



September 17, 2024

Dr. Lawrence Wilder, Chairperson  
Fresno County Committee on School District Organization  
Fresno County Office of Education  
1111 Van Ness Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Support of Ventana Hills Community Petition for Transfer of Territory

Dear Members of Fresno County Committee on School District Organization,

I am writing to express Granville Homes' support for the petition submitted by the homeowners of Ventana Hills community.

We acknowledge our company's involvement, as creating thriving communities is a core value for Granville Homes. Our involvement should be seen as an endorsement of what the homeowners believe will best serve their children's educational success.

We find it unfortunate that the outcome of the public hearing on September 5th at Foothill Elementary revolved around Granville Home as we have property in Shaver Lake and will continue to be heavily vested in Sierra Unified. We are especially disappointed that this detraction took away from chief petitioner Marc Thurston and the parents within the Ventana Hills community whose children were carelessly labeled as financial pawns with no concern for their educational experience.

Public education exists to serve students, not the other way around. These children are not attending Sierra Unified to support them financially, they are there to receive a good education.

While Ventana Hills parents may have chosen to move to this community knowing it fell within the Sierra Unified boundaries, this did not keep them from continuing to be a part of the Clovis Unified community. After 18 years of uncertainty from Sierra Unified, including the past 10 years marked by the turnover of six superintendents, Ventana Hills families need consistent and stable educational opportunities now more than ever.

In the spirit of compromise, we want to highlight that there have been several sincere efforts to find a solution that works for everyone involved.

As stated by Connie Schlaefter, a county committee member, on her Connie for SUSD Board website, "There is the old adage that schools should be run more like a business. I can think of no business that willingly gives away its customer base." Since 2006, you could consider that the

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Ventana Hills community has been an untapped audience for Sierra Unified. Now, as the Ventana Hills community requests the choice to go to a different school, Sierra Unified is resisting, despite having neglected the Ventana Hills community for the past 18 years. Good businesses do not neglect those whom they serve.

For example, the Ventana Hills homeowners thoughtfully proposed their properties to stay within the Sierra Unified, while still giving families a streamlined option to choose between school districts. They designed this approach to ensure that Sierra Unified would continue to benefit from property taxes for future bonds, while also providing parents with the stability they seek for their children's education.

Additionally, upon receiving a request from Marc to assist with facilitating communications and negotiations with the Sierra Unified Board & Superintendent, we showed our willingness to explore allocating a portion of the sale and resale of Ventana Hills homes to Sierra Unified. There are no current developer impact fees, and this proposal would potentially substitute any loss of funding for Sierra Unified, creating a cost neutral resolution.

Our intention with these proposals has always been to find a compromise that supports each communities' needs as well as the educational stability of families from both school districts. These two examples, and the request to discuss any other items, was disappointingly ignored by Sierra Unified. There is also the absence of outreach to the Ventana Hills community from the Sierra Unified community; whether that included encouraging all Ventana Hills parents to enroll their children in Sierra Unified or inviting the Ventana Hills families to their community events.

The option to petition exists because boundaries are man-made and flexible. This means there's an opportunity to approve changes that could better meet the needs of the children in Ventana Hills community.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to evaluate this petition on its own merits, focusing on the genuine benefits it offers to the families and children involved.

Sincerely,



Darius Assemi

CEO, Granville Homes

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