MEMO

To: Dr. Mark Bedell, Superintendent
To: KCPS Board of Directors
From: South Middle School Steering Committee
Date: June 30, 2017
Re: South Middle School Steering Committee Recommendations

1.0 Purpose of Steering Committee

The KCPS Master Plan, approved in February 2016, called for the creation of a steering committee to investigate the potential of opening a 3rd middle school that would serve the community south of Brush Creek. In January 2017, the steering committee, which includes representatives and stakeholders from KCPS, charter and private schools, as well as community organizations, began convening. The committee is tasked with the important work of “conducting an assessment and providing a recommendation to the Superintendent and School Board about the opportunities and challenges in creating a third middle school south of Brush Creek.” See Appendices for a list of the steering committee members, meeting notes and meeting presentations.

2.0 Priorities (What are we trying to achieve?)

In order to assess the opportunities/challenges of creating a third middle school that serves students who live South of Brush Creek (SOBC); the steering committee was asked to identify why are we having a discussion about creating a third middle school SOBC? “What are we trying to achieve?”

The committee members have identified the importance of providing opportunities for all middle school students based on four overarching principles: Academic Excellence, Social/Emotional Health, Equity and Diversity. In respect to the possible creation of a middle school south of Brush Creek, these principles need to be public and intentional, and built into the fabric of the school from the start (i.e., diversity is much easier to achieve if this is a goal from Day 1).

Academic Excellence: To provide a rigorous, relevant, and responsive curriculum where students meet and exceed national standards and achieve 21st century skills.

Social/Emotional Health: To provide a nurturing and caring environment for social and emotional development and well-being.

Equity: All students receive the resources they need to be successful.

Diversity: a) A student body that is reflective of the school-aged demographics of the area SOBC (racial/economic)

b) Staff diversity reflective of the demographics of the area SOBC and a wide range of life and teaching experience

1 Note: Not all committee members prioritized achieving student diversity. First and foremost they wanted to prioritize quality schools over working to achieve student diversity.
While the committee has been asked to focus on middle school programming to serve student who live SOBC, the aforementioned goals should be applied to all schools within KCPS. Unfortunately, the committee does not believe that any of the KCPS middle school programs (aside from Lincoln) are achieving these principles, and the committee’s recommendations will focus on how to achieve this for middle school students who live SOBC.

3.0 Key Findings/Data Trends (Where are we?)

The following outlines major findings/key data trends that were identified and discussed by the steering committee. These are organized as 1) key findings; 2) demographic trends; 3) enrollment & student demographic trends; and 4) south middle school survey feedback.

3.1 KEY FINDINGS

a. Concerns that the existing middle school/high school programs (KCPS + charter) are not robust enough to effectively serve students nor compete with the suburbs

   Loss of enrollment at secondary grades (see enrollment trends)
   Declining school-aged population within district boundaries (see demographic trends)
   Number of school sites serving middle school grades (and the resulting low number of students/grade at those sites) impacts offerings (6 KCPS and 17 charter schools)

b. Many KCPS schools have perception and awareness issues that need to be addressed in order to retain more families

   Difficult to navigate PK-12 system (KCPS + charter schools), i.e., families don’t know a) what programs are available b) what options exist for PK-12
   Perceptions of neighborhood schools, especially at secondary level, are low (see south middle school survey feedback)
   Central Middle School is not viewed as a viable option for many SOBC parents (location is too far, the neighborhood is not perceived as safe, and the perception is that the school’s academic performance is not where it should be)

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

a. School-aged population loss SOBC has been 5X larger than overall population loss SOBC

   The South of Brush Creek (SOBC) school-aged population decline from 2000 – 2015 was almost five times more than the overall SOBC population decline (-20.7% school-aged children & -4.0% overall population)

b. Significant black population loss since 2000

   Black population has steadily declined since 1980, but largest loss was between 2000-2015 (-24.5% districtwide & -21.1% SOBC), especially for black children under age 18 (-41.6% districtwide & -38.2% SOBC)

c. White population increasing since 2010

   After decades of population loss, white population has begun to increase districtwide (+3.6%) and SOBC (+11.9%), especially for white children under age 18 (+19.2%)
3.3 ENROLLMENT & STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

a. Public school enrollment has decreased since charters were authorized in 1999, but has stabilized since 2010
   Public school enrollment (KCPS + charters) decreased -27% between 1999 and 2017

b. Lower birth rates and declining population under age 5 (districtwide) are impacting Kindergarten enrollment
   Overall Kindergarten enrollment (KCPS + charters) has decreased -3% since SY2015 even though more Kindergarten seats have been created at new/expanding charter schools

c. Major enrollment shifts have occurred from KCPS schools to charter schools during transition from elementary school to middle school
   KCPS enrollment decreased an average of -11% from 6th to 7th grade over last 2 years, whereas charter school enrollment increased an average of 7.8% from 6th to 7th grade over last 2 years
   Enrollment (KCPS + charters) is 15-20% smaller in 6th grade than in Kindergarten over the last 3 years

d. Public school (KCPS + charters) enrollment declines from 9th – 12th grades are significant and warrant additional examination
   Public school enrollment (KCPS + charters) declined an average of -26% between 9th and 10th grade over last two years (SY15 – SY17)
   Charter school enrollment declined an average of -15% per year between 10th and 11th grade and 11th and 12th grade over the last two years (SY15-SY17)

e. Cohort survival at some high performing schools (KCPS & charters) is very low and warrants additional examination

f. Most schools SOBC lack racial diversity
   Only 3 schools SOBC have white enrollment > 10% in SY2016
   Only 22% of SOBC charter schools had Hispanic enrollment >5% vs 50% of SOBC KCPS schools in SY2016

g. KCPS serves a significantly higher % of IEP students than charter schools
   Districtwide: 13.5% IEP for KCPS vs 7.6% IEP for charters; SOBC: 16.6% IEP for KCPS vs 7.3% IEP for charters (SY2016)

h. Lack of information re: where charter school students live creates challenges in fully understanding demographic/enrollment trends and the potential population of students who could enroll in a KCPS middle school SOBC
3.4 SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY FEEDBACK

a. Respondents were evenly split between middle school grade configuration options (6-8th grades vs 7-8th grades)

b. Most respondents preferred smaller middle schools
20% preferred middle schools with less than 250 students & 42% preferred middle schools between 251 – 450 students (KCPS middle school standard is 450 – 800 students)

c. Respondents gave their child’s school high ratings
90% of respondents gave their child’s school an “A” or “B” rating (highest ratings came from charter and signature elementary school parents)

d. KCPS neighborhood schools have major perception challenges
73% of parents who send their children to a neighborhood elementary school gave it a rating of “A” or “B”
47% of signature elementary schools gave their neighborhood elementary school a rating of “A” or “B”
9% of charter school parents gave their neighborhood elementary school a rating of “A” or “B”
74% of respondents gave their neighborhood middle and high schools a rating of “D” or “F” or “I don’t know”

4.0 Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned information, the steering committee outlined the following opportunities and challenges in creating a third middle school south of Brush Creek:

4.1 OPPORTUNITIES

a. Create a middle school that achieves the four desired principles (as identified by the steering committee): Academic Excellence, Social/Emotional Health, Equity and Diversity

b. Increase enrollment:
   - Retain more KCPS and charter elementary students into the middle school grades (stop the loss of students)
   - Attract middle school students from elementary charter schools
   - Attract more families to elementary (if they feel they have a solid middle school option) which could potentially justify reopening Bryant as a neighborhood elementary school
   - Increase enrollment in public high schools once families remain in the district through the middle school years
c. Build stronger connections between the community in the southern part of the district and KCPS (by establishing a physical presence)

d. Potential for building community partnerships that could engage with extra-curriculars, etc.

e. Build a strong community within the middle school (because a school in the south would be located closer to where SOBC families live)

f. Potential to capitalize on the positive energy that exists in the community to support/build-up KCPS

g. This is not just a KCPS issue, it’s a KC issue (KCPS can’t accomplish this with current KCPS students only - we will have to work together to make this a success)

h. Potential to create a network/relationships between KCPS and charter schools in the south to better serve middle school students (breaking ground)

### 4.2 CHALLENGES

a. Too many middle schools (middle school students served at 23 different sites)

b. Resources are spread too thin

c. We currently don’t know what middle school students are offered at all the middle school sites (with respect to course offerings/extra-curriculars/wrap-around supports)

d. We don’t fully understand why families are leaving KCPS boundaries

e. How do we define a “successful” middle school? Are we meeting the needs of students?

f. Instability in the current system (KCPS + charter)

g. Neighborhoods aren’t diverse (if we want a diverse school, someone has to give something up with regards to proximity to the school)

h. Impact on Central Middle (enrollment/resources)

i. Financial feasibility of opening another middle school

j. Segregation of KC (in neighborhoods and in schools)

k. Comfort level of white and middle class families with economic and racial diversity

l. Will white and middle class families (of all races/ethnicities) take a chance on a new school (especially at the middle school level)?

m. How to ensure equity for students who don’t attend the SOBC middle school

n. Creating a strong middle school option in the south is not just a KCPS issue, it’s a KC issue (KCPS can’t accomplish this with current KCPS students only - we will have to work together to make this a success)
At its final meeting on May 25, 2017, the south middle school steering committee expressed strong support for the creation of a 3rd middle school SOBC, but with the following caveats:

4.3 CAVEATS

a. does not negatively impact KCPS’ existing middle schools (equity is critical)

b. financially feasible

c. must demonstrate that students needs would be better served by opening a 3rd middle school

d. must grow KCPS enrollment and/or stop the loss of students from the KCPS system

e. need to define which elementary schools/how elementary school students would feed into the middle school

In order to assess the viability of addressing the aforementioned caveats, the committee recommends the following actions be taken by KCPS, charter schools and community partners over the next 12 months:

4.4 NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS

a. Conduct research on why families are leaving the KCPS boundaries (those that leave KCPS and charter systems) so that we can assess how to collectively better serve students and their families

b. Conduct research into what students are currently offered at the middle and high school grades at KCPS, charter and private schools (course offerings/extra-curriculars/support programs/etc.) to determine whether students’ needs are being met

c. After understanding the findings of the aforementioned research, KCPS and charter schools need to define expectations/minimum standards (courses/electives, extra-curriculars, enrichment programming, etc.) necessary to create great experiences for middle school students

d. After understanding the findings of the aforementioned research, KCPS and charter schools need to come together to discuss how to better serve middle school students and reduce the number of families that leave our boundaries (create stronger pathways/feeder from K-12). Note: this ties back to the identified challenges (too many middle schools/resources are spread too thin/instability in the current system/Creating a strong middle school option in the south is not just a KCPS issue, it’s a KC issue

e. Conduct impact study on how opening a 3rd middle school SOBC would affect existing middle schools

f. Conduct impact assessment of middle school grade configuration differences across KCPS system

g. Conduct financial feasibility assessment (note: KCPS should have access to same start-up grant funding that charter schools can access)

h. Consider additional actions that can be taken in the near-term (i.e., revising Lincoln Middle admissions requirement; build community support for Central Middle and awareness programs for Central (meet the new principal, tour of school, reviewing school choice survey research that will be finalized soon, etc.));

i. Consider creation of an on-going/implementation committee (many committee members would like to stay involved)

j. Report out on findings and inform constituents if/when/how KCPS can move forward with a middle school SOBC
APPENDIX A: South Middle School Steering Committee Members

Sean Ackerson, Southtown Council
Ken Bacchus, Urban Summit
Julie Ball, Hale Cook
Tufanza Byrd-Primos, Academie Lafayette/Lincoln Prep
Dwayne Crompton, Urban Summit
Sarah Darmitzel, Hale Cook
Tricia DeGraff, AFIA
Noah Devine, SchoolSmartKC
Andrea Ellis, Border Star Montessori
Jennifer von Fintel, Lincoln Prep
Andrea Flinders, AFT
Francie Grandanette, Pathway Academy/Hale Cook
Princeston Grayson, KCPS Central Office
Anika Hickman, Hale Cook
Julie Holland, Mayor’s Office
Jude Huntz, CCO
Karen James, Hartman
Rosa James, NAACP/Black Agenda Group
Miriam King, DAC
Angie Lile, Border Star Montessori
Brigid Klamann, CCO
Anthony Lewis, KCPS Central Office
Michael Moore, Lincoln Prep
Tiffany Moore, Armour Hills Homes Association
Jan Parks, More2
Kim Pollard, Holliday Montessori
Karen Smith, St. Peter’s/Academie Lafayette
Sally Tudhope, Former SW Faith Based Coalition
Travanna Alexander, Holliday Montessori
Barbara Washington, Urban Summit
Garrett Webster, KCPS Central Office

Facilitators:
Shannon Jaax, KCPS Central Office
Natalie Allen, KCPS Central Office
South Middle School Steering Committee
Meeting #6
May 25, 2017

The committee members reviewed the group discussion notes from the April 22nd meeting and shared additional feedback, which included:

#3: Make MS 6-8th grade

- The question of where kids go for MS
- 6th grade should be with 7 and 8 (2 people) Montessori doesn't need to keep until 6
- Some ES feed 6th into MS and some should keep them as a potential plan?
- There is inconsistency with how we matriculate → we need to fix (ie: K-6, K-8, 7 & 8, 6-8)
- 9th grade centers?
- If we do a 6-8 it should be 6-8 across the district
- More neighborhood market research needed
- Investments in schools need to be equitable

#9: Make Central Middle kick-a**

- Central MS has a location issue
- Academie Lafayette has some cultural issues: There is some research that needs to be done
- We have too much choice: Baskin Robbins example: people were happier with 3 choices (chocolate, vanilla, strawberry)
- Need to get everyone to the table: district, charter, private

#10: Attempt to find a MS that is west of Troost

- A South Middle School shouldn’t drive progress for other schools, all should be independently great
- Agree that a MS on the west side is needed
- Is this (a 3rd MS) REALLY viable?
- First wave of loss: Kindergarten; 2nd wave: 6th grade
- Need to ask the charters: how much do you care to serve 6-8 if we open this MS? Would you partner with KCPS for the MS?
- Interim step: reopen Lincoln MS & remove/lessen testing requirements
- Pathway Academy: kids want to go to school in their neighborhood, kids leave the charter at 5th grade to go to Kauffman
- Parents have their own internal feeder system
- 63rd Street corridor: charter row
- Is this a KCPS issue or a Kansas City issue?
- Should we make the school a signature, test-in school?
The committee reviewed the purpose of the committee – “conducting an assessment and providing a recommendation to the Superintendent and School Board about the opportunities and challenges in creating a third middle school south of Brush Creek” and identified the following opportunities and challenges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not a KCPS issue, it’s a KC issue</td>
<td>Not a KCPS issue, it’s a KC issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Could achieve diversity</td>
<td>Resources spread too thin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase enrollment (stop the loss of students)</td>
<td>Too many middle schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical presence in south would help build connection to KCPS</td>
<td>Don’t know what kids are offered currently (academics/extra-curricular/supports)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community partners that would like to engage with extra-curriculars</td>
<td>Don’t know why families are leaving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attract students from elementary charters</td>
<td>How do we define a “successful school”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attract more families for elementary (if have solid MS option)</td>
<td>Instability in the current system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitalize on positive energy around making changes in KCPS</td>
<td>Neighborhoods aren’t diverse (someone has to give something up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming a community within the MS (because located closer to where families live)</td>
<td>Impact on Central Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a network between district and charters (breaking ground)</td>
<td>Financial feasibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create awesome school</td>
<td>Segregation of KC (comfortability)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will families take a chance on a new school (especially at the MS level)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Equity</td>
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After discussing the opportunities/challenges, the committee was asked “Does the committee support the creation of a 3rd middle school SOBC? If so, under what caveats/conditions”? All the committee members present (except one) expressed support for the creation of a 3rd middle school SOBC, but with caveats/conditions/next steps to determine the viability/impact of a 3rd middle school. The group agreed that a 12 month timeframe was realistic to complete the necessary due diligence/research:

- KCPS and charters need to define what are our expectations (curriculum, extra-curriculars, programming) to create great experiences for MS students. And What it will take to achieve this (school size, etc)
- Doesn’t negatively impact existing MS (equity) emphasis to serve kids that can’t move, etc
- Research what kids are currently offered at MS and HS
- Research why families are leaving (what are there needs) and why they are making the school choices they are making
- KCPS and charters need to talk (create pathways and system that better serves K-12 system & MS students)
• Develop a feeder system (from elementary and where they are going for HS)
• Has to grow the pie or stop the bleeding
• Demonstrate that students needs will be better served
• Look for some quick wins (i.e., changing the Lincoln admissions requirement; build community support for Central Middle and awareness programs for Central (tour of school)
• Consider creation of an on-going / implementation committee

Next steps: KCPS staff will made edits to the draft memo (based off the feedback/discussion) and circulate to the committee members for comments/edits.
South Middle School Steering Committee  
Meeting #5 – Table Discussions  
April 22, 2017

Table Discussions:

Q1: Brainstorming Activity: How can we provide opportunities for middle school students south of Brush Creek that achieve the committee’s four overarching principles: Academic Excellence, Social/Emotional Health, Equity and Diversity?

**Group 1**
- Create 6th grade center
- Revise middle schedules to cost share enrichment course offering across charter and district
- It is possible to have a smaller middle school (400)
- Have enrichment during the day not afterschool
- Make middle school 6-8 and remove middle school from the signatures
- Don’t re-open Lincoln Middle
- Combine sports team to provide more athletic offerings (district and charter)
- Start small and grow
- Separate middle school
- Restart - have to start diverse to get diversity

**Group 2**
- Pen Pals across metro
  - Opportunity to create relationships across schools
  - Prior to middle school
- Create a middle school with an innovative model
  - i.e., one that supports what middle schoolers go through as an age group
  - Specific themed model like project-based, entrepreneurial, etc. Something NOT currently already in the district
- Keeping an energy of exploration in the middle years
- If we don’t open a new school:
  - Strong leadership is important
  - Have AC Prep K-6th then have 7th and 8th become broader—more exploratory
  - Then have specialized programs float between schools by semester
  - On-site dental clinic that serves both youth and families. Wrap-around services
  - Services and training for staff
  - Kick-A** programming will draw parents from around the city
    - Also positive relationships and continuation of peer-support
  - Prior to school transition/relationship building time
Group 3

- Middle School west of Troost
- Use Southwest for two things:
  - Middle School AND
  - High School OR
  - IEP Center
- 7th Grade Center at Bryant?
  - Q: How big is this building
    - 425 seats?
    - No air / old
- NOTE: More data needed charters to understand where to start them at middle (6th? 7th? 8th?)
- Brainstorm between district and charters to see if collaboration can happen as to when they end lower El.
- Some charters end at 4th grade, others at 5th. A better plan should be in place so there are less decision points
- Whatever we do, it must be innovative to attract families

After brainstorming, the committee members ranked the following ideas (each committee member picked their top 3):

1. Revise school size standards/smaller middle schools (less than 450-800) – 13 votes
2. Remove middle school grades from signature high schools (Lincoln, Paseo) and K-8 schools (FLA, AC Prep) – 5 votes
3. Make MS 6-8th grade - 7 votes
4. Re-open Lincoln Middle School building – 1 vote
5. No testing/no signature middle schools – 2 votes
6. Don’t reopen Lincoln Middle – 2 votes
7. Could the district be the single authorizer for any new or expanding charters? – 1 vote
8. Change Middle School locations (one north and one south) – 0 votes
9. Make Central Middle kick-a** – 5 votes
10. Attempt to find a MS that is west of Troost – 6 votes
11. Can AC Prep be PK-6, and then 7-8 be more exploratory to attract more families – 0 votes
12. Use Southwest for MS and build to HS later or another complimentary use (support center, training, etc) – 4 votes
13. 7th grade center at Bryant – 1 vote
14. Create a 6th grade center – 0 votes
15. Separate MS buildings – 3 votes

The committee members then discussed idea #1, 2, 3, 9, and 10 and identified a) what do you like about the idea; b) What concerns do you have? What are the potential pitfalls?; c) Could the idea be modified to be improved? How?
#1: Revise school size standards/smaller middle schools (less than 450-800) – 13 votes

What do you like about the idea?
- Small school communities provide opportunities for students to be known/feel known
- Easier to intentionally diversify
- Geographic diversity
- Relationships and support system are better—closer community
- Behavior is better
- For social/emotional learning/personalized
- More neighborhood feel (sense of community)

What concerns do you have? What are the potential pitfalls?
- Money (financial feasibility)
- Less resources and high-quality staff (Human Resources)
- Lack of resources
- Expense (don’t have enough kids)
- Neg impact
- Min enrichment opportunities (inequitable and ↓ academic excellence)
- Does it prepare for HS

Could the idea be modified to be improved? How?
- Less resources: then you can partner with other schools
- Leveraging resources already in the community → District-wide
- Cost share w/ charters for enrichment and sports

#2: Remove middle school grades from signature high schools (Lincoln, Paseo) and K-8 schools (FLA, AC Prep) – 5 votes

What do you like about the idea?
- Pulling them out will help us to have a more full school instead of several ½ empty
- ↑ diversity
- Opportunity for exploration
- ↑ size of school and resources
- Could help with ESL and AE if properly resources
- Provides more students for new school
- 6-8th creates a safer environment that allows youth to grow at a separate pace from high school

What concerns do you have? What are the potential pitfalls?
- No feeder for FLA and AC Prep so doesn’t make sense, but yes for Lincoln, Paseo, yes.
- Needs strong, consistent leader
- Communication to parents and community
- Negative impact on the signature schools
• Parental/family impact
• Could lose students focused on those programs
• Take away options

Could the idea be modified to be improved? How?
• Remove testing requirements (to get into middle) which encourages parents to stay longer
• Need to grandfather in transitions (Could do it over years and not immediately)
• Have data and support to come with the change
• Just make 7-8
• Have to create an innovative alternative at those middle schools
• Share resources between middle schools

#3 Make MS 6-8th grade - 7 votes

What do you like about the idea?
• We’ve changed our mind

What concerns do you have? What are the potential pitfalls?
• Equity: Too many elementary schools are depending on K-6th population (Montessori needs 6th grade to solidify all previous lessons)
• 6th graders need a chance to be leaders
• Many schools (charters) end at different levels
• Should be 7-8, contingent on signature schools releasing their middle schoolers
• SEL of 6th

Could the idea be modified to be improved? How?
• Modify to 7th and 8th OR 7th, 8th and 9th → to keep 9th graders from dropping out

#9: Make Central Middle kick-a** – 5 votes

What do you like about the idea?
• Start with what you have, make it great and then replicate
• Great location
• New leadership coming

What concerns do you have? What are the potential pitfalls?
• All schools must be kick-a** equally
• Doesn’t solve perception issues that exist
• All schools should be kick-a**
• How to change the culture
Could the idea be modified to be improved? How?

- Good things happening at Central MS—marketing—make it known—strategic plan for marketing
- Determine what you want to see there. What’s the end game? How do we get there?

#10: Attempt to find a MS that is west of Troost – 6 votes

What do you like about the idea?
- You can’t have true diversity without having a school west of Troost
- White people will come
- Makes sure that KCPS has a strong footprint on the west side

What concerns do you have? What are the potential pitfalls?
- All schools should be excellent choices/high quality education
- Look at research
- Equality and equity and diversity in the student and staff populations

Could the idea be modified to be improved? How?
- Feeder patterns: boundaries would have to be thoughtful in terms of diversity
- How can you make sure the new innovative school pushes positive change in other schools north and east
Homework for 04/22/17 Meeting:

**Brainstorming activity – How can we provide opportunities for middle school students south of Brush Creek that achieve the committee’s four overarching principles: Academic Excellence, Social/Emotional Health, Equity and Diversity?**

Note: See Slides 8 – 20 from the 4th Meeting for additional information/data that may assist in your evaluation (survey preferences, enrollment trends, race/ethnicity trends, maps, etc.)

Please add your ideas to the list BELOW (there are no wrong answers; don’t be afraid to think outside the box):

- remove middle school options from our high schools so that they are in a building on their own for 7th and 8th grade
- consider making the “ideal” school size a lot smaller (250-350) than it is currently (450-800). The data shows that we have enough seats at those schools to fill seats at a dedicated middle school south of Brush Creek with that size in mind.
- remove testing requirements from elementary to middle school and simply feeds our students into a neighborhood middle school, 7th and 8th graders can acclimate to Junior High and puberty before going on to the high schools they want (telling families with 4th graders that their student’s scores aren’t good enough to get the best education that KCPS offers at Middle-school levels basically forces those families to start making big life changing plans and disengages them from future KCPS messaging)
- investigate the option to re-open Lincoln Middle School for all students but even if you choose not to open a new middle school SOBC, at the very least, the testing requirements need to be removed from Lincoln for 7th and 8th graders
- stop admitting 6th graders to Lincoln
- place focus on offering robust after-school programs for middle school students and parents
- place more emphasis on IEPs at all schools and not just in 2-3 public schools
- strategy/intervention to address perception issues (I have heard from several parents there that students at Paseo are not learning anything important (Math, English, Science))
South Middle School Steering Committee  
Meeting #3 – Table Discussions & Requests for Additional Info  
March 4, 2017

Table Discussions:

Q1: Members of the committee expressed a desire for a middle school with student diversity. What does this mean to you?

Group 1
- Nobody knows difference
- 50% black, 30% white, 20% other
- Within 10% of SOBC demographic
- Must be diverse at the start
- Diversity goal needs to be public and intentional
- Teaching staff and leadership racially diverse

Group 2
- Ethnicity/Race
- Programs/services available for the different types of students. Teachers are educated enough to help diverse students
- Financial diversity – economics
- All types of families LGBTQ more than just student diversity

Group 3
- No response

Group 4
- No Response

Group 5
- Child interaction outside of school  
  - Interpersonal relationships
- Family Advocacy – Ambassadors
- Economics diversity
- Learning capacity
- Reflect the community (all)
Q2. Looking at the demographics of our students SOBC, how could we achieve this?

Group 1
- quality, equity, diversity
- Acquire faculty that are excellent
- Have founding principal and teaching staff a year or two out of opening
- Provide more transparency and better vision for schools quality to stop the Black flight
- Messaging is not excuses, but how we will and are improving
- Word of mouth is how perception of new school is formed
- Have school messengers in all neighborhood and SOBC schools to change perceptions of middle school

Group 2
- If you create an excellent educational experience the population will be attracted to it
- Border Star is on 63rd Street. It is on the bus line easy for AA families to get to. It is also easy to see on a busy thoroughfare
- Communication is a big factor. To let people know where it is and what is going on [marketing]
- Must also begin with excellent leadership

Group 3
- No Response

Group 4
- No Response

Group 5
- Signature type of school
  - Marketing
  - What attracts
  - Personalized learning
    - Personal pace
    - Integrated learning
    - Project – based learning
- Direct connection to real life/career/future education
- Academic resume building
  - Partnerships
  - College connections
- Fresh start

Requests for Additional Information/Other Comments:
- We also need to talk about a high school, not just middle school
- What’s available? What’s the pathway?
- Need to know where the charter kids live
- Why do we have so many high schools? How do we ensure robust offerings?
• Need a product that retains and attracts families – long-term growth strategy, well-rounded education
• External forces (vouchers), we need to think about what we’re competing against
• Transparency is an issue (RSIT, Title I meetings not on the website, need to increase communications to parents, community)
• What are the demographics of the teaching staff SOBC?
• Who is getting their diversity demographics right? (Group discussed that Border Star has had a track record of strong racial/economic diversity of its student body. How are they achieving this?)
• Black and white folks are leaving for the same reason, we need to give them a reason to stay
• Build trust
• Canvassing and marketing is a huge – starts with leadership
• Don’t underestimate the word of mouth
• What if we had KCPS ambassadors who go to community meetings and events to get one on one with current and future parents to spark interest in school events/programs?
South Middle School Steering Committee
Meeting #2 – Table Discussions & Requests for Additional Info
February 11, 2017

Requests for Additional Info
- District-wide mobility rates?
- School mobility rates?
- We say that we want schools to be racially diverse, but what is considered racially diverse?
- Do charter parents want to attend neighborhood schools?
- What is optimal size for a middle school to provide robust extra-curricular programs?
- With racial make-up of SW area will SW residences support a MS experience?
- What is the geographic distribution of Lincoln students?
- Data on school attendance at charter and private schools for students who live SOBC?

Q1: What takeaways do you have from the demographic, enrollment & survey data that we reviewed? Where are we?

Group 1
- How to retell narrative from middle school survey? i.e. need to improve perception of KCPS
- KCPD presence i.e. too much interference with the children

Group 2
- Population going down, but not enough to not support middle school
- Lincoln parents are pressuring the District to open up the Lincoln middle school
- With the right mix of race and economics SOBC could find an interest MS SOBC
- We could focus on science and tech strong programs to develop
- With more charters every year the numbers decrease for everyone

Group 3
- So small?
- What is optimal size for a MS?
- Population shift (decline)
- Split already small MS enrollment?
- Signature/charter demand
- Different models in different areas
- Class size/school size
- Programming
Group 4

- The children are in South Brush Creek, just not in KCPS
- Black large population decline with sometime white pop increase. Anecdote: fewer after school options – so black families move to suburbs, - white families could afford private afterschool
- It’s not easy to participate in afterschool so makes difficult for MS
- Shocked by overall decline in pop 213,615 to 190,789
- Don’t have enough data to know if we have enough kids to literally open a south middle school
- We cannot provide a robust MS & HS experience to compete with suburbs or private

Group 5

- It would be good to have data before meeting to absorb
- Good and detailed data
- St. Peters enrollment declining data interesting
- It’s good there are positive feelings about the District. And more choices etc.
- How do we make the District appealing?
- Pre K option gives parents foundation etc.
- We need to continue to look at HOW we keep parents interested in the District and what it can offer students
- Surprised to see decline in Black population
- It depends on the parent
- Many parents feel trapped
- Communicate with neighborhoods in area
- We want to provide the best for all our children
- Parents have to explain why they choose the District
- Perception of the District is weaker than what it really is
- Extra-curricular activities are necessary
Q2. Where do we want to be? Why is there interest in a MS south of Brush Creek? What are we trying to achieve?

Group 1

- Proximity to school
- Better accessibility to community partnerships
- Better programming
- Increasing # of students in 7-12
- Develop rental/condos on Bingham property

Group 2

- Maybe a hybrid between charter & KCPS
- There has to be a draw to a middle school
- Corporate sponsored MS to develop career oriented students/programs
- 7-8 grades school size of 400-500
- With racial make-up of SW area will SW residences support a MS experience?
- What is racially diverse?

Group 3

- SOBC – live near school
- Travel time, distance
- Location, location, location
- Stay together (friends)
- Community engagement
- Extra-curricular programs

Group 4

- We will still have choice
- White parents will not want to send their children to Central MS
- Want school closer to home
- You can come to us (diversity) but we won’t go there (Central)
- Are we really talking MS short term but long term 7-12
- Financially 7-12 more viable
- Lincoln Prep left out
Group 5

- We want a middle school for South Brush Creek
- Parents do not want to send kids to Central too far and bad reputation
- We are doing the District a disservice not having a middle/high school in the area
- There should be a school close to the center of the District
- Why do our schools have bad reputations?
- Middle school needed to integrate our students
- If they build it they will come
- What is racially diverse?
- Only one middle school north and one south
South Middle School Steering Committee
Meeting #1 Notes
January 21, 2017

1. Additional data/information requested by committee members (Note: blue font explains where the data can be found in the PPT from the 2nd steering committee meeting held on 2/11/17)

   General
   • Demographics in general, i.e., baby boomers vs families moving in and out of district – Slides 3, 4
   • Enrollment by grade level – Slides 7, 8
   • Percentage increase/decrease of enrollment and population from 2014-now – Slides 3, 4, 9-12
   • Breakdown/trends of school aged children – Slides 3, 4
   • Are you able to get private school enrollment data? – We do not have this data
   • What is the capacity for adding students in HS buildings in KC? I’m wondering this because I’m thinking about where the MS kids could go next. Families don’t want to have so many decision points.
   • Maybe we can have a private FB group as an organizing platform for all committee members
   • Like to look at the data/feasibility info collected around a Lincoln Middle School
   • We need to start having courageous conversations about race and how it plays into the divide

   Enrollment Dept
   • Are there any “exit” surveys for students leaving the district? Slide 16
   • Would like to discuss what it does to district when schools have different cut offs (end @ 6th grade, some start at @6th grade, etc.)
   • If we are losing children is it a curve or migration? If migration, where? Is it across all grades? Slides 3, 4, 9-12
   • Reduction in overall enrollment from 6th to 7th grade. From which schools? Slides 9-12
   • Where did the 100 Central Middle Schoolers who left in 2017 go to? Slide 16
   • How many 6th graders enroll in Lincoln each year and what’s Lincoln’s 6th grade capacity? Slide 9

   Survey
   • Do parents prefer the tiny charter class size vs 450 – 800 sized schools? Slide 18
   • Survey respondents grading of neighborhood schools differentiated by where their child actually attends school – Slide 17
   • Breakdown of all school choices by type (grades contained, # of students in each grade, include private if possible) – Slide 8
   • Survey results of all parents of kids in KCPS and/or elementary aged kids – what % could give ratings? Slide 17
   • Definition of school types used in the survey – Slide 20

2. Who else should serve on steering committee
   • CCO
   • Maybe invite Presidents of other Homes Associations in the District
   • Businesses + Realtors
APPENDIX C: PPT Slides/ Handouts