Shannon, attached is the minority report to the middle school committee's recommendations. The attached was prepared by: Barbara Washington, Ken Bacchus and Dwayne Crompton. If you have any questions, let us know.

Thanks,
Dwayne
ADDENDUM TO SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL STEERING COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS

MINORITY REPORT/SUGGESTIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of the South Middle School Steering Committee should be to investigate the feasibility and strategy in creating a middle school both south of Brush Creek and west of Troost so as to strive toward successfully diversifying the population of students attending KCPS Schools.

2. Priorities

The priorities are as follows:

a. To reopen Southwest High School so as to attract and include “students” who live west of Troost and south of Brush Creek as full fledged stakeholders in the KCPS district.

b. To staff the school with quality teachers and implement a quality educational program.

c. To provide all students with an improved quality of education. Studies for decades have shown that diverse populations create improved student results.

3. Background

For more than 40 years Southwest High School has been an enigma in the Kansas City, Missouri School District. Desegregation in the late 1970s led to the integration of the school with minimal numbers of African American students being bussed into the school. Until the early 1990s the school enjoyed a diverse population of students almost mirroring the diverse of Kansas City. During much of that time the school was also one of the few to continue to combine neighborhood students with those outside of the area. In light of the pure geographical location of the school a pure neighborhood school would not enjoy such diversity.
While diversity existed until the early 1990s the numbers of neighborhood students (majority) dwindled in part due to the decreasing quality of education provided at the school. As such, by the mid 1990s neighborhood students ceased attending the school and opted for charter schools and/or private schools. When the school closed in 2016 it’s population was more than 99 percent bussed in.

The present priorities stem from a variety of conversations, meetings, observations and pleas to KCPS to keep the school open despite the recommendations in the KCPS Master Plan of 2016. Member of the African American community, along with civic groups such as the Urban League, the Urban Summit, the NAACP and others attended Town Hall meetings to express their opposition to the closing of Southwest High School. Separate meetings were held with acting Superintendent Al Tunis, Repurposing Director Shannon Jaax, and others in KCPS Administration – including board members. At each juncture it was stated with specificity that the closing of the Southwest High School building would send a message to the entire community that KCPS was creating a district of self-imposed segregation. Further closing the building would also send a message to those who reside west of Troost that KCPS’ concerns for the future of the district did not include their needs, desires or children.

It has been clear from the outset of court-imposed desegregation in this district that the majority of white citizens in Kansas City WILL NOT send their children to schools outside of their neighborhoods – or east of Troost. The declining numbers of students in the district and the lack of the diversity in the middle and high schools which currently exist is proof positive of this fact. Further the proliferation of charter schools, with many operating west of Troost, is additional demonstration that the white community has no desire to send their children to schools on the east side of town.

However African American and Hispanic families are flexible. From the onset of desegregation in this district black and Hispanic students have been required to travel outside of their own communities to attend quality schools. And while it has not been ideal it has been done with the goal of providing better opportunities for their children. In 2017 these families are still willing to do so if it means their children will receive a quality education.
4. **Recommendations**

   a. Reopen Southwest as a middle school beginning with grades 6-8. As enrollment increases add additional grade(s) each year to accommodate a 6-12 secondary school serving children in the Southern sector of the district. Charter schools throughout this district have been using this formula and it has been successful.

   b. Develop a strong academic program at Southwest inclusive of maximizing the school’s resources and space.

   c. Market the school focusing on the exceptional quality of teachers hired and the innovative and rigorous academic programming offered.

5. **Closing**

   We would be remiss if we did not also comment on the process of how the committee’s report has been developed. While we appreciate the makeup of the committee members and the opportunity for all to be heard we do not feel the real issue has been addressed. From the onset the data appear to have been used to deter the opening of a third middle school without closing any of the existing middle schools. We feel that should not have been the primary focus. During this process parents on this committee have made it clear they will not transport their children to Central Middle. Their actions – the fact that their children also do not attend Southeast - makes it clear that they will not cross the Troost boundary to seek education (with the limited exception of LCPA). Further the mere presence of these parents on this committee and their willingness to work toward a solution indicates the need for re-opening Southwest.

   The numbers were not a factor in opening Hale Cook – the desire was the primary factor. Please re-evaluate the decision to close Southwest while keeping Southeast open when the 2016-17 school year has shown that decision is not the best one to serve all of the students in our city.

   cc: KCPS Board of Directors
       Dr. Mark Bedell