

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals,

On behalf of Green Hedges School, I am writing to provide additional clarity regarding our request for a modest increase of 20 students and eight full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty and staff members. We believe it is important to emphasize that this request is not driven by growth for growth's sake as a few of our neighbors have suggested. As a nonprofit institution that has served the Vienna community for more than 70 years, our mission is—and has always been—to reinvest every dollar of operating surplus directly back into the school to strengthen our programs, support our students, and be a responsible neighbor.

### **Rationale for the Student Enrollment Adjustment**

This request represents the first proposed increase to our enrollment cap since 1985. Over the past four decades, the educational landscape, community needs, and expectations for schools, both independent and public, have evolved significantly. The ability to enroll an additional 20 students serves two essential purposes:

1. **Ensuring Healthy Grade Sizes:** Maintaining a healthy cohort of students per grade is critical to the academic, social, and developmental well-being of students. Green Hedges is committed to the one section per grade model in the Lower School and Middle School divisions. A range of 18-20 students per grade allows for balanced classroom dynamics, sustainable peer groups, and the flexibility to manage natural year-to-year fluctuations in enrollment.
2. **Supporting Community-Focused Improvements:** A modest increase in enrollment strengthens the school's financial foundation, enabling us to fund improvements that directly benefit teaching and learning here at Green Hedges, our neighbors, and the broader Vienna community. These include campus enhancements, traffic and safety measures, and continued stewardship of our shared environment.

With this modest increase, Green Hedges will operate as a small school now and into the future, maintaining our mission and ambition.

### **Rationale for the Increase in Faculty and Staff**

The request for eight additional FTE faculty and staff members is independent of the requested student enrollment increase. It reflects the realities of modern education and the responsibilities we have as a school that is committed to student well-being and support, academic excellence, administrative responsiveness, and campus safety. Specifically:

1. **Evolving Student Needs:** Green Hedges is determined to respond effectively to a wider range of learning profiles and support needs than schools have traditionally done in the past. Additional *Learning Specialists* are essential to meeting these needs effectively and compassionately.

2. **Expanded Focus on Science and Technology:** To prepare students for a rapidly changing world, we are strengthening our science, technology, and innovation programs. These disciplines require specialized *STEM Faculty* who can deliver high-quality instruction in current and emerging fields and technologies.
  
3. **Health and Wellness Requirements:** A dedicated *School Nurse* and full-time *School Counselor* are now standard expectations in high-quality K–8 education, ensuring that student health and safety are supported every day.
  
4. **Operational, Safety, and Security Needs:** As expectations for school safety and operational oversight have increased, Green Hedges must strengthen a lean administrative and operational team to ensure that our campus remains secure, well-managed, and aligned with best practices.

Green Hedges School is deeply committed to being a thoughtful, responsible, and collaborative member of the Vienna community. Our request is rooted in our mission, our history, and our desire to continue serving families and neighbors with excellence and integrity.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing partnership. We welcome any questions and look forward to continuing this dialogue.

Sincerely,

Jessica Wadlow  
Chair of the Green Hedges School Board of Trustees