4817 36th Street, N.W. #202
Washington, D.C. 20008
March 13, 2001

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Councilmember Kathy Patterson
441 4th Street, N.W. Room 709
Washington, D.C. 20001
Re: BZA Application Case No. 16611, Proposed Edmund Burke School Expansion

Dear Councilmember Patterson:

I am writing in support of the application by the Edmund Burke School for a zoning adjustment to build an addition to their existing school building. I have been a resident of Ward 3 for over 25 years, and previously worked for the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia. I have a daughter at Burke.

The Edmund Burke School is a wonderful school. Both of my daughters are learning disabled and attended The Lab School of Washington. Their education there was paid for by the District Government. Unfortunately, my older daughter was never able to be mainstreamed. When my younger daughter reached High School age, it was determined that she could be mainstreamed, so that her education would no longer be supported by taxpayer funds, but we were warned that the process would be difficult. In fact, there were only two schools within the District of Columbia which we considered to be appropriate. She was accepted at Edmund Burke, and her education there has been a great success. Their philosophy has been to accept a wide range of students and bring them along as quickly as possible according to their abilities. Yet, Edmund Burke is a college preparatory school, and my daughter's abilities are being appropriately stretched so that she will be able to be successful in college. This fall, she was able to attain the honor roll, for which we are very proud.

However, Edmund Burke has serious physical limitations. The school is very small, and the information I get from my daughter is that there are significant barriers to a good educational experience. For example, study halls had to be held in the Ceramics Room, and the students had to avoid the ceramics in order to study. There are insufficient places for the students to study during their free periods, or to socialize. There is also insufficient space for a full music program. An expansion is therefore necessary in order for the students to get the benefits of a well-rounded education.

I am aware of the issues that the residents of Upton Street have raised; in fact, I am acquainted with one of those residents. The school seems to have taken reasonable steps to mitigate these concerns. For instance, one of the problems that raised concerns was the use of Upton Street for the loading and unloading of students for field trips. The school has now moved that activity to Connecticut Avenue. Another concern was parents' blocking the alley that leads off Upton Street into residents' garages. Parents have been instructed to drop off their children by entering Upton Street from Tilden Street, and using a drop-off point on the other side of the street. The school has hired off-duty police to direct traffic. Residents have proposed that parents drop off their children at the Metro Stop several blocks away. Some parents are doing this, and will be encouraged by the school to do this when the expansion is completed. Further, student and faculty parking on restricted sections of Upton Street has been prohibited.

I further understand that after expansion, the school plans to have on-site parking for all students and faculty, that most of the drop-off will shift to Connecticut Avenue and the school's property, an on-site drop-off lane will be added, keeping the alley between Van Ness and Upton Street clear. As stated above, the school will encourage student drop-off at the Metro Station and prohibit student and faculty parking on restricted sections of Tilden and Upton Street.

I believe that these steps are a reasonable response to the concerns of residents. The school has been open to addressing their concerns. I know, as a resident of 36th Street, that the pick-up and drop-off of students at Murch School limits my parking opportunities, and makes driving difficult at times. However,

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Exhibit No. 128

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District of Columbia
CASE NO.16611
EXHIBIT NO.128

that is the price we pay for educating our children. Schools like Edmund Burke increase the benefits of living in the District, and in Ward 3, and its superior educational program should not be obstructed unnecessarily.

Sincerely,

Peter G. Wolfe

Peter G. Wolfe

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

David Shapiro
Head of School
Edmund Burke School
2955 Upton Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008