

Dear Members of the Commission:

We respectfully request you not adopt the findings of the Executive Director's report recommending that the MNPS's denial of the amended applications of KIPP SE Elementary and KIPP SE Middle be overturned. Instead, the Commission should uphold MNPS's decision to deny both applications because their approval is contrary to the best interest of the students, the LEA, and the community.

While opening the school may be benefit in the short-term, the Executive Director has failed to address the long-term implications of continuing to open charter schools in the Antioch area when projections indicate that no additional seating is needed. In her analysis, the Executive Director states that MNPS argues that there was no need for an additional charter school in Antioch due to a lack of overcrowding. She believes, however, that this argument is undermined by a demonstrated desire on the part of students for a KIPP school in Antioch based on waitlist figures. Respectfully, the Executive Director has missed a large portion of MNPS's argument. As a district, MNPS does not only have to plan for the short-term needs of students, but the long-term needs as well. MNPS's argument was, in part, based on projected numbers for the area rather than the current need. As MNPS noted, the district itself has already allocated resources towards renovating and building additional schools in the area and already has other charter schools opening in the next school year: Aventura and Rocketship. What the Executive Director has done is presented a snapshot of the current demand for KIPP and said those numbers alone undermine MNPS's arguments. MNPS, and in fact the Charter Commission, have a duty that is larger than the short-term benefit to the students who desire to attend KIPP schools in the Antioch area.

As noted by the Executive Director, "The statute also requires consideration as to whether the approval would be in the best interest of the students, the LEA, or the community." MNPS would argue that this consideration cannot be determined solely by looking at a current snapshot of need, but the projected need in the Antioch should also be considered. Without a consideration of the projected need, high performing charter networks or those simply with a long waitlist may be opened in the Antioch area, or really in any area, possibly causing an oversaturation of seats in a specific targeted zone. Without the Commission at least considering this issue, individual schools cannot control what opens in their specific area and the district has little control as it relates to charter schools. As such, this issue is necessarily one that the Commission should consider and to which more analysis should be devoted than a present-day snapshot.

Based on the foregoing, MNPS asks that the Commission reject the Executive Director's recommendation and uphold the MNPS Board's decision.