3330 Tennyson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015
202-966-3637

April 29, 2001

Councilmember Kathy Patterson
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Room 709
Washington, D.C. 20001

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
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Dear Councilmember Patterson:

We write to urge your support of Edmund Burke School's plans for the expansion of its facilities at Upton Street and Connecticut Avenue. As parents of two Burke students and long-time residents of Ward 3, we believe that Burke's development project is a win-win-win situation.

First, the new building is a win for the Burke community. The addition will give Burke an auditorium/theater for the first time ever. It will provide space for expanded art and music offerings. And it will allow for expanded academic and non-curricular use of classrooms, which presently are occupied 97 percent of the day. Our tenth grade son's experience is illustrative. Despite his strong interest in music, Burke's limited physical facilities mean that the 9th-10th grade band can meet only one of the three terms during the academic year. The new facility will allow Burke students to take music courses throughout the year.

Although Burke will be doubling its physical space, it has made the conscious decision to increase the size of the student body by only 20 percent, so that it can maintain the many advantages of a small school with small classes.

Second, the new facility is a win for the Burke neighborhood. Burke has worked sincerely and diligently to be responsive to the neighbors' concerns about traffic and parking. This year, for example, Burke has paid for a D.C. police officer to direct traffic at the beginning and end of each school day. This has resulted in a much smoother flow of traffic on Upton Street.

The expansion will allow for even more improvements regarding traffic. On-site parking will be increased from 25 to 70 spaces, which will accommodate all students and faculty who drive to school. More importantly, the School has designed a new traffic pattern that will keep most Burke-related traffic off the residential portion of Upton Street altogether. Thus, the Burke facility expansion will actually reduce congestion in the neighborhood.

Third, the facility expansion is a win for the entire District. Burke currently is a great asset to the city and the addition will ensure that Burke can continue to offer a unique education opportunity to Washington area students. As one of the few remaining small schools in an urban setting, Burke demonstrates its strong commitment to the city through its numerous community service programs and its practice of maintaining a diverse student body and teaching its students

BZA
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Exhibit No. 149

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EXHIBIT NO.149

to appreciate differences of all kinds. An improved physical facility will allow Burke to continue to offer an exciting alternative for those District residents who, like ourselves, are faced with the difficult decision of either sending their children to a school that does not meet their particular needs or moving to the suburbs. Moreover, the new addition is aesthetically attractive and will provide a desirable vibrancy to the Upton/Connecticut corner, a development that we're sure the local retail businesses will appreciate.

It is important that you not reach conclusions based solely upon the views of a vocal minority of immediate neighbors. We are representative of many others in Ward 3 and the District who strongly support Burke's carefully thought-out plans and see them as a positive development for the larger community.

We would be happy to arrange for a group of Burke families to meet with so that you can have a balanced understanding of Burke's plans. Once you do, we are confident that you will agree that the enhancement of Burke's facilities is a plus for all concerned.

Respectfully,

Joanna L. Pratt Stephen Samuels

Joanna Pratt and Stephen Samuels

cc: Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St., NW, Room 210
Washington DC 20001
BZA Case Number: 16611