



**Kshama Sawant**  
**Seattle City Councilmember**

June 17, 2015

Seattle School Board and Superintendent Larry Nyland  
Seattle Public Schools  
2445 3rd Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98134

Dear Superintendent Larry Nyland and School Board Members Stephan Blanford, Sherry Carr, Sue Peters, Marty McLaren, Harium Martin-Morris, Sharon Peaslee, and Betty Patu;

Thank you for your ongoing support for public education. I am writing to join the many educators, students, family, and community members of Middle College who have spoken out against the proposed closure of Middle College at High Point.

Seattle Public Schools must be run to serve the public. Alternative schools like Middle College are dedicated to meeting the needs of diverse learners, with a focus on preparing students for higher education. Support for Middle College is central to addressing high school dropout rates and gaps in academic achievement. A serious approach to further development would include more sites like Middle College modeled after the pedagogy of those at High Point and Ida B. Wells located at the University of Washington.

Rather than expanding support for these programs, I have heard that the district plans to close the Middle College site at High Point, forcing out many longstanding educators of color who have made Middle College so successful. Students will have to change schools, and deal with a serious disruption to their education. What message does it send to struggling students if they are forced out of a learning environment where they are thriving?

I am also concerned about the race and social justice impact of this school closure. Around the country, public schools that predominately educate students of color have been closed down in recent years. Seattle should stand up against this terrible national trend, not exacerbate it. Unfortunately, in 2008 Seattle Public Schools closed five schools, all of which served a majority of students of color.

Not only did these previous school closures have a devastating impact on the students of those schools at the time, they also created capacity problems from which Seattle Public Schools has not yet recovered. At a time when Seattle Schools is under investigation for disproportionate suspensions of students of color, you should be looking for every opportunity to support social justice curriculum, programs, and schools such as Middle College, not closing them.

**City Hall, 600 Fourth Avenue, Floor 2, PO Box 34025, Seattle, Washington 98124-4025**  
**(206) 684-8016, Fax: (206) 684-8587, TTY: (206) 233-0025**

**E-mail Address: [kshama.sawant@seattle.gov](mailto:kshama.sawant@seattle.gov) Web: <http://www.seattle.gov/council/sawant>**

An EEO employer. Accommodations for people with disabilities provided upon request.

I stand in solidarity with the teachers, students, alumni, and community in demanding that you reverse the rushed and shortsighted decision to close Middle College at High Point, retain the current Middle College model for what it has always been, and reinstate the teachers, who are so fully supported by the community, to their positions immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kshama Sawant', with a stylized, cursive script.

Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant

An equal opportunity employer

600 Fourth Avenue, Floor 2, PO Box 34025, Seattle, Washington 98124-4025

Office: (206) 684-8804 Fax: (206) 684-8587 TTY: (206) 233-0025

email: [peter.steinbrueck@seattle.gov](mailto:peter.steinbrueck@seattle.gov)

[www.cityofseattle.net/council/steinbrueck](http://www.cityofseattle.net/council/steinbrueck)