

Liza Williamson
West Tisbury, MA 02575

January 26, 2024

Martha's Vineyard Commission
Adam Turner, Executive Director
saltzberg@mvcommission.org

Re: DRI#751 Vineyard Montessori School Expansion Letter of Support

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing this letter to express my support for the above Vineyard Montessori School (VMS) expansion project.

From the time my children attended and graduated from the VMS (2009 – 2014), the school has been open to and mindful of the specific needs of our community. When it was realized that the parents who were teachers in the island public schools had to be at work earlier than the usual drop-off time, they created an “early start” option. For other working parents, a “late day” option was offered so that children could remain in a stable environment until parents could pick them up. Impressively, it was at the Montessori students’ request that the school expanded grade levels past 3rd grade. A few years later, again at the students’ request, they expanded through the 8th grade.

The only need the school was unable to fill was early childhood care. That need was extreme then and remains so today. In fact, the need has grown exponentially, along with our rapidly growing population. The population growth in Dukes County from the 2010 census to the 2020 census was 25% (the state average was 7.4%). This marked increase does not consider the subsequent population increase resulting from the COVID pandemic. Waitlists at the very few available early childhood programs on Martha’s Vineyard are years long.

As you know, VMS is a non-profit organization. Their expansion is a response to the needs of our community. Their mindfulness in addressing other needs of this community by providing workforce housing should be noted as well. Please support this project.

Very Truly,

Liza Williamson
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