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Washington, D.C. 20015-2437
6 March 2001

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2001 MAR -9 PM 3:35

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street N.W.
Room 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: BZA Case #16611 – proposal Edmund Burke School expansion

Dear members of the ZBA:

We have been homeowners in Ward 3 since 1988 and both of us work in the city. We have two children, one at Lafayette Elementary School and one at Edmund Burke School. We write to seek your support for Burke's plan to improve its facilities at its current location. We know that some of Burke's neighbors have raised objections to the school's plans. But we also know that the school has responded to their objections so as to be a good neighbor and that Burke is an asset to the District that should be nourished.

As you know, there has been a school at 2955 Upton Street since 1911 and it has been Burke's home for 27 years. The neighborhood is now a mix of residential, educational and commercial, a rich fabric of urban life with all the pleasures and tensions that go with it. Burke's expansion will not substantially alter the character of the neighborhood. It won't make the traffic disappear, that's true. But the school's plan for traffic and parking will improve current conditions.

Already, responding to the neighbors' concerns about traffic and congestion, Burke has added off-site parking for its vans, hired off-duty police officer to monitor and direct traffic, eliminated revenue-producing activities after school, prohibited faculty and student parking on restricted sections of Upton Street and successfully offered incentives to faculty to use the Metro.

The plan before the Board of Zoning Adjustment provides on-site parking for all teachers and students who drive, much of it in an underground garage. It moves the drop-off and pick-up from Upton to Connecticut Avenue and Burke's property, reducing the use of Upton Street. It preserves the green space between the school and the immediate neighbor to the East. It is a well thought out proposal that is considerate to the neighbors.

It's clear that the District benefits enormously from the presence of schools like Burke. By providing educational opportunities inside the city boundaries, close to our homes and workplaces, schools like Burke keep taxpaying families in the District. We know how much families in the Lafayette community appreciate having Burke as an alternative to nearby public and private schools. The recent sharp increase in applications

BZA
Case No. 16611
Exhibit No. 123

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16611
EXHIBIT NO.123

to Burke from District families demonstrates the need that the school fills in our community.

Burke isn't a clone of the other schools in the District. It has a long commitment to serving young people with a wide variety of learning styles and experiences. It has lately been working hard to raise money to increase financial aid, now provided to 22% of its families, and to increase the diversity of its student body and staff. And particularly under its new director, David Shapiro, the school has energized its commitment to community service as an integral part of its program. Today, it has on-going service relationships with over 50 community service sites. Our daughter, among other things, has volunteered at the Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place and at Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center's day-care center in Adams Morgan.

Both this neighborhood and the entire city would be well served by an expansion of Edmund Burke School at this site. Please approve this application.

Yours,

Naomi Karp

David M. Wessel