

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 3/23/05
SB 419

For the record, my name is Michele Mauri, and I am the mother of three children who currently attend Ophir School in Big Sky. My oldest child is in eighth grade and will be graduating in June.

Unfortunately, for my family, Nick's graduation doesn't simply represent the normal passage of a child from middle school to high school. For us, it marks the end of our ability to have our family together. In a very real way, I feel that my son is being torn away from me.

With two children in Big Sky schools, as well as a family business here, it will be impossible for me to be as involved in my son's education as I currently am, or even to know his friends or teachers. My son will be gone for over ten hours a day; if he needs me, I'll have to make arrangements to be gone for two hours from work and from my children in Big Sky in order to go to town to help him. He will leave for school before his sisters get up in the morning, and return only to do homework and sleep.

And yet, for all the time he will be away from home, he will only receive a fraction of the true high school experience. Because of the distance, he will not be able to participate in after-school activities or sports, study and work on projects with fellow students in Bozeman, or simply hang-out with high school classmates. Everything will have to be planned and scheduled, if it can happen at all.

And because we have three children, the current circumstances would have me deal with these kinds of issues for the next nine years! Imagine, if you can, the extreme stress this puts on our family and our children. It is no wonder that well over half of Big Sky families with children in high school send their kids out of state, leave the state themselves, or move to Bozeman during the high school years. The measures Big Sky residents regularly take in order to put a child in high school is testimony in itself to the hardship imposed on our community.

The kids, families, and community of Big Sky *need* a high school. The growth in our area warrants it; the hardships we currently endure justifies it. Please vote for SB419 and give Big Sky residents the ability to decide what is best for our children.