EXHIBIT 4
DATE 1-26-05
HB 404

Monforton School District
6001 Monforton School Road
Bozeman, Montana 59047
(406) 586-1557

Lynne Scalia, Principal/Superintendent
lscalia@metnet.state.mt.us

January 25, 2005

The Honorable Roger Koopman

Dear Mr. Koopman:

As principal and superintendent of an independent K-8 public school district in the Four Corners area of Bozeman, Montana, I submit the following for your consideration concerning HB 404.

I am a public school educator who has utilized the services of volunteers in a number of capacities for the benefit of the students in my care. Recognizing the increasingly important role volunteers have come to play in the education of children, I support the provision of a tax deduction given to those who work without compensation in the school district.

In the Monforton School District, I see the role of volunteers as contributing to the instructional program, not displacing teachers or paid classified staff, but rather allowing further instructional and support role opportunities. For example, Monforton does not currently have a foreign language program at the elementary level. With the volunteer tax credit, I may have a greater chance of recruiting a teacher, thereby offering a program I would not have dreamed of considering, owing to financial constraints. Similarly, Monforton discontinued the Gifted and Talented program for the 2004-2005 school year, again, due to financial constraints. The teacher was reassigned. Committed volunteers could rebuild this program, if they had clearer and better-defined roles and expectations from their employers.

A final example is, as a former principal of a Reading First school, I found that "direct instruction" reading interventions are highly effective in tutorial-type small groups. As these direct instruction programs are well structured, scripted and progress easily measured (ex. SRA Corrective Reading), volunteers are easily trained and supervision is straightforward. Students able to work in this way in a group of 2-4 make enormous gains – enough gains to close significant reading gaps (can provide data *Fall, '04-Winter, '05, Monforton Reading Assessments*). A competent, reliable volunteer workforce can make such gains happen in a school.

There is potential for innovative and useful partnerships between schools and volunteers in HB 404. If I may be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Lynne Scalia, Principal/Superintendent
Monforton School District