David Domenici is co-founder of The Maya Angelou Schools, a network of alternative schools in Washington, D.C. He served from 2007 to 2011 as the founding principal of the Maya Angelou Academy, the school located inside D.C.’s long-term secure juvenile facility. He designed the key elements of the school model, including short thematic units aligned with state standards, incentive programming based on the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports framework, a technology-enhanced instruction and learning platform, and a set of technology tools designed to enhance communication between school and correctional staff.

The Maya Angelou Academy’s success has been widely recognized. The changes at the school were termed “remarkable” by a national expert and court-appointed monitor. The Middle States Commission’s accreditation team called the Maya Angelou Academy “one of the best schools we have ever seen.” The school has been featured in local and national publications, including the Washington Post Magazine and Education Week. David left the Academy in the fall of 2011 to start the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings.

Michelle Newell is senior policy associate for the Children’s Defense Fund’s Los Angeles office. Through her policy and advocacy work, Michelle specializes in education and juvenile justice reform, and the overlap of the two fields. She uses research, policy analysis, and coalition work to advocate for systemic reform aimed at keeping youth out of the juvenile justice system whenever possible. Her focus has been on ending punitive school policies that contribute to the “school-to-prison pipeline,” and on reforming the juvenile justice system in Los Angeles and California to ensure that youth are provided effective rehabilitative programming that meets their special needs.

Michelle received her Master’s degree in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where she wrote her master’s thesis on juvenile reentry in Los Angeles County for Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. Earlier, she completed the Education Pioneers graduate fellowship, worked in research and evaluation for the Long Beach Unified School District, and taught fourth grade through Teach for America. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley.
Moriah Barrett is a proud graduate of RTSA at Camp Scott in Saugus. She is a poet, singer, and lyricist. Currently, she works with the County of Los Angeles Public Works and is a peer mentor for the Spirit Awakening Foundation. Moriah wants to “open eyes and encourage and inspire anyone who needs it in any way.”

Adrienne Berke teaches Social Studies/English at RTSA at Camp Miller in Malibu. She joined LACOE in 1990, teaching in Juvenile Court Schools for the past 15 years. As a result of RTSA, Adrienne says she has evolved into a teacher who is more outgoing and accessible to students, creating lessons that are more rigorous and challenging.

Adrienne holds Multiple Subject and Special Education credentials. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Education and Master’s degree in Educational Psychology/Social Studies from Queens College City University of New York.

Ivory J. Thomas, Jr. is 20-year veteran of the Los Angeles County Probation Department. His first assignment was working at Camp Scott-Scudder in Saugus as a night group supervisor. He earned several promotions over the years, and in 2008 became supervising deputy probation officer at Scott-Scudder, providing oversight of all services, safety, and security at the facility.

Ivory saw the transition of Camp Scott-Scudder from an all male to all female population. He has provided oversight and functional service referrals for youth and their families as they transition from camp to the community. He also has served as a school-based staff assistant and liaison to LACOE, providing supervision of in-school and after-school multisystemic services for youth in the greater Los Angeles area.