COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C 20001

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D.C. BOARD OF ZONING
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Ms. Sheila Cross Reid, Chairman
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW 2nd Floor
Washington DC 20001

RE: BZA Case No. 16611
(Edmond Burke School)

Dear Chairman Reid:

I am writing in support of the Office of Planning, the Department of Public Works, and the neighbors in urging that you do not grant the requested relief in Case No. 16611. This case is an application by the Edmond Burke School for a special exception and variance to permit expansion in a residential zone at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Upton Street, N.W.

I reach my position with some regret, because the Burke School is an excellent school. My position is not a reflection on their academic program, and I recognize that they are trying very hard to be a good neighbor and accommodate neighborhood concerns. But they have outgrown their facility. There is no way the school can expand under the pending proposal without furthering and probably aggravating an adverse impact on the neighborhood. And yet the principal criterion for special exception relief is that there not be an adverse impact affecting adjacent property owners.

Two excerpts from the Department of Public Works analysis and the Office of Planning report are noteworthy:

> "The proposed mitigation measures offered by the school would improve traffic congestion and safety over existing conditions. Of the various alternative parking and circulation patterns proposed by the school, Alternative 1F ... is the least objectionable. However, local residents would continue to experience traffic congestion under the proposed traffic plan and therefore the Department does not support the application to expand the school to the adjacent property, with a student population and faculty increase." (DPW May 3, 2001 memorandum by Kenneth Laden)
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> "...The location of the proposed addition is a logical area for the school to expand; it places the new building away from the residential properties and along the major

BZA
Case No. 16611
Exhibit No. 159

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16611
EXHIBIT NO.159

thoroughfare. ... The principal issue is whether the expansion of the school, with the requested increase in students and staff, will have an adverse impact on the neighborhood. ...OP has analyzed the application...and determined that the major issue is the impact of traffic and the school's ability to mitigate that impact. OP relies on the Department of Public works' transportation experts for analysis of the traffic issue. ... OP cannot support the application." (OP May 2, 2001 report)

I hope these comments are useful to your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Phil Mendelson
Councilmember At-Large