Statement of Robert A. Molofsky
in Support of the
Edmund Burke School Application for Zoning Exceptions
to Build an Additional School Building at Upton/Connecticut Avenue, Northwest

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Board, my name is Robert Molofsky. For the past 19 years, my family has lived on 32nd Street, NW. I am the proud parent of two sons in the 11th and 8th grades at the Edmund Burke School. Prior to their enrollment at EBS, they both attended Lafayette Elementary School. For the past 21 years, I have been employed by the Amalgamated Transit Union, now serving as its general counsel. Throughout this period, I have been involved in numerous community and civic affairs. Before moving to 32nd Street, I lived for over three years at the Brandywine Apartments located on the corner of Connecticut and Brandywine, NW. I mention this brief history to underscore both my commitment to the District of Columbia and my familiarity with the community and neighborhoods surrounding the Edmund Burke School.

I appear here in strong support of the Edmund Burke School's new application for special exemptions allowing it to build its new educational facility. From February 8, 2002, the date of this Board's decision on Burke's first application, to the present, its school administrators, faculty advisors, parents and professional team have worked hard to shape their new proposal in direct response to the issues raised by your 2002 decision. It was understood then, and remains true now, that the Edmund Burke School is a fine school serving the city, its neighborhoods and students well.

As stated in the Board's initial decision, the location of the proposed new building is ideally situated, as it is less than one block from a Metro stop. The Board then found that the proposed increase in enrollment and faculty would not result in excessive noise; that parking facilities were sufficient to accommodate these increases; and perhaps most important, that the proposed private school was in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations and maps. The only basis for rejecting our original application was as yet unanswered questions with respect to traffic and safety concerns which might result from the projected increases. The new application comprehensively addresses all of these concerns.

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EXHIBIT NO. 146

First the proposed increase in student enrollment and faculty has been significantly reduced to an initial level of 300, rising to 320 only if rigorous benchmarks were met with respect to traffic congestion and safety concerns. A comprehensive traffic management and enforcement plan has been developed which, upon review, may prove to be a model for other citywide projects. Not only does it define in detail the do's and don't's for parents and others entering and exiting the school property, but establishes a comprhensive set of rules, the violation of which would result in progressive penalties against the students, their families and ultimately the school itself. Further, in recognition of the longstanding increase in school enrollment above the original 270 limit established in 1983, the new plan proposes reductions in enrollment from current levels to 290 students this year, rising to 300 only upon completion of the new building operating.

I refer to these facts, which have been previously mentioned, to underscore my view that the decision facing the Board should be based not on an open-ended debate regarding the school's presence at its current location, but rather an evaluation on whether the improvements in the proposed plan meet the concerns previously raised by the Board in its initial decision. It would be a disservice to our community and this city if the Board allows the intractable views of a minority of neighbors, intent on seeing the Edmond Burke School exit to the suburbs, to govern its decision making.

By every measure and on every level, the new plan meets, and no doubt exceeds, the Board's concerns and expectations for improvements in traffic, safety and congestion. The program developed through direct consultations with neighbors, traffic and other experts would not only make the current situation better, but would actually reduce neighborhood impact when the new building is completed. As you continue to review our plan and evaluate the various views expressed before you today, I would urge that you look to the future and base your decision on the fact that this is a sound, enforceable plan which fully responds to the Board's concerns, the neighborhood's issues, and the needs of this city and the community in which we live, including, most importantly, its students.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Molofsky, Secretary
Edmund Burke School Board of Trustees