

Kathleen Byrne
Director/Hearing Examiner
Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings
Montgomery County, Maryland
100 Maryland Ave
Room 200 Rockville, MD 20850

March 29, 2026

Dear Ms. Bryne and OZAH Board Members,

I am writing to oppose the expansion of Holton-Arms School under Case # CBA 1174-E. The proposed changes including a 30% increase in academic enrollment, a 45% increase in summer camp enrollment, and expanded facility rentals to outside groups would impose serious burdens on the surrounding community with no meaningful traffic plan in place. The expansion would dramatically worsen an already strained traffic situation on River Road, a state highway that currently backs up in both directions during school arrival and dismissal, while expanded weekend and weeknight rentals would create surges of heavy traffic through the surrounding neighborhoods that already deal with Holton Arms families cutting through their residential streets which creates safety hazards for pedestrians, school buses, and emergency responders. Overflow parking at Primary Day School and St. Bartholomew's would only push these problems further into the surrounding areas. Beyond traffic, the expansion is simply unnecessary: Holton Arms is already the number one rated college preparatory private school in Maryland. Expanding enrollment could undermine the very qualities that make Holton-Arms exceptional.

Perhaps the most overlooked consequence of adding 200 students to Holton Arms' enrollment is the damage it would do to the very qualities that make the school exceptional in the first place. The close-knit community, the personalized attention, and the deeply meaningful relationships between students and teachers are the hallmarks of a Holton-Arms education. These are not incidental perks; they are the foundation of the school's reputation and the reason families sacrifice financially to send their child there. A 30% surge in enrollment would inevitably strain these relationships. Teachers who currently know every student by name, who notice when a child is struggling, who write the kind of college recommendation letters that open doors. As class sizes grow and hallways become more crowded, the school begins to look and feel less like Holton- Arms and more like any large school. The close community that fosters trust, mentorship, and belonging cannot simply be scaled up, you cannot manufacture this culture with more students; you can only dilute it. If the administration truly values what has made this school number one in Maryland, it should recognize that protecting its size is not a limitation; it is a commitment to excellence.

As a former parent of three Holton-Arms graduates, I spent eleven years witnessing firsthand the steady deterioration of both traffic and parking at the school. It is clear that increasing enrollment / adding more students would unnecessarily burden the school and the surrounding community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paige Coulman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paige Coulman
4517 N Chelsea Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814