

January 20, 2026

Matthew A. Pruter, Associate Planner
Planning Division
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

RE: Phillips Brooks School — Proposed Amendments to Conditional Use Permit (PLN2018-00111)

Dear Matthew,

Phillips Brooks School (PBS) is a cherished Menlo Park school that has been operating as an independent school at 2245 Avy Avenue since 1978, in the Sharon Park neighborhood, on property owned by the Las Lomas Elementary School District. Using Avy Avenue in the north-south orientation, the subject property is located on the eastern side of Avy Avenue and is located in the P-F (Public Facilities) zoning district. There are currently 304 students enrolled at the school.

The school provides instruction for students in grades ranging from pre-school to fifth grade. The original use permit approval allowed a private school to operate with up to 205 students and 22 teachers on a temporary basis. Subsequent use permit revisions have increased the maximum permitted school population, with the most recent approval in 2018 for 320 students and 68 staff (teachers and administrative staff).

On behalf of PBS, I am writing to respectfully request amendments to our existing Conditional Use Permit (PLN2018-00111). These updates are designed to reflect the growth of our community, support the school's educational mission, the increased need for safety, and align our programs with the needs of families, while maintaining our strong commitment to neighborhood relations and City requirements.

We request the following amendments:

1. Summer Camp-included students ages 3 and 4
2. Increase the maximum allowable number of staff from 68 to 73 employees during the school year
3. Revise the school activities list to better reflect the needs of the parent, guardian, and educator community, while minimizing any impact on the neighboring community.

Proposed Amendments

A. Summer Program

1. Summer Program Ages

Phillips Brooks School (PBS) requests an amendment to its Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to expand its existing summer program to include children aged 3 and 4, in addition to the already approved ages 5-11. This enhancement aligns with the school's mission to nurture curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning year-round, while responding to an identified need in the Menlo Park and greater Peninsula community for high-quality, developmentally appropriate summer programming for both early learners and elementary-aged students. In addition, the addition of ages 3 and 4 aligns with the school year program for ages 3-11 year olds.

The summer program, open to all current PBS students and all neighbors, will mirror the school's well-established educational and community values, offering a balanced schedule of inquiry-based learning, enrichment activities, and outdoor play. By serving a broader age range, PBS will continue to strengthen its connection with local families and provide consistent, mission-aligned programming to a broader community.

2. Program Structure (No Changes)

- The summer program will continue to run eight (8) weeks from June through early August (no change).
- The summer program classes will continue to operate from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, with morning care provided between 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM and aftercare from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. (no change).
- The summer program will employ no more than twenty-five (25) instructors/assistants (no change).
- The school's administrative team, no more than twenty-five (25), will work during the summer in office buildings (no change).

- There remains an option for third-party vendors to operate their independent programs on campus, for which the staff vendors will be included in the overall maximum summer staff of 50 people (no change).

3. Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Pick-up and drop-off procedures for the summer program will be identical to those used during the regular school year, following a staggered schedule designed to manage traffic efficiently and safely. For the early learning center students, all families are required to park and walk into the classrooms to meet our licensing requirements.

This approach minimizes congestion on Avy Avenue and surrounding streets while ensuring an orderly flow of vehicles through the campus. The same systems, such as designated zones, clear signage, and staff supervision, will be in place during the summer months. No changes to existing circulation patterns or campus access points are proposed. PBS also intends to maintain the same commitment to Transportation Demand Management measures, such as carpools and walking/biking.

Lunch and Recess Timing

Lunch will take place from approximately 12:00 to 1:00 pm and will be held at the locations identified on the included map. Recess will take place from 10:00-11:00 am and 2:00-3:00 pm. The recess locations are identified on the included map.

4. Amplified Sound

Amplified sound is limited to a small, portable bluetooth speaker capable of 200-400 watts of output, designed for audio playback in a small area and intended for intermittent use outside.

5. Community Need and Benefit

Expanding the summer program age range directly addresses a significant unmet need in the community. Few local programs currently serve children ages 3 and 4, leaving families with limited options for high-quality, mission-driven summer enrichment. By opening the PBS campus to this broader age range, PBS will provide valuable access to Menlo Park and neighboring communities, supporting families who live and work locally.

This expansion also supports the City's broader goals of community enrichment and family support by providing additional childcare and educational opportunities during the summer months. The program will foster continuity for PBS families while also welcoming new participants from the surrounding area, promoting inclusion and community connection.

6. Staffing and Supervision

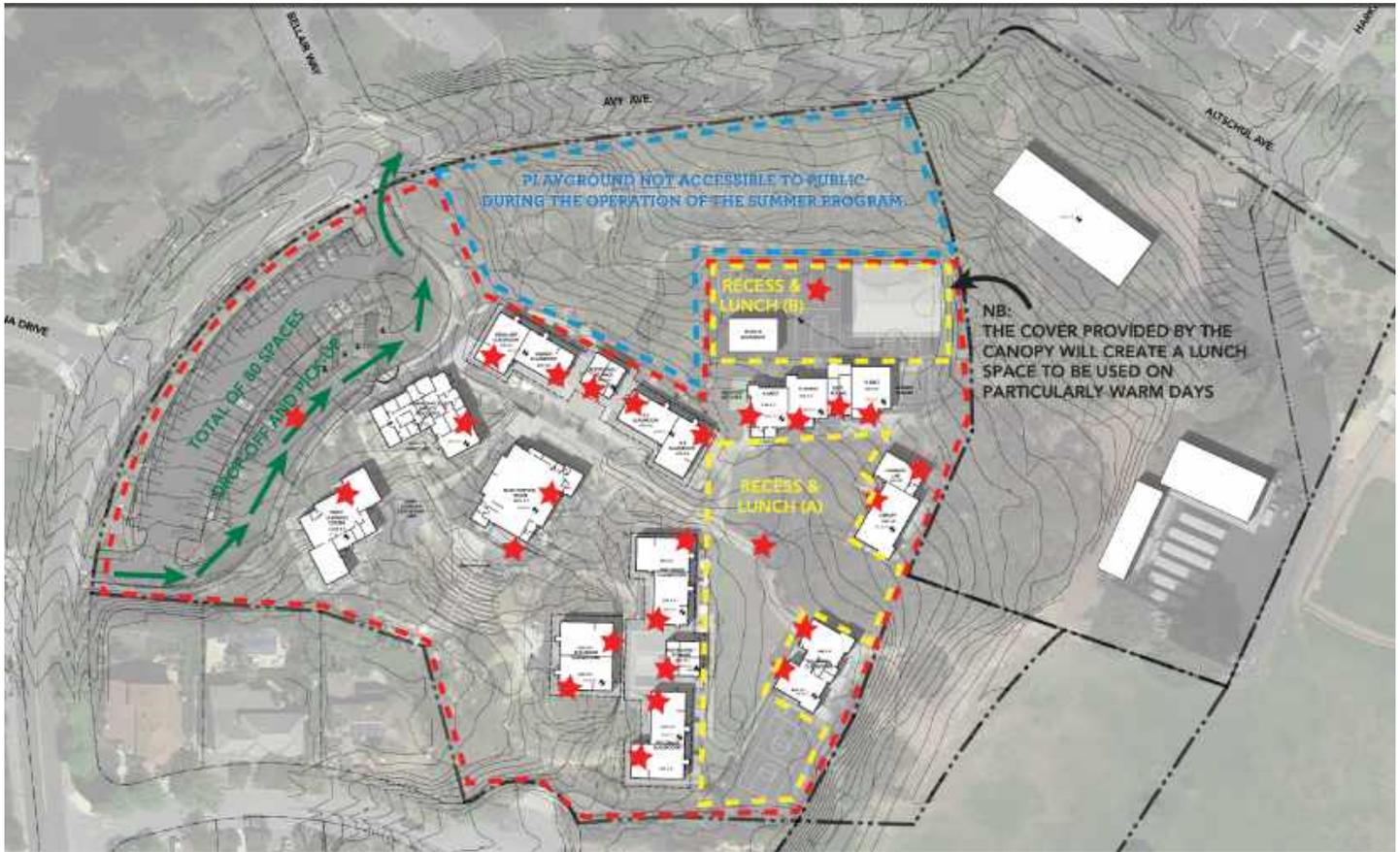
The summer program will be fully staffed by trained educators and camp specialists who uphold PBS's standards for safety and engagement. The staff-to-student ratio will remain the same to ensure that each child receives appropriate attention, guidance, and supervision throughout the day. A Summer Program Coordinator will be present every day during the Program to oversee operations and ensure PBS families continue to follow the usual rules. Additionally, administrative and facilities staff will be on-site daily to provide operational support and ensure compliance with all relevant safety and licensing requirements.

PBS is committed to operating our summer enrichment program ourselves, from designing the curriculum to overseeing all aspects of the day-to-day operations throughout the year. We anticipate needing the assistance of third-party vendors to teach specific courses that are of interest to our students and families, but for which we do not have a teacher or other necessary resources. This is the model we follow for our after-school enrichment program during the academic year – bringing in outside expertise to fill a specific need. We also anticipate using many of the same vendors as we do for the rest of the year, as they are trusted and respected members of our community who are well-known to parents and students.

7. Campus Use

The maps below depict the campus zones in which the Program will be operated.





Summary of Proposed Summer Program

This CUP amendment reflects Phillips Brooks School's thoughtful, community-centered approach to growth. The proposed summer program expansion will:

- Utilize existing facilities and traffic systems efficiently.
- Maintain compliance with all safety and operational standards.
- Address a demonstrated need for additional summer programs serving ages 3 and 4.
- Provide a valued community resource that aligns with the school's mission and the City's priorities for family-friendly services.

PBS remains committed to being a good neighbor and community partner, ensuring that all programs are conducted with consideration for nearby residents and the broader Menlo Park community.

B. School Year Staffing

PBS requests an amendment to its CUP to increase the maximum allowable number of staff from 68 to 73 employees during the school year, reflecting our current operational needs while maintaining the existing campus scale.

The increase is necessary to support school-year programming while maintaining a low teacher-to-student ratio, which is essential for ensuring safety, providing individualized attention, and achieving high-quality learning outcomes. Additional staff will allow PBS to:

- Meet program requirements for both early learners and elementary-aged children, including specialized small-group instruction in math and reading.

- Maintain supervision standards and ensure the safety of all students.
- Provide high-quality instructional and enrichment activities that are consistent with PBS’s educational mission.

The proposed staffing increase of five (5) teachers ensures each child receives appropriate guidance and support throughout the day. Administrative and facilities staff will also be on-site daily to provide operational support and ensure compliance with all safety and licensing requirements.

The addition of five (5) staff on site would not impact the trip cap. Additionally, we have a growing number of employees who commute to work by bike, public transportation, or carpool.

C. School Activities and Events

PBS proposes revising the school activities list to better reflect the needs of the parent, guardian, and educator community, while minimizing any impact on the neighboring community. The proposed changes provide more specific details for clarity.

The revised event list is organized into broad categories. A side-by-side comparison of the current CUP allowances and our proposed changes is provided below:

Category	Current CUP Events	Proposed Events	Notes / Changes
Community Building (All families)	Back-to-School Night (1) New Family Picnic (1) Parent Coffees (6) Book Fair (1)	Back-to-School Night (1) New Family Event (1) Parent Coffees (6) Book Fair (1) Fall Fair (1) Winter Concert (1)	+2 increase of events
Parent Education (Parents/Guardians)	Parents’ Association Meetings (2–3)	Parents’ Association Meetings (2-3)	No change
Academic Showcases (Parents/Guardians)	Student Presentations (1 per class)	Student Presentations, (1 per class)	No change
Sports Practice (Student & Coaches)	After School Sports Practices (3 times a week)	After School Sports Practices (3 times a week)	No change
Neighborhood Meetings (Neighbors)	Quarterly Neighborhood Meetings (4)	Quarterly Neighborhood Meetings (4)	No change
Board Meetings and Operational Meetings (Board members & community members)	Board of Trustees Meetings (12) Board Committee Meetings (2-3 times per month)	Board of Trustees Meetings (6) Board Committee Meetings, including other meetings as directed by the Board (2-3 times per month)	-6 decrease of events

For events, PBS utilizes the PBS parking lot and the St. Denis parking lots.



Neighborhood Outreach

PBS hosted a neighborhood meeting on December 9, 2025, at 6:00 pm to share details regarding the requested amendments to the CUP. An invitation to the meeting was sent out to almost 200 neighboring members. A total of 3 neighbors attended the meeting including Heather Hopkins, LLED Board Member. Historically, attendance at those meetings is low.

A survey was sent out to 166 neighbors to capture additional feedback regarding the amendments to the CUP. A total of 20% of neighbors responded to the survey. The survey results indicated that the majority of the neighbors are familiar or somewhat familiar with PBS. The most common concern raised relates to traffic congestion during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Respondents emphasized safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Many of the respondents requested continued updates from PBS. A number of respondents expressed neutral to supportive views regarding the amendments to the CUP, especially when paired with careful planning and keeping community space available to the public.

As next steps to address the feedback, PBS will remind community members of our traffic and carpool guidelines, continue transparent communication with neighbors, explore additional traffic and safety mitigation strategies, update traffic signage, and add additional traffic support during drop-off and pick-up times.

We will continue to host quarterly neighborhood meetings and maintain open lines of communication to ensure that our activities remain positive for the broader community. Historically, attendance at those meetings is low.

Letters of Support

PBS has a strong relationship with many neighbors. Attached are letters of support for the CUP amendments.

PBS remains committed to compliance with all City conditions, including parking, traffic, and transportation demand management requirements. We request no changes to these conditions. The proposed summer program and the increase in staffing numbers are expected to result in minimal parking and circulation issues.

We believe these amendments are modest, mission-driven, and consistent with our historic operations at 2245 Avy Avenue. They will enable us to serve our current families more effectively while minimizing the impact on neighbors and city infrastructure.

We respectfully request your review and consideration of these proposed amendments and look forward to working closely with you and the Planning Commission as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Bohner" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jenn Bohner
Head of School
Phillips Brooks School