EXHIBIT 10
DATE 2-3-05
HB 47

Dr. & Mrs. Leonard Ramsey
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Bozeman, MT 59715

Attn: Representative Roger Koopman
Members of the House Education Committee
FAX: (406) 444-4825

01/31/05

Dear Representative Koopman and Members of the House Education Committee:

It is our understanding that a bill recommending full day kindergarten classes in our Montana schools will be discussed in committee this week. As a family physician and as an elementary teacher, we would like to voice our concerns for young children in regards to this proposal.

We disagree with the philosophy of the full day, five day per week kindergarten. We believe the idea of sending young children into more extensive social and academic arenas to "aid" in their development is erroneous and harmful both from medical and educational standpoints. We draw on our training and experience in the fields of Family Medicine and Elementary Education as well as our experience as parents of three grown children. To be creative, stable, and self-confident, and to be able to take on the stresses of academics and socialization, young children need ample time at home in a safe and secure environment. Children who have time at home with parents who love them and give them the boundaries, attention, security, and opportunities needed to develop tend to fare better in their abilities to cope when placed in school settings around age six. Children, at age five, typical kindergarten age, who are expected to delve into social and academic arenas all day long, five days a week will not, in our experience and opinion, gain from this extra time in structured activities, but actually be less able to grow emotionally, socially and academically. Creativity is stifled by too much structure at an early age. Children need small amounts of social interaction with large amounts of process time at this tender age. Children at the age of four to six require extra rest and unstructured physical activity. Not allowing for rest, processing, creative and unstructured periods in the child's day tends to create discipline problems, stress and burnout. We want our children to have a positive, enjoyable start in their school experience. Full time, five day per week kindergarten is not be the way to promote this ideal.

Medically speaking, exposing young children with immature immune systems to prolonged periods of classroom confinement leads to unnecessary spread of disease in this age group, resulting in costly MD office visits, hospitalizations, loss of work for parents, and potentially serious illness for the children.

"Allowing" for this possibility in our Montana schools will, most assuredly, open the doors to required full day, five day per week kindergarten for all children who opt to attend kindergarten in our public schools. This new policy would not be in the best interest of our children, physically, mentally, academically or in the area of creativity. Please do not approve this bill for floor vote in the Montana House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Leonard Ramsey M.D.

Cindy R. Ramsey, MT Certified K-8 Instructor