

Dear Dr. Nyland and Seattle School Board of Directors:

I am writing you all to urge you to reconsider your decision, of closing Middle College located in West Seattle.

As you know Middle College is an Alternative High School that has served our West Seattle community successfully for 18 years. Currently, there is no other alternative high school in our SW region, with the same or equal level of highly qualified and effective teachers of color, that can connect with our at-risk youth, with the influence to close the achievement gap, and prevent drop out rates, through their social justice curriculum.

Although, the District may have other plans for the building, curriculum and teachers of color, I would like to request a special consideration for our at-risk youth who are holding on by a thread to stay in school. There is not a Metro bus that goes direct from West Seattle to Southeast Seattle. The proposed plan that these students commute by taking 2 – 3 buses to get to a School in the Southeast region, is highly unlikely. In fact, most families need our At-Risk Youth to avoid the “negative forces” in downtown Seattle, and the bus ride alone, will continue to feed our kids into the school to prison pipeline.

The future of our children that attend Middle College stand to lose an invaluable educational resource, where a dynamic faculty welcomes, mentors them, and creates a community, where they feel “school is for them”.

Middle College use to be at South Seattle Community College and then it was moved to High Point. This move was devastating, pushing out at-risk students who are not expected to attend college. At that time, the District had plans to close Middle College, but it remained opened. Now we are back on the chopping block again.

When we think of Equitable Education, there are many factors that make a program successful: a staff that can relate to our children, qualified teachers of color, social justice curriculum that engages our youth, location, access to public transportation, funding, school leadership that supports faculty, that is culturally competent, that believes in our children, and wrap around health and human services.

As a District, if we want to close the Opportunity Gap, we cannot standardize our children’s curriculum and think that we will test them out of poverty. Middle College is a successful school, and a rich resource for the District to turn too, to see what is working. The Northern regions of the district have always had Alternative High Schools and the SW region needs one as well. We cannot deny that for decades our children from the SW and the SE always travel the most to get to school. Our SE and SW schools are the first to close, to be labeled as failing, and this reason alone is why Legislators attempted to split the district, because our children that reside in the SE and the SW are disproportionately adversely affected by District policy decisions.

So in closing, our community faces economic hardship, less educational resources (limited bussing, no counselors, unavailable certified substitute teachers, and teacher

gap salaries ranging from 10K upward). Our regions do not stand a chance to keep qualified teachers, due to the inequitable salaries between regions. We find this the case for qualified Teachers of Color and also harsher disciplinarian actions by principals.

I hope you and the Board of Directors, will re-consider your decision, and understand the depth this decision has on our youth, our teachers, and our future. We need Middle College and we need to keep our phenomenal highly quality Teachers of Color at Middle College, with an engaging social justice curriculum in tact.

I hope I have been able to shed some light on the matter, and look forward to discussing this further with you and any departmental leadership that is part of this decision making process.

Thank you for your attention to these matters,

Annabel Quintero
Founder, Fund Title 1 Schools