

May 2015

To all whom it may concern of the Seattle School district.

RE: Middle College at Highpoint's Neighborhood house.

It has come to my attention that the district feels that it is okay to shut down a program that engages, supports, encourages and offers success and self-achievement to students who NEED it the MOST! To say that I am out-raged and appalled is an absolute under-statement. You, the educators, have an obligation towards all kids and there should be NO child left behind!

I feel passionately about this because I have a son who struggled from the time he entered into kindergarten. He was placed into special Education, given an IEP and yet we still struggled, clawed and fought the school district to provide our son with the tools that he needed to be successful. This continued through elementary school and into the 1<sup>st</sup> month of middle school, all traditional schools. Finally we placed him in an alternative school where teachers were passionate about their students, got to know the whole child and their backgrounds! This small group of educators turned things around for our son. He went from almost failing to an A student!! I think now, he could have been a school drop out! He could have been a statistic! He could have been a child no-one cared enough about! A child with no name, low self-esteem and making poor choices. Instead, he was given a place where he was pushed to be successful, taught study skills, held accountable and accepted responsibility for his choices! Alternative education provided for my son where traditional education could not! I believe passionately in alternative schools and the teachers deserve standing ovations for their time, effort and above all else, believing in him and all kids just like him! Yet, all they ask for is the support and funding from the district, not for THEMSELVES, but for their STUDENTS! For kids like my son! Many kids don't even have the support of their families for various reasons, all they have are the teachers who go over and beyond to build these kids up and let them know that they matter! That they can achieve great things! My son was accepted into Aviation High School and then attended CWU. I know for a FACT, that he would not have moved forward with his education had it not been for the alternative school that he was placed in to! How can anyone deny a child the right to be successful? Why do kids of Middle College NOT have the support of the district? Why do their lives NOT matter? Why are their teachers NOT heard? What, if under the same circumstances as these kids, would YOU want for your child? These kids NEED Middle College! It not an entitlement! It is not a luxury! This school is an opportunity for these kids to lift themselves up, a chance to believe in themselves. To see in themselves what their teachers see in them. It's a

moment given to them in their lives to move forward and know that their dreams can and will be a reality. WE cannot turn our backs on children that need us the most!

I urge you to re-think what you are taking away from these kids! Have you visited the school? Have you spoken to their teachers? Have you heard from the students? They have voices, their opinions matter. The school matters!

Yes I am just a mom. Does my voice matter? I believe in public education and I want my kids to believe in public education, but how can they if schools like Middle College are shut down with no thought and consideration to the HUGE impact this will have to the kids in programs like these?

Middle College DOES matter! Alternative Education DOES matter. My passion comes from first-hand experience and I believe EVERY child that does not fall into the pigeon hole of traditional schools deserves an equal opportunity! They deserve to be in an environment where they are happy, treated respectfully and given the tools to reach their full potential. They are learning life skills and the power to succeed. It is the obligation of the school district to honor these kids and to continue to provide programs like Middle School as every child has the right to an education!

Please honor your commitment to these programs, to these kids and to their teachers that make a difference in every-one of their lives. Teachers that sacrifice and give all of themselves to teaching these kids, OUR kids!

PLEASE do NOT close down Middle College!!!

Sincerely,

Claudia Haynes

“A voice for alternative education”