. [2026-9-29-M: Approval of Suspension Policy](#)

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso**	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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**.: Motion Seconded



VII. *PACKAGE N, O, Q - S: Motion: Gilchrist - Speight** / Approved*

[2026-9-29-N: Update to MPTCS BOT Standing Committee Roster\(s\)](#)

[2026-9-29-O: Approval on Board Mandated & Monitored Policies](#)

[2026-9-29-Q: MPTCS Board Empowers CSA to Develop the SIR Policy's Regulation](#)

[2026-9-29-R: Authorizing Designation of M. Williams as Agent for Voluntary Benefits](#)

[2026-9-29-S: Approval of Menifield & Associates, LLC. Contract for Board Retreat Facilitation](#)

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight*	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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VIII. [2026-9-29-P: Approval of Board Management Software](#)

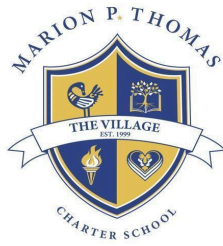
*Favor of Diligent Software / Motion: Speight - Towe** / Approved*

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe**	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

- The Board held an extensive discussion comparing Diligent and OnBoard as potential board management software platforms. Discussion focused on cost, functionality, policy management, document storage, transparency, communication, and overall efficiency. Board members expressed differing preferences regarding the platforms, with consideration given to both financial implications and governance needs. Following discussion, a motion was made to proceed with Diligent, as recommended by the Board Secretary and School Business Administrator.

**.: Motion Seconded



IX. *Motion: Baffo - Gilchrist** / Approved*

2026-9-29-T: Adopting Disciplinary Findings Arising from the CSA's Conduct during the June 22, 2026, Public Evaluation Proceedings

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe**	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

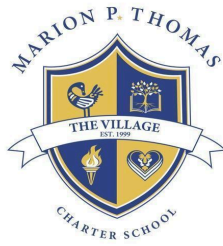
- Valdivieso recused himself.

X. 2026-9-29-U: Adopting Disciplinary Findings Arising from the CSA's Conduct during the June 30, 2026, Executive Session

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince**	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Allan Boomer	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Covington	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	Andre Speight	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

- Valdivieso recused himself.



7. PUBLIC COMMENT - It is now time for public participation. To engage in public comment, all speakers must register via the district's website no later than 5 calendar days prior to the advertised meeting by 5:00 PM ET. Please state your name and address for the record. All speakers will have 2-minutes to address the BOT.

- Hassan Little
- Charmaine Morris
- Leon Pinckney
- Cassandra Dock
- Andre Holis
- DeShay Carter - Approved extra minute

8. CLOSED SESSION - 8:49 PM

9. CLOSING REMARKS FROM BOARD CHAIR:

Thank you to all for your hard work and dedication to the village. Have a great evening! Committees thank you for meeting.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: 8:49 PM ET Gilchrist - Valdivieso** | Approved

Respectfully submitted at: 9/29/2026

Submitted by: MaLiyah E. Griffiths