Good morning, Chairman Griffis and members of the Board. My name is Ann Haas, and I live at 1601-45th Street, across the street from Rock Creek International School.

Like the rest of the community, I supported the school's proposal in 1999 to renovate Rose Lees Hardy elementary school and operate a private school for grades pre-Kindergarten through 5. Three years after that emergency situation, Rock Creek International School finds itself in another emergency. Now it needs space for its sixth-graders. If the past is prologue, what will happen next year?

I do not support adding a sixth grade on site. I've come to this position as a result of experience--for philosophical and practical reasons. Pragmatically, the school's space-requirements and the current location are not a match. What was a playground for a public elementary school is a parking lot for Rock Creek International School. The result is that students rely on Parks and Recreation facilities that rightfully belong to the taxpaying community.

Traffic congestion is another practical reality. With a combined enrollment of 2000 students, 7 private schools operate

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within a mile of Rock Creek International School. Judging from the number of cars, very few students walk to school. On weekday mornings after 8 o'clock, Que Street is bumper-to-bumper from 45th Street to Mac Arthur Boulevard. We are approaching critical mass.

The philosophical reasons for my opposition to the current proposal by Rock Creek International School are more troubling. A chronology will speak for itself.

At a meeting with residents on August 7, 2001, the school's administration mentioned expanding facilities through on-site construction of a middle school. The reaction was unanimous: group opposition. In response, the school's administration pledged as a good neighbor to present any plans to build a middle school at the current location to the Foxhall Community Citizens' Association.

On September 4, the school's administration wrote to the Office of Property Management, offering to buy the school "to construct our middle school." On September 19, the school's administration commented at a citizens' association meeting that it was <u>considering</u> placing "mobile classrooms" on the grounds to accommodate additional students. On September 24, the administration wrote to the Office of Property Management to request permission to put trailers on site.

An important aspect of the correspondence is that the community learned of it thanks to a request that a resident made under the Freedom of Information Act.

In granting an exception to use a public facility as a private school, the Board specified that Rock Creek International School would discuss and resolve any community concerns.

Just to mend fences with the community, Rock Creek International School has some liaison work to do. Mending fences does not include adding another grade to a location that it has clearly outgrown. It does not include adding to the impact on the community, a concern that the Board identified three years ago.

The solution is to add a new campus and adjust enrollment accordingly--and in the process, communicate with the community. It is in the students' best interests to have a playground, ball field, gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium that they can rely on.

Rock Creek International School can set an example for its students to follow. It can start by being a good neighbor.