



Board of Trustees
Bozeman Public Schools
404 West Main, P.O. Box 520
Bozeman, Montana 59771-0520

EXHIBIT 4

DATE 3-7-07

Carson Taylor, Chair
Sara ~~HB~~ 809 ~~Vice Chair~~
Martha Collins
Sarah Glover
Bruce Grubbs
Heather Hart
Denise Hayman
Gary Lusin
John Morgan
trustees@bozeman.k12.mt.us

February 6, 2007

To the Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

We are the Bozeman School District No. 7 Board of Trustees. As such it is our responsibility to provide a quality education for the students in our district. As you know, it is your responsibility to provide adequate funding so that a quality education can be provided.

We oppose HB 809 as it is currently written. HB 809 would provide additional revenue to Bozeman Public Schools. However, when we take into consideration the estimated inflation in various areas, our preliminary estimate is that it is \$340,000 short of funding current programs in our elementary district and \$500,000 short in the high school district. Those shortfalls are without adding any programs to meet the growing needs of students. We are aware that some legislators see Bozeman as a successful school district and because of its success, could not possibly need more money. We ask you to trust that we are aware of our strengths and weaknesses and that cutting programs is neither in the best interest of our students or the State of Montana. More importantly, we ask that you not wait until we are failing to decide to adequately fund education. By then, some of our students may be damaged permanently.

To date, there is no legislation, introduced in either chamber that will allow us to continue our excellent educational program without cuts. More importantly, in order to meet the challenges of No Child Left Behind and in order to provide our students with the education that they deserve, we would like to embark on a new approach to math education. That will not be possible without substantially more funding than is currently proposed in House Bill 809. Our teachers and administration have worked hard to understand what we need to make our students successful, and we, the Board of Trustees, will be unable to fund their plan. It seems incredible that we should be forced to consider cuts in our high school program when the state has a massive surplus. We urge Democrats and Republicans to work together to find a way to effectively continue the last two years of increased spending in education which has only begun to make up for the years of parsimony that have harmed our education system statewide.

In the last eight years that any of us have been on the School Board, we have only had two school years where we were not cutting programs from one budget or another. The

reason for those six years of cutting has been the legislature's inadequate spending on education. We were hopeful that the previous session's agreement on the definition of quality education would result in a commitment to improve funding for public schools.

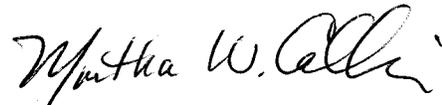
The cornerstone of any democracy is a well educated electorate. If we do not adequately fund education, and our system fails to meet the challenges of a changing economy, we will certainly be failing our students and we will necessarily be hurting the democracy which we hold so dear.

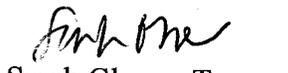
We strongly urge you to find a way to fully fund education in Montana so that we, and others, will not be telling our constituents, once again we have to cut solid educational programs in order to balance a budget that has been imposed upon us by our state legislators.

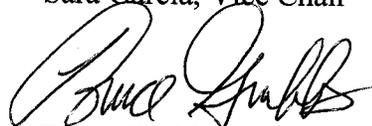
Sincerely,


Carson Taylor, Chair

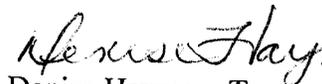

Sara Garcia, Vice Chair

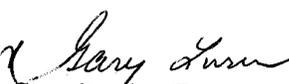

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