



Seattle City Council

June 29, 2015

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

Dear Superintendent Larry Nyland,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts and support for public education. We are writing to join Council's voice to the many educators, students, family, and community members of Middle College who have reached out to ask you to keep Middle College High School at High Point open.

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.

At the last school board meeting, supporters of Middle College at High Point gave very moving testimony about the impact Middle College has had on their lives. Some of its teachers are graduates who have returned to the school that made such a difference in their lives, and graduating seniors spoke about the impact of their experiences at the school.

Rather than expanding support for these programs, we have heard that you plan to close Middle College at High Point. Students will have to change schools and deal with a serious disruption to their education. A program that has made the difference between a student dropping out of school and graduating to go on to college will no longer be available.

Thank you for sending the Department of Education and Early Learning a summary of your reasons for considering this school closure. You state declining enrollment as a major factor. But instead of continuing to look for new ways to refer struggling students to Middle College, as we encourage you to do, the administration has frozen enrollment this past year.

Given the impact Middle College has had on students' lives, we think the cost of 2.2 FTE positions and \$28,000 a year in rent is a worthwhile investment in the future of our children.

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<http://www.seattle.gov/council>

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

We are also concerned about the race and social justice impact of this school closure. The 2008 closure of five Seattle schools, all of which served a majority students of color, led to capacity problems and serious impacted many families. Around the country, public schools that predominately educate students of color have been closed down in recent years. Seattle should stand up against this national trend, not exacerbate it.

We support the teachers, students, alumni and community in requesting that you reverse the decision to close Middle College at High Point, and urge you to retain the current Middle College model for what it has always been and reinstate the teachers to their positions.

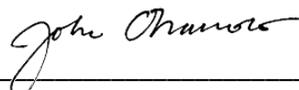
Sincerely,



Councilmember Nick Licata



Councilmember Mike O'Brien



Councilmember John Okamoto



Councilmember Kshama Sawant