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Washington, DC 20016
March 5, 2001

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Room 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA Case #16611
Proposed Edmund Burke School expansion

To Whom It Mav Concern:

I am writing to support the zoning adjustment request of the Edmund Burke School. I am a Ward 3 resident and a long time resident of the District of Columbia who, as a parent, has had children in both the DC public and private school systems, District residents should be doing all we can to keep schools like Edmund Burke within its borders. I strongly believe. Burke's proposal is a reasonable one that has been developed and revised in close consultation with the neighbors on Upton Street.

Our son and our family are new to Burke this academic year. Prior to this, however, we have watched as our daughter's school went through two different renovation/expansion efforts in Cleveland Park. I also served as the President of the Board of Directors of a Montessori school as it bought, renovated and moved into a parish school building in Woodley Park. Both of these involved taking proposals through the BZA. From my own experiences, the process that Burke has gone through in informing and involving the surrounding neighborhood is exemplary. Burke clearly values the community in which it is located and, I believe, has given the neighbors access and involvement in the plans as they were developed. I am the first to recognize the chaos that can reign on Upton Street during drop off in the morning or pick-up in the afternoon. But my understanding of Burke's latest parking and drop off proposal is that the neighborhood will be left with a significant reduction in the traffic through and around the community during those hours.

My husband and I made the decision to remain in the District in large part because there were schools like Burke that would offer our kids academically rigorous, community-based education once they left the DC public school system. While the wishes and needs of communities and neighborhoods must be a priority for those who run the District, these are not nor should be inconsistent with an environment that allows schools like Burke to remain vital parts of the District. Not only is Burke a good neighbor, but also through its community service programs demonstrates its commitment to be involved in every aspect of DC life. Spanish students at Burke meet regularly with children at a child care center, playing with them and reading to them in Spanish. Eighth graders are writing journals and books based on their regular meetings with senior citizens at DC senior centers. And my son's seventh grade class is spending one day a week, over a fourteen week period, making and delivering meals to DC residents with AIDS and other life-threatening illnesses. This is what we want from our city's kids and from those responsible for educating them.

BZA
Case No. 16611
Exhibit No. 118

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16611
EXHIBIT NO.118

Burke has put together a reasonable expansion plan and involved the neighbors in decisions that will affect them. As one who has been involved with school expansion proposals from both the inside and the outside, it is clear that Burke understands how important it is to reach out to the neighborhood and, to the greatest extent possible, meet the concerns of neighbors. When you look at the most recent traffic, parking and congestion proposals, it seems to me that Burke has arrived at a solution that is in everyone's best interest – the school's, the neighborhoods and the city's. I know the BZA will give the Edmund Burke proposal its full consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicki Otten