PUBLIC COMMENT (ADDITIONAL) SUMMARY AS OF OCTOBER 21, 2026

ARTS & CULTURE | 0 additional comments received

CONSERVATION | 7 additional comments received

- Climate Action Plan Implementation | Big Sky SNO
    - 6 in support
    - 1 in opposition

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 4 additional comments received

- 3 providing general support for Visit Big Sky
- 2 providing general support for Big Sky Chamber of Commerce

EDUCATION & CHILDCARE | 42 additional comments received

- Campus Expansion: Franklin Unit 1D | Big Sky Community School
    - 21 in support
    - 1 in opposition
- Early Childhood Education & Tuition Assistance | Morningstar Learning Center
    - 6 in support
- Early Childhood Education | Big Sky Discovery Academy
    - 13 in support

HEALTH & SAFETY | 6 additional comments received

- Big Sky Community & Workforce Food Security | Big Sky Community Food Bank
    - 1 in support
- Affordable Mental & Behavioral Health Support Program | Wellness in Action
    - 1 in support
- Navigator Network | Be Well Big Sky
    - 6 in support

HOUSING | 0 additional comments received

PUBLIC WORKS | 0 additional comments received

RECREATION | 11 additional comments received

- Expanding Youth Winter Sports Safety Equipment | Big Sky Ski Education Foundation 11 in support

Note: Some comments expressed support for more than one project and are counted under each project they reference. As a result, project-level counts may not add up to the total number of comments received for an impact area.

From: Jonathan Gans
To: Public Comment
Subject: Be Well Big Sky Navigators
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:06:07 AM

[You don't often get email from jonnybgans@mac.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Good morning All, I am writing in support of an allocation of resort tax funds to Be Well Big Sky and it's Navigator network. I am one of the two dozen Navigators, all of them serving the organization and the community on a volunteer basis. I have personally had monthly interactions over the two years that I have been involved with various members of the community in need of social, emotional, addiction, and counseling support, often in crisis mode. The Navigators serve as guides for those community members to the web of health and wellness services available as this community takes care of its own. The leadership of Be Well Big Sky under Shannon Steele, and the leadership council of Ruthie Solari, Robert McCormick, Sara, Gaither Bivens, and myself has steered BWBS away from sponsorship by One Valley and into a new sponsorship agreement with Mission Edge, after a great deal of exploration of other options. This was a very carefully considered decision and one which will benefit BWBS greatly.This new arrangement is lean, efficient, and will save great deal of time and money offering its suite of services. Be well deserves some financial support from BSRAD and I hope you will reconsider your zero decision from yesterday.
Respectfully,
Jonathan Gans

From: Shannon Steele
To: Public Comment
Subject: Big Sky Community School - Capital Project
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:20:13 PM

You don't often get email from shannsteele@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board of Directors,

I wanted to share my perspective as a Big Sky community member on the Big Sky Community School capital project.

While I recognize the distinction between public and private education, I hope we can also consider the broader community value this project could provide.

Through my work with Be Well Big Sky, I've experienced firsthand the school's willingness to open its doors to the broader community. We've hosted several Navigator Network meetings, Be Well's five-year celebration, a Big Sky Medical Center information session, and partnered to host a Holistic Emotional First Aid training there. These are opportunities for connection and learning that extend well beyond the school's student population.

In 2025, I also served on a Coordinating Council committee that engaged eight local high school students in conversations about what matters to them and what they envision for their community. A recurring theme was the desire for **welcoming spaces to gather, express themselves, connect across generations, and feel a sense of belonging.** Amid Big Sky's rapid growth and development, these young people spoke about the loss of familiar places and the importance of having spaces that feel safe, steady, and grounding. They weren't simply asking for more programming, but for places where they could feel anchored in their community, where their voices would be heard, and where they could meaningfully participate.

We hear similar needs expressed by adults throughout our community. And the Community School has already demonstrated its willingness to be one of those gathering places.

This capital project represents an opportunity to expand not only educational choice for families, but also the physical spaces that support community life.

Regardless of where children attend school, they are all part of our community. Investments in spaces that welcome and serve the broader public can benefit far more people than those enrolled.

I hope the board will recognize the broader public value of this project and consider it as an investment in **community infrastructure: a place for learning, connection, and belonging that extends beyond the classroom.**

Thank you for your consideration and service to Big Sky.

Shannon Steele

From: Elizabeth Morton
To: Public Comment
Subject: Big Sky Community School -
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 11:33:09 AM

You don't often get email from elizabethemorton@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Liz Morton and our family recently moved to Big Sky so our daughter can attend the Community School. This opportunity allows her to maximize her education, with the benefit of a flexible schedule, as she is pursuing NCAA ski racing.

We are a public school family but have been dissatisfied with MTDA experience offered through the district.

Since moving to Big Sky we make conscience decisions to spend our money inside the community and support businesses that make Big Sky a better place. For example, we appreciate and spend money at the restaurants open during the off season. Locals need places to socialize to get us through the shoulder seasons.

The Community School helps bring families committed to their children's education and the outdoors to Big Sky. Our community needs regular families who want to ski, ride bikes and educate our kids.

Thank you for your consideration,
The Morton's

From: Jill Woodman
To: Public Comment
Subject: Big Sky Community School funding
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:22:33 AM

[You don't often get email from jill@terrapinpath.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Subject: Request to Reconsider Funding for Big Sky Community School

Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Tax Board,

I am writing to respectfully ask you to reconsider funding for Big Sky Community School, a nonprofit organization that provides an important and much-needed educational option for families in our community.

This school model is especially meaningful to my family because it complements our homeschooling approach while offering the connection, community, and social learning that can be difficult to provide through homeschooling alone. Big Sky Community School fills a gap that is not currently addressed by other programs in Big Sky. While we greatly appreciate, support, and participate in the public school's sports programs, there are few other opportunities that provide this kind of flexible, community-based educational experience.

Big Sky Community School is also particularly valuable for neurodivergent learners. Its approach offers a more supportive and adaptable environment for students who may not thrive in traditional educational settings. These options are currently limited in Big Sky, even as the needs of local families continue to grow.

With approximately $29 million in funds available for allocation, I sincerely hope the Board will consider investing in education and supporting our teens. Middle- and high-school students need greater support, more variety in educational and care options, and additional opportunities to help prepare them for their futures. They also need environments that recognize and respond to the growing demands on their mental health and well-being.

Big Sky Community School has demonstrated both demand and the need to expand. Funding would help the school increase its capacity, serve more students, broaden its programming, and strengthen its physical presence in the community. Supporting this effort could also help attract and retain families who want to live in Big Sky but need more diverse educational options for their children.

Investing in Big Sky Community School would be an investment in local families, student well-being, and the long-term vitality of Big Sky. I respectfully ask you to reconsider providing funding to support the school's continued growth and expansion.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our community.

Sincerely,

Jill Woodman

From: Kate Scott
To: Public Comment
Cc: Brian Scott
Subject: Big Sky Community School Letter of Support
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:50:32 PM
Attachments: image001.png

You don't often get email from kscott@lonepinebuilders.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Big Sky Resort Area District,

I am writing to express our family's support for Big Sky Community School and its request for funding.

We are longtime locals and have five children in the Big Sky community, ranging from 4K through 6th grade. Ophir Elementary has been a great school for three of our children and we are grateful for that. However, for our two older daughters, Big Sky Community School has made a tremendous difference in their lives, in two very different ways.

For our daughter with a learning disability, the Community School has honestly been life-changing. The one-on-one attention and support she receives from her teachers have made a difference that is hard to put into words. Having teachers who understand how she learns, take the time to work with her and help her succeed has meant so much to her and to our family. As a parent, you want your child to feel confident and capable and to know that they can succeed, even when learning doesn't come easily. The Community School has given her that and we are incredibly grateful.

For our sixth-grade daughter, the school has given her the opportunity to challenge herself academically while also learning to manage her time and take responsibility for her work. She can complete her schoolwork and then focus on the extracurricular activities that mean so much to her. That balance has been great for her and the school has helped her grow both in and out of the classroom; she is a far more independent child than she was before starting at the Community School.

Our family has seen firsthand how Big Sky has evolved over the last 25 years and we believe that education in Big Sky deserves the opportunity to evolve as well. We have also witnessed in our own family, that children have different needs and having options like the Big Sky Community School matters. What works for one child may not be the right fit for another. We are fortunate to have a school in our community that can meet children where they are, give them the individual attention they need and help them reach their potential.

We truly believe the Community School is an important part of what makes Big Sky a great place to raise a family. We hope the Big Sky Resort Area District will support the school so that other families can have the same opportunities and experiences that have meant so much to ours.

Thank you for considering our perspective and for supporting the children and families of Big Sky.

Sincerely,

Brian and Kate Scott

--
Kate Scott
O: 406.993.2400
C: 406.599.0885
www.lonepinebuilders.com

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From: Christine Brennecke
To: Public Comment
Subject: Big Sky Community School
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:40:18 PM

You don't often get email from murr.christine@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board,
We are the parents of two BSCS middle school students. Both of our kids are freeride skiers with BSSEF. Last winter they were on the road 35 days for competitions. BSCS offers an online and in-person experience that provides our kids continuity when they are traveling BSCS solves the problem of having to choose between academics and sports.

Please consider our grant request for any remaining funds.

Sincerely,
Christine and Will Brennecke

From: Grace Delaney
To: Public Comment
Subject: Big Sky Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:23:23 PM

You don't often get email from graceedelaneyy@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

To whom it may concern,
I am writing today to urge you to continue funding Discovery Academy in Big Sky. I have seen the impact this school and curriculum has had on both staff and students. Social emotional learning is so important to growth and development in early childhood education. Financial support is essential to continue providing the life changing experiences and educational opportunities at Discovery for both students and staff. I hope you will reconsider the recent decision. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Grace Delaney

From: Howard, Patricia
To: Public Comment
Subject: Big Sky SNO
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:56:46 PM

You don't often get email from patty.howard@gallatin.mt.gov. Learn why this is important

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for Big Sky Sno's efforts to continue their work to grow their network for climate action and community resilience. I have worked with SNO for over 4 years and have helped with the food waste reduction, the waste audit, the summer recycling day and many of the public outreach events in Big Sky. I have seen the positive impact that SNO is making in the Big Sky community by diverting over 12,000 pounds of waste from the landfill at the recycle fest. I strongly encourage the Big Sky Resort Area District Board to consider giving them full funding.

Thank you,
Patty Howard

Patty Howard
Recycling/Outreach Educator
Gallatin Solid Waste Management District
406-582-2493

From: Matthew Jennings
To: Public Comment
Subject: BSRAD allocation
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:46:35 PM

My name is Matt Jennings and I am the board chairman of the Big Sky School District Board of Trustees. I thank the BSRAD members for all of their hard work and sound decision making in not only this funding cycle but all funding cycles.

I want to speak in support of the BSRAD board decision to fund the Big Sky Community School grant at zero dollars. I do not support this decision for any other reason than the law in the state of Montana and the original BSRAD ballot language.

This is really a matter of facts. The fact is that the Montana constitution clearly prohibits appropriations to private education entities for educational purposes and while in 2000 the the Attorney General concluded that this restriction applies only to legislative appropriations, not expenditures by local governments. That holding also recognized that a local government may fund a private nonprofit when the expenditure serves a public purpose. This leads us to the vote in 1992 in which the ballot to establish a resort tax district reads: **To impose a resort tax of three percent (3%) on the retail value of goods and services sold in the Big Sky Resort Area for twenty (20) years to fund infrastructure facilities, public transportation, tourism development and other public services and facilities within the Area.**

A private k-12 school does not meet any criteria as approved by the voters and enforced by this board. Public services may be considered, however if a private k-12 or k-6 school has the ability to select who will be admitted, who will be able to stay year to year and possibly expel students at any time, this does not represent a public service This represents a private entity that exists and serves those who meet the stated criteria for participation.

Again, thanks for your time and reiterate that I support the decision to fund the Big SkyCommunity School at 0 dollars.
Sent from my iPhone

From: Shana Seelye
To: Public Comment
Subject: BSSEF funding application
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:57:35 PM

You don't often get email from sjseelye@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

To members of the BSRAD board,

Thank you for all you do in service to the Big Sky community. Your hours of volunteered time do not go unnoticed.

I'm writing to you as a new member of the BSSEF board of directors. Although new to the board my family has been involved with BSSEF for 11 years. Regarding the $52,000 request submitted for equiptment. I appreciate this is a large number especially as one of our core goals is maintaining accessability of sking for any family who wants to participate at any level from beginners to seasoned competitors asnd this is not a request targeted toward financial aide. However, a large part of keeping youth skiing accessable is keeping safety at the forefront of all offered programmimg. All families sign the same waivers for their children that we sign for ourselves acknowledging that skiing has inherent risks. By updating our safety equiptment in a timely fashion we strive to limit the risks our young athletes are exposed to. Yes, we could raise programming fees to cover the cost requiring more families to ask for more assistance via schlorships to cover those increased rates. Unfortunately some families looking at our programmimg would never read past the up front cost to see there is financial aide available. We hope to have every interested child interested have the opportunity to try the programming BSSEF provides in whichever of our diciplines, alpine, freeride or nordic attracts their attention. We want to provide these opportunities as safely as possible. In the current economic climate the up front price has the potential to work as a deterent even if financial aide options are clearly displayed. We are very fortunate as an organization to have other area organizations (Spanish Peaks Community Foundation, Yellowstone Club Community Foundation amd Moonlight Club Commuity Foundation specifically) contributing directed donations to our schlorship funds however we cannot use those funds to off set tuition accross the board. We also cannot use those funds for safety equiptment. All of this said please support the full request of $52,000 from BSSEF for FY27. By doing this you will help keep as many of the youth of BIg Sky sliding on snow as safely as possible. After all, Big Sky is a ski town at heart and we want to pass that love on to the next generation.

Thank you for your consideration,
Shana Seelye
sjseelye@gmail.com
406-580-4327

From: Neil Johnson
To: Public Comment
Subject: BSSEF Funding Request
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:54:57 AM

> You don't often get email from neil@bssef.com. Learn why this is important

Good morning,

I would like to thank all of you for the time you commit to working for the COMMUNITY by being part of the BSRAD board. Your commitment is incredibly important and I am happy that you are all a part of this process. Thank you.

I am writing to provide comment on the BSSEF request for this year. This request covers equipment and maintenance needs so that a program serving many in our community does not have to pass those costs onto participant families. Per the BSRAD's requests, BSSEF is not asking for annual operating funds, but a specific request for the organization's current needs.

BSSEF consistently works to keep initial participation costs attainable for as many community families as possible. My personal interactions with families in the community tell me that the upfront cost, even when scholarships are offered, dictates participation decisions. We want to remain open and accessible to these families and this $52,000 request supports the organization's ability to do so rather than passing the costs of this maintenance and equipment request directly on to the participants.

BSSEF is an important part of our community and approving this request shows BSRAD's support for the organization.

Thank you for your time,

--

Neil Johnson
Member at Large | Board of Directors
Big Sky Ski Education Foundation

Supporting the next generation of Alpine, Freeride, and Nordic athletes.

P.O. Box 160134, Big Sky, MT 59716

From: Ody Loomis
To: Public Comment
Subject: BSSEF support
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 11:57:52 AM

[You don't often get email from odyloomis@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Public comment in support for Big Sky Ski education foundation funding.

“What its children become, that
will the community become.”
- Suzanne La Follette

Ody Loomis

Sent from my iPhone

From: Danielle Phelan
To: Public Comment
Subject: Community Impact and Urgent Need for Resort Tax Support for Big Sky Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:53:00 PM

You don't often get email from dphelan3@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the Resort Tax Board,

I am writing to express my unequivocal support for Big Sky Discovery Academy and to advocate for its vital funding through resort tax dollars. As a parent living and raising my family in Big Sky, having access to an exceptional, adaptable educational alternative is not just a preference—it is an absolute necessity for our community's families and children.

Why Big Sky Discovery Academy is Essential to Our Community and Family

Big Sky Discovery Academy was born out of a profound grassroots effort—founded by a group of mothers who saw a critical void in our local educational landscape and stepped up to fill it. Every child is unique, and they simply do not all fit into a rigid, one-size-fits-all traditional schooling box. Standard classrooms often expect children to sit still for hours on end, which runs counter to how many active, dynamic children naturally process information.

The Discovery difference lies in its unwavering commitment to meeting every child's social, emotional, and academic needs on an individual basis. The Montessori-based learning models utilized at the Academy offer the physical and mental flexibility that out-of-box learners require. By providing tangible, hands-on tools rather than rote memorization, children are empowered to truly grasp concepts, engage deeply with their material, and move forward with confidence. The faculty serve and support our children with remarkable dedication, creating an environment where active learners thrive.

The Critical Need for School Choice and Addressing Public School Pressures

Our town desperately needs true school choice because of systemic challenges in the local public system. As reported in *Explore Big Sky* covering the state of our local schools and community forums, families have increasingly voiced deep concerns regarding a pervasive bullying culture at Ophir, with local parents noting that children are frequently "ostracized… being left out… [and] there's very little action taken" [cite: 1.2.4]. As local professionals and therapists have emphasized, many families feel unheard by administration, leaving the community grappling with an overwhelming problem where parents are left searching for real solutions and safe alternatives [cite: 1.2.4].

We realize that multiple alternative schools have been started across town to address these gaps; notably, these initiatives are driven directly by parents—rather than corporate boards or traditional administrators—in an urgent effort to secure meaningful school choice. This grassroots proliferation of parent-led learning environments vividly demonstrates the unwavering, undeniable need Big Sky has for expanded school choice. Discovery Academy

provides an essential anchor among these alternatives, offering vital structure and relieving pressure on local education systems. It ensures that families do not have to choose between living in our quiet mountain community and keeping their children in a safe, supportive environment.

Why Discovery Academy Should Be Offered Resort Tax Support

Resort tax dollars exist to enhance the quality of life, infrastructure, and well-being for the people who live, work, and build futures in Big Sky. We need the Tax Board to hold space for this essential need in our community, as many children and families rely on resort tax support to help sustain vital community needs like school choice.

> **Community-Led Solutions:** Founded by local mothers who recognized an urgent community need, Discovery represents the grassroots resilience of Big Sky.
> **Flexible, Out-of-Box Learning:** Discovery provides the operational and educational flexibility required for children who thrive in hands-on learning settings rather than rigid traditional classrooms.
> **Retaining Working Families:** High-altitude mountain towns rely on working families staying rooted here. Without accessible alternative education and safe school choices, families are forced to relocate.

Big Sky Discovery Academy is a cornerstone of our community's future. I urge the Resort Tax Board to approve funding support for the Academy so it can continue its invaluable work of educating, empowering, and protecting our children.

Sincerely,

The Zarembas
Big Sky, Montana

From: Michele Geppert
To: Public Comment
Cc: Julie Edwards; Sam Geppert
Subject: Discovery Academy Appeal
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:10:58 PM

You don't often get email from michele.geppert@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Area District Board,

I am writing to you first and foremost as a parent whose family has personally experienced the value of Discovery Academy.

I understand that the Board is responsible for making incredibly difficult decisions about how Resort Tax dollars are distributed across our community. There are many worthy organizations and important needs competing for limited funding. However, I was deeply concerned to learn that Discovery Academy received an allocation of only $150,000 toward its $395,000 request. I respectfully ask the Board to reconsider that funding level and to recognize just how significant this shortfall could be—not simply for a school, but for the children and families who rely on it.

As a parent, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that our community preserve different educational pathways for children.

Children are not all the same. They do not all learn the same way, develop at the same pace, thrive in the same environments, or need the same things from their teachers and classrooms. Traditional schools can be wonderful places for many children. But there are also children who need something different.

That is where a school like Discovery Academy becomes so important.

The Montessori structure at Discovery allows children to learn in a much more individualized way. Children have opportunities for hands-on learning, movement, independence, mixed-age interaction, individualized pacing, and deeper exploration of subjects rather than being expected to fit into one uniform educational model.

For some children, those differences may simply make school more engaging.

For other children, they are essential.

There are children with learning differences, neurodivergence, developmental differences, social or emotional needs, sensory needs, or other challenges for whom a traditional classroom environment simply may not be the place where they are able to flourish. There are also children who may not have a diagnosis at all but simply learn differently.

Those children deserve a place in our community too.

They deserve an education that recognizes who they are rather than continually asking them to become something they are not in order to fit into a particular system.

As a parent, one of the things I value most about Discovery is that the focus is not simply on

whether a child can keep pace with everyone else. The focus is on understanding the individual child—where that child is academically, socially, emotionally, and developmentally—and helping that child grow from there.

That can change the trajectory of a child's life.

When a child spends day after day feeling behind, overwhelmed, misunderstood, or unsuccessful, it can fundamentally change how that child views school and, eventually, how that child views themselves. Conversely, when a child finds an environment where they are understood and can experience success, they begin to see themselves as capable learners.

Every community should want that for its children.

Discovery Academy is also a nonprofit school, and tuition assistance is critical to ensuring that this educational option does not become something available only to families who can afford the full cost of private tuition.

That part of this funding request is especially important to me.

A school can technically be "available" in a community, but if only the highest-income families can afford to attend, it is not truly accessible.

Working families in Big Sky should not have to decide that the educational environment best suited for their child is simply unattainable because of their income. A child's opportunity to succeed should not depend entirely on whether their parents can write a tuition check without assistance.

Need-based tuition assistance makes Discovery accessible to a broader representation of the families who actually make up this community.

And those families matter.

The early childhood program at Discovery is particularly important because it serves two essential purposes at the same time: it provides children with meaningful early education, and it provides working parents with dependable childcare.

Those two things cannot realistically be separated for families with young children.

Parents of preschool- and kindergarten-age children have jobs. They are serving this community every day in healthcare, hospitality, restaurants, construction, education, small businesses, professional services, tourism, maintenance, retail, and countless other roles that keep Big Sky operating.

They cannot go to work if they do not have somewhere safe, reliable, and nurturing for their children to be.

For those parents, Discovery's Early Childhood classroom is not simply a preschool enrichment program. It is part of the infrastructure that allows them to remain in the workforce.

Their children are not simply being "watched" while their parents work. They are spending those hours in a thoughtfully designed educational environment where they are learning independence, communication, problem-solving, social skills, early academics, and how to function as members of a community.

As both a parent and a working adult, I understand how much reliable childcare determines whether a family can function. When childcare disappears, parents miss work, reduce their hours, leave jobs, or sometimes leave communities altogether.

Big Sky already faces the challenges that come with being an expensive place for working families to live. We should be doing everything possible to preserve childcare and educational capacity—not reducing access to it.

I also believe there is tremendous value in what Discovery contributes to the greater educational ecosystem of Big Sky.

Supporting Discovery does not mean choosing one school over another.

It means recognizing that a healthy community needs multiple ways to serve children.

A child who thrives in the traditional public school environment should have that opportunity. A child who needs the Montessori environment at Discovery should have that opportunity as well. A child who requires more individualization, a smaller setting, or a different learning structure should not be considered less deserving of community investment simply because their educational needs look different.

Supporting different types of learners strengthens the entire community.

These children will grow up here. They will become our employees, employers, healthcare providers, teachers, tradespeople, entrepreneurs, parents, volunteers, and community leaders.

How we support them now matters.

Early childhood education matters.

Educational diversity matters.

Childcare matters.

Accessibility matters.

And making sure that children who learn differently still have somewhere they can succeed matters enormously.

I know that $395,000 is a significant amount of money. But I would ask the Board to also consider what is at stake when funding is reduced by nearly two-thirds.

The consequences do not exist only on a spreadsheet.

They can mean fewer tuition-assistance dollars for a family that desperately needs them.

They can mean a child losing access to the educational environment where they finally began to thrive.

They can mean a preschool family losing childcare that allows a parent to continue working.

They can mean teachers, classrooms, and programs being stretched further.

And ultimately, they can mean less educational and childcare capacity in a community that needs more of both—not less.

As a parent, I do not view funding for Discovery Academy as funding for a private benefit.

I see it as an investment in Big Sky's children.

I see it as an investment in working families.

I see it as an investment in childcare.

I see it as an investment in educational accessibility.

And I see it as an investment in the long-term health of this community.

There are few things more foundational to a community than how it cares for and educates its children.

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn in an environment where they can succeed. Every working parent deserves access to safe and dependable care for their young children. And families whose children need an educational alternative should not be excluded from that opportunity simply because they cannot afford full tuition.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider the current $150,000 allocation and provide Discovery Academy with substantially greater funding, ideally the full $395,000 requested.

Please protect this resource for the children and families who depend on it now, and for the families who will need it in the years to come.

Thank you for your time, your service to Big Sky, and your consideration of what this funding truly represents to families like mine.

Sincerely,

Michele Geppert
Parent

From: AJ Carlson
To: Public Comment
Subject: Discovery Academy Funding
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:54:16 AM

You don't often get email from ajc1127@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Big Sky Resort Tax Board,

Thank you for your continued investment in our community and for the important role you play in allocating resort tax dollars to support Big Sky.

As a parent of children attending Discovery Academy, I want to highlight the importance of early childhood education and encourage increased funding for education in Big Sky.

Since 2012, I have had the opportunity to witness Big Sky grow into the community it is today. One of the most significant changes has been the increase in families with children choosing to make Big Sky their home. As our community continues to grow, so does the responsibility to ensure our children have access to the educational resources and opportunities they need to succeed, not only relative to statewide benchmarks, but national standards as well.

Our family has experienced firsthand the value of Discovery Academy's Montessori approach. It has helped foster our children's curiosity, attention to detail, and enthusiasm for learning. Access to quality early childhood education and childcare benefits far more than individual families. It strengthens the entire community by supporting working parents, attracting and retaining families, and preparing the next generation of Montanans to contribute to the future of Big Sky and our state.

We are fortunate to have dedicated educators and outstanding learning facilities in our community, particularly in a state that continues to face challenges in early childhood education. Preserving and strengthening these resources is an investment in the long-term vitality of Big Sky.

On behalf of our family, I respectfully ask the Big Sky Resort Tax Board to consider allocating funding to support Discovery Academy and its continued growth. Investing in early childhood education today will help ensure that Big Sky remains a community where families can thrive and children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to our community.

With gratitude,

AJ Carlson

From: Elizabeth Blue
To: Public Comment
Subject: Discovery Academy Impact
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 3:02:39 PM

You don't often get email from liz@headwatersbigsky.com. Learn why this is important

To the entire Resort Tax Team,

I am a parent of a 3 year old Discovery student. Before he started at Discovery he was home for a year and before that he was in daycare. The negative impacts of daycare carried into his life at home where he constantly screamed, hit, said things like, “I’ll kill you!” We worked with him at home but the damage was impacting our social outings and life at home. He was violent with his older sister and just angry and defensive a lot.

I was nervous to send him to any school again after our experience in a group daycare setting. I wasn’t confident that any school, specifically one that would impact us financially hard would be worth it. We took the leap and all I can say is WOW.

Within a week, Calvin has changed as a whole. He gives hugs and says he loves his friends. He says please and thank you unprompted. He is kind and sweet again like the little boy we knew and loved before daycare. This is because of Discovery.

The skills he’s learning, the consideration with others, and his overall personality is blossoming at Discovery. We are hoping to bring our 4 year old over next year as we feel this school supports kids better than any facility we have tried.

Thanks for reading and your consideration with funds for Discovery Academy.

Liz Peabody
406.209.5520

From: Nikki Harbaugh
To: Public Comment
Subject: Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 11:59:57 AM

You don't often get email from nikki.h2281@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important

Hello to all -

I would like to speak as to why Discovery Academy is so important to our family and, more importantly, why I believe it is so important to Big Sky.

Discovery has become much more than a school for our family. Both of our children have benefited from it in very different ways. (One child receives all day therapist assistance throughout their school day) They are different kids with different personalities, strengths, learning styles, and needs, and what has made Discovery so special is the teachers' ability to meet each child where they are — academically, socially, and emotionally. For some children (mine included), a traditional classroom setting is not the right environment for learning. They may be gifted, neurodivergent, need additional academic support, learn differently, or simply benefit from a smaller and more individualized setting. Discovery is meeting each and every one of these children in our community exactly where they are at. There is a highly individualized approach that our teachers apply to each student and help at identifying their challenges, adjust instruction and help them progress in ways that are difficult to accomplish in the traditional setting. Discovery provides support daily for children struggling in different areas and offers connections to:

-occupational therapy

-speech and language support

-dyslexia support

-educational and developmental therapies (including RBT's that work daily with multiple students age 7 and older)

-individualized academic intervention

-enrichment for students who are ready for greater challenges

When we chose Discovery, I don't think we ever expected it to become such an important and long-term part of our family's life. This school has

not only positively impacted our children, but our entire family. Now, we realize for one of our children we simply could not be here without this school and its resources they have provided for us. Which is a heartbreaking realization to make in parenthood. We all walk into it not knowing the challenges or reality of what our children will need.

And I know our family is not alone in that.

Discovery serves children up to 5th grade who may not thrive in a traditional classroom for a variety of reasons. It gives families an educational choice that otherwise simply does not exist here. If Discovery were to disappear, families would not just be choosing between schools. For some, the alternative would be driving significant distances, seeking specialized resources outside of Big Sky, homeschooling, or potentially leaving the community altogether.

My husband and I have been in the community for over 2 decades and we have built our lives here. Leaving Big Sky would be heartbreaking for all of us.

I understand the desire to prioritize tuition assistance for younger children, but the need does not disappear when a child turns five. In fact, for many families, the reason Discovery is so important becomes even more clear as children get older and their individual academic, social, emotional, or learning needs become more apparent.

Our children don't suddenly stop needing the environment that allows them to succeed because they reach a certain age. Learning differences can severely affect mental health, and in a small town we know how important it is to help each other. We are not competing with other schools, we just simply want our children to have access to resources that they need and deserve.

Big Sky talks often about being a community where families can live, work, and raise their children. To me, that means more than having housing and jobs. It means having educational options for different kinds of children and families.

We are incredibly grateful to have this school in our community. But I don't believe we should look at Discovery only through the lens of the families currently enrolled. We should look at what it contributes to Big

Sky as a whole. Our teachers are committed to this community, our children and Big Sky. They have put their hearts and soul into their careers, to be in this beautiful and special place, and they too are BEYOND important to the success of our future generations here.

This school is not just benefiting the families who attend it. It is helping make Big Sky a community where more families can stay, more children can thrive, and more children can find a place where they belong.

That is why I believe Discovery deserves meaningful investment and support from our community. Thank you for taking the time to read our story. We love Big Sky, and Discovery Academy has allowed us to continue living here with the challenges that parenting a child with learning differences has come with.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

From: Shannon Hyem
To: Public Comment
Subject: Funding of big Sky community school
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 6:14:18 AM

You don't often get email from shannon.hyem@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Resort Tax Board,

As a sixth-generation Montanan, a mother of two children attending Big Sky Community School, and a small business owner who has chosen to invest our family's future here, I ask you to consider what it truly means to invest in Big Sky.

Big Sky Community School has been transformative for our family. It provides 55 children with opportunities to learn through self-regulation, entrepreneurship, community outreach, and outdoor education. This school complements the educational opportunities available in Big Sky, offering families another approach to learning and helping make it possible for more families to build their lives here long term. With approximately 50% of students receiving tuition-based support, this opportunity extends beyond families with financial privilege. As our community grows, so does the need for diverse educational options that support our children and families.

I would appreciate a better understanding of how funding priorities are determined when early education and childcare receive support, while K–12 educational opportunities for these 55 children receive no allocation. We all recognize the importance of early education, and I believe we share the desire to see children thrive throughout their lives. Our children are tomorrow's workforce, entrepreneurs, business owners, and community leaders. If we want families to stay, businesses to grow, and tourism to thrive, investing in the next generation must remain part of that vision.

As a family, we have tried to live these values ourselves. When financially able, we have intentionally contributed to Morningstar, Discovery, and Ophir Public School, even though our own children did not attend each of these schools. Our intention has always been to support education beyond our immediate circumstances and help build a community where every child has the opportunity to thrive. We believe a strong village is built when we recognize the value of opportunities that may look different from our own.

As Big Sky and its resort tax revenue grow, perhaps there is an opportunity to revisit our allocation criteria and processes to ensure they continue to reflect our community's evolving needs. I recognize that funding decisions involve competing priorities and important responsibilities. My hope is that we can continue exploring ways to ensure educational opportunities are considered fairly, with transparent criteria and a clear understanding of how funding decisions are made.

I would also welcome consideration of whether a one-time investment in a permanent, sustainable educational space could provide lasting value to Big Sky. With community donors already contributing toward this vision, could resort tax funding help establish a long-term asset that reduces future financial pressures and allows more resources to be directed toward educating children? I understand that eligibility and competing needs must be considered, but I believe the potential for lasting community benefit is worth exploring.

We have an opportunity to shape what Big Sky becomes for the next generation. That takes collaboration, creativity, and a willingness to look at new possibilities. As a parent and business owner, I want to see a community where families can put down roots, children have opportunities to thrive, and local businesses have the people and community support they need to succeed.

We are not asking the community to choose one school over another. We are asking that every educational opportunity be considered thoughtfully, that funding decisions be transparent, and that our children remain at the heart of the future we are building together.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued service to our community. I respectfully ask that you reconsider the previous decision and explore whether there may be a creative path toward supporting a sustainable educational space for Big Sky's children and families.

With appreciation,
Shannon Hyem
Big Sky Resident, Parent, and Small Business Owner
Hero Snow Coffee
Sent from my iPhone

From: Sarah Cessna
To: Public Comment
Subject: Impact and Appreciation Report from a New Big Sky Family
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:55:44 AM

You don't often get email from srcessna1@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the Board,

We are writing to encourage the Board to allocate resort tax funds to support Big Sky Community School and to share how vital this institution is to our family. Our family relocated to Big Sky specifically for an educational environment that could offer more opportunities than what was available to our children in our prior state.

Since our arrival, Big Sky Community School has gone entirely above and beyond in delivering high-quality academic programming. The dedication of the educators and the depth of the curriculum have far exceeded our expectations. For our family, choosing this school was our only path forward outside of homeschooling.

Because of Big Sky Community School, we are actively growing deeper roots in the local community. Being a part of this school has provided our family with a strong sense of belonging and connection within Big Sky. Investing public funds in local education is critical to attracting and retaining families like ours who came to Big Sky specifically for the educational opportunity.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and continued dedication to supporting the local community and services that make Big Sky a wonderful place to live and raise children.

Sincerely,

Sarah Cessna

From: sarah mitchell
To: Public Comment
Subject: In support of fully funding Morningstar
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 10:30:56 AM

You don't often get email from knitsarahknit@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board members,

My name is Sarah Mitchell, and I am a full-time resident of Big Sky, and the parent of two former students of Morningstar. I am writing in support of Morningstar Learning Center's request for Early Childhood Education and Tuition Assistance, and I respectfully ask that BSRAD fully fund this request.

When our family moved to Big Sky 11 years ago, Morningstar was an integral part of our choice to come and be able to accept employment at Big Sky Medical Center.

If we as a community want Big Sky to be a place where families grow and put down roots and stay, then high-quality early childhood education must be a top priority. The health and beauty of our ecosystem, our love of art, of our pets, and the thriving of our community as a whole will all flow up from the bedrock of a town that puts first the health and welfare of all of its members, starting with the smallest and most vulnerable. Let us not become another resort community loses sight of what matters most: its greatest treasure, our children.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your continued investment in Big Sky families.

With gratitude,

Sarah Mitchell

From: Emily Potts
To: Public Comment
Subject: Letter in support of the Big Sky Community School
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:47:57 PM

You don't often get email from emilyeganpotts@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

I write today in hopes of expressing just how important Big Sky Community School has become to our family, and how strongly I believe in its value to the greater Big Sky community.

Until this year, all three of our children attended Big Sky Discovery Academy. We spent seven wonderful years as part of the BSDA community and remain deeply grateful for the experiences, relationships, and opportunities it provided our family. Last year, however, we began to feel that our children might benefit from a change. After much consideration, we made the decision to move all three to Big Sky Community School, and for a multitude of reasons, we could not be happier with that choice.

Our oldest child was diagnosed with a learning disability last year, and it became clear that he needed a different structure of academic support. Big Sky Community School has done an incredible job of providing exactly that. In a relatively short period of time, we have already seen meaningful progress in both his academic performance and, perhaps even more importantly, his confidence. As parents, there is an enormous sense of relief that comes with knowing your child is in an environment where he is understood, supported, and given the tools he needs to succeed. The challenges he faces have not disappeared, but with the dedication and guidance of his teachers, we feel increasingly confident that he is on the right path. What once felt overwhelming now feels manageable, and we are incredibly grateful for that.

For our other two children, who have not demonstrated any particular learning challenges, we feel equally confident in our decision to begin this new chapter at Big Sky Community School. The classroom environment, the approach to learning, and the thoughtful nature of the curriculum have already had a noticeable and positive impact on both of them. We are seeing growth not only academically, but also in their enthusiasm for learning, their independence, and their overall confidence. It has been wonderful to witness.

There is no question in my mind that the teachers, staff, and families who make up Big Sky Community School are something special. The passion, dedication, and genuine commitment to the children that we have witnessed in our short time there have been remarkable. It is clear that this is a school where the people involved care deeply about what they are building and, more importantly, about the children they are helping to shape.

While our family's experience has made us personally invested in the success of Big Sky Community School, my belief in its importance extends well beyond our own children.

As Big Sky continues to grow and diversify, I believe having a variety of educational opportunities will become increasingly essential to the health and strength of our community. Children are not all the same. They learn differently, respond to different teaching styles, and thrive in different environments. What works beautifully for one child may not be the right fit for another. Having options allows families to make thoughtful decisions based on the individual needs of their children, rather than feeling limited by what happens to be available.

I believe this is something we should all be able to recognize and support, regardless of where our own children attend school. As members of a community, we have a responsibility to look beyond our individual circumstances, put ourselves in the shoes of other families, and consider what is ultimately in the best interests of all of our children. A strong community is one that recognizes that different families have different needs and works to create opportunities for everyone.

To me, the presence of Big Sky Community School is not simply an added educational option. It is an essential part of creating a community where more children have the opportunity to succeed, where families feel supported, and where the unique needs of individual learners are recognized and valued.

Additional funding would not only help ensure that Big Sky Community School can continue to grow and thrive, but it would also make this valuable educational opportunity financially accessible to more families. I believe that is an incredibly important distinction. The ability to find the right educational environment for a child should not be determined solely by a family's financial circumstances.

Ultimately, I believe that investing in Big Sky Community School is an investment in the future of Big Sky itself. The more opportunities we can provide for our children to learn, grow, and succeed, the stronger our community will be.

I am deeply grateful that this school exists, grateful for what it has already given our family, and hopeful that it will continue to be a meaningful and accessible option for many more families in the years to come.

As the Big Sky Resort Area District considers Big Sky Community School's request for funding, I sincerely hope you will take into account not only the immediate needs of the school, but also the broader and lasting value it brings to our community. I recognize that decisions about allocating BSRAD funds are complex and require thoughtful consideration of many competing priorities. However, I hope that the importance of providing diverse, accessible educational opportunities for our children will weigh heavily in your decision. I respectfully ask that you support this funding request, recognizing that the benefits of doing so extend far beyond the walls of the school and into the future of the community we all care so deeply about.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to the well-being of Big Sky.

Sincerely,

Emily Potts and family

October 20, 2026

Big Sky Resort Tax District
Board of Directors
Big Sky, Montana

RE: Support for Big Sky Chamber of Commerce FY27 Funding Request

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce's FY27 funding request and to encourage the Board to affirm its initial approval with a favorable final funding vote.

Having spent many years helping operate businesses in Big Sky, I have experienced firsthand the opportunities and challenges of doing business in this remarkable community. I've watched Big Sky grow and evolve, not only in size and development, but through significant economic shifts that have changed the landscape for local businesses, employees, and residents alike.

As our community has evolved, so have the challenges of operating a successful business. Rising costs, changing customer demands, workforce availability, and shifting economic conditions have required businesses to continually adapt. What worked successfully years ago may no longer be sufficient today.

One thing I've learned over the years is that a strong business community doesn't happen by accident. It takes leadership, collaboration, communication, and a willingness to address challenges that no individual business can solve alone.

I believe the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce plays an essential role in meeting those challenges through three important contributions to our community.

1. Strengthening Big Sky's Economic Foundation

Our local businesses are a fundamental part of Big Sky's economic engine. They provide employment, generate economic activity, support community organizations, serve our residents and visitors, and contribute to the tax revenues that help fund the services and infrastructure our community depends upon.

As Big Sky's economy has evolved, so have the demands placed on these businesses. The challenge is no longer simply managing growth, but adapting to changing economic conditions while maintaining viable businesses and a sustainable local workforce.

The Chamber plays an important role in helping businesses navigate these transitions, understand emerging challenges, and remain an essential part of Big Sky's economic future. Supporting our businesses is not simply an investment in individual enterprises; it is an investment in the long-term economic health and sustainability of our entire community.

2. Developing Businesses, People, and Community Relationships

Through business education, professional development, networking opportunities, and community partnerships, the Chamber provides resources that help businesses navigate challenges, adapt to change, and identify opportunities for growth.

Equally important is its investment in people. Programs such as Leadership Big Sky help develop future community leaders who understand our unique challenges and are prepared to help shape our future.

The Chamber brings people and organizations together, creating relationships, encouraging collaboration, and building a stronger sense of shared responsibility for the success of our community.

3. Advocating for Big Sky at the County, State, and Federal Levels

Perhaps one of the Chamber's most important, yet less visible, contributions is its advocacy on behalf of Big Sky.

As an unincorporated community spanning two counties, Big Sky faces unique challenges in ensuring that our needs and interests are understood and represented in decisions made beyond our community.

Whether the issue is workforce housing, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, or policies affecting local businesses, we need a knowledgeable, consistent, and credible voice at the table.

I also believe it is important to recognize that effective advocacy for Big Sky is a shared effort. The Chamber and the Resort Tax District bring different but complementary perspectives to many of the same challenges. The Chamber brings the experiences, concerns, and economic realities of our business community, while the Resort Tax District brings its broader perspective on community needs, public investment, and infrastructure priorities.

Together, these perspectives strengthen our ability to communicate Big Sky's needs and advocate for solutions at the county, state, and federal levels. This collaboration helps ensure that economic vitality, community well-being, and long-term sustainability are considered together rather than as competing interests.

The Chamber's advocacy, particularly when combined with the District's community-wide perspective, benefits far more than Chamber members. It contributes to a stronger, more informed, and more unified voice for the entire Big Sky community.

These three contributions are interconnected**.** Strong businesses create economic opportunity. Education, leadership, and collaboration help sustain that success. Effective advocacy helps ensure our community has a voice in the decisions that affect our future.

As a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors, I have an opportunity to see the commitment behind these efforts. I also recognize that organizations receiving public funding have a responsibility to demonstrate results, remain accountable, and use those resources effectively.

I appreciate that the Resort Tax District must balance many competing needs with limited resources. However, I would encourage the Board to view funding for the Chamber not simply as financial support for an organization, but as an investment in the economic foundation, leadership, and representation of the Big Sky community.

Our community's future depends not only on the infrastructure we build, but also on the strength of the businesses and people who sustain it, and our ability to influence the decisions that affect them.

I appreciate the Board's initial support of the Chamber's FY27 request and respectfully encourage you to carry that support through the final funding decision.

Thank you for your service, your thoughtful consideration, and your continued commitment to Big Sky's future.

Sincerely,

Jim Delzer
Longtime Big Sky Advocate
Board of Directors, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce

From: joseph mcfadden
To: Public Comment
Subject: Letter of support for discovery academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:48:51 PM

You don't often get email from bikeingpgh@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

I am writing in support of awarding more resort tax funds to Discovery Academy in addition to financial aid, operational support would be very helpful as well.

Supporting Discovery Academy is an investment in our community's children, families, and future. These funds would help provide valuable educational opportunities and resources that benefit local families and strengthen our community.

Speak soon.
Joseph

From: karen campos
To: Public Comment
Subject: Letter of support for Discovery Academy.
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 8:53:39 AM

You don't often get email from kcampos1701@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Resort Tax Board Members,

I am writing to express my heartfelt support for Discovery Academy and the wonderful impact it has on our children and the Big Sky community.

As a parent, I have personally seen the positive difference Discovery has made in my daughter Alana's life. Since she started attending, we have noticed such a beautiful change in her social skills, confidence, and independence. She has become more outgoing, comfortable around others, and eager to learn. Watching her grow and thrive in such a loving environment has meant so much to our family.

Discovery Academy is so much more than childcare. It is a place where children feel safe, loved, and encouraged to grow. The teachers genuinely care about each child's development, and that makes all the difference.

Discovery is also essential to our community. It provides families with quality early education and reliable childcare, allowing parents to work and contribute to the local economy.

I truly believe Discovery Academy deserves continued support through resort tax funding. Investing in Discovery means investing in our children, supporting working families, and building a stronger community.

We are incredibly grateful for everything Discovery has done for Alana and our family, and I hope it continues to receive the support it deserves.

Warm regards,
Karen & Jessie Campos

From:	Stephanie Kissell
To:	Public Comment
Subject:	Letter of Support for MLC
Date:	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:56:30 AM

Dear BSRAD Board,
Thank you for your time and commitment to ensuring public tax dollars are utilized in the most beneficial ways for the Big Sky community. Your discussion yesterday was thoughtful and respectful of all the organizations doing important work throughout Big Sky and I greatly appreciate your conscientious methodology.

I am writing in support of fully funding Morningstar Learning Center's request. Both the MLC Board of Directors and the administration team have worked diligently and transparently to be excellent stewards of what we have worked for and been given, resulting in high teacher retention and training, a safe learning environment, and accessibility for all families regardless of income. In all of this hard work, we also now have some unrestricted emergency reserves. We are proud of these successes and would prefer keeping the reserves on hand for emergencies.

Additionally, the question of whether our community is funding empty spaces is a good one, which I'm glad Director Zirkle brought up. This is an excellent question, and one that the MLC Board and administration have dedicated much thought and discussion toward. Currently, we are staffed appropriately to ratio +1 (we are not overstaffed) in each classroom and do have room for additional students; however, we still need the same amount of staff in those classrooms whether we enroll additional students or not because of the ratio requirements.

At the close of this first round of allocations, there was still a balance in the Education and Childcare impact area. Please reconsider allocating full funding to Morningstar, so it may continue to serve Big Sky with excellence.

Respectfully,
Stephanie Kissell
MLC Board Member

10/20/26

To BSRAD Board of Directors,

I am a Big Sky Ski Education Foundation (BSSEF) Board member, I have two children currently enrolled in the BSSEF alpine program, and I am a community advocate for keeping ski programs accessible and affordable for youth in our Community. I am writing to convey my strong support for the FY27 grant request of $52 000 to allow BSSEF to expand winter sports equipment for our program.

I believe that equipment funding will keep baseline tuition more affordable to all families. Our program has high operating costs for equipment that we need to upgrade/replace to allow race/competitions venue safety, such as B-net fencing/C-net fencing for competitions venues, timing equipment and funds to buy and fix gates. If we cannot cover these costs we will have to further increase tuition fees and this will deter families from applying to our program, and possibly they will seek out other programs, or youth will miss out on these opportunities. I understand that the BSRAD Board was considering that the grant money request should go toward scholarships versus equipment funding. We very much appreciate scholarship funding but this fiscal year we appear to have met scholarship requests but our financial gap for meeting equipment operation costs has got higher and we need solutions to keep our program accessible, tuition affordable and to have adequate equipment to ensure safety to our athletes. I think it is important to match our tuition costs to other state-wide programs to drive our local program and support our community. We would like to see our program grow and we think that keeping our tuition costs affordable is imperative. BSSEF has a history of fiscal responsibility, and we come to BSRAD only as needed. Much thought was put into this grant request and we would appreciate your support to fund out equipment grant request.

Sincerely,

Mary Marshall.

From: Marie Goode
To: Public Comment
Subject: Morningstar funding request
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 5:03:17 PM

[You don't often get email from magoode2004@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Dear Big Sky Resort Tax Board,

I am writing to request that you fully fund the Morningstar Learning Center funding request.

Morningstar is a vital asset to our community and as a nonprofit relies on funding from Resort Tax to keep childcare affordable for Big Sky families.

Children attending Morningstar are the children of so many vital workers in our community that help with the collection of resort tax every year.

Please reconsider and fully fund the Morningstar request.

Thank you.

Marie Goode
Sent from my iPhone

From: anne chiles
To: Public Comment
Subject: Morningstar funding
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:48:14 AM

[You don't often get email from annetana@aol.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Please support full funding for Morningstar.
The school services so many local families that work in our community.
We need to support their efforts.
Asking you to allocate all their funding request,
Anne Chiles

From: Giuliana Olivo
To: Public Comment
Subject: Please Choose to Make a Meaningful Investment in Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:19:01 PM

[You don't often get email from golivo@bigskydiscoveryacademy.org. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

As a long-time Big Sky local, growing up in this town since I was 14 with my family's opening of Michaelangelo's Italian Restaurant, I feel very passionate about giving back to a community that has done and continues to do so much for me and my family. Included in the heart of this community is Big Sky Discovery Academy. After watching my friends graduate from Discovery's first high school class in 2020, and then later getting to see their younger siblings graduate after them, I knew this was a place that brings an unconditional sense of belonging to students, where all types of learners are accepted, and lifelong memories are made. Ultimately, this was where I had hoped to eventually begin my teaching career out of college.

In 2024, that dream of teaching at Discovery came true for me. Working with these students and families has been life-changing by providing opportunities of growth for me to become the teacher I am today. Thanks to the school's support, they have continued to invest in their educators through essential grants and community fundraising to provide opportunities that invest in their teachers, classrooms, students, and families. Furthermore, financial assistance is essential to sustain quality educators living in a town that, otherwise, pushes teachers out.

It would mean the world to not only our students and families, but also teachers and the entire Big Sky community to continue supporting teachers by backing quality education opportunities, housing assistance, and enriching the learning experience of their students with raised-funding for hands-on learning material, curriculum, and resources.

While we are grateful to even potentially receive tuition assistance for our families, we cannot continue to do the meaningful work with our students that not only changes lives, but that we are truly passionate about without your continued financial support, allocating funding dedicated to teachers and their classrooms.

Thank you for your consideration of allocation of funding for Discovery Academy. Your assistance will make a difference in our ability to continue to do our jobs WELL for ALL!!

Sincerely,
Giuliana V. Olivo
Lower Elementary Teacher
Big Sky Discovery Academy

From:	Patrick Sullivan
To:	Public Comment
Subject:	Public Comment in Support of Big Sky Community School
Date:	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:59:11 PM

Dear Resort Tax Board,

I am writing as a parent of three children at Big Sky Community School and as Board Chair.

I would respectfully request that you reconsider your draft grant of zero dollars.

I would like to put a few facts into the public record and make a broader call to action: **Big Sky needs to do more to support every K–12 student in our community, regardless of where they attend school**.

Last fall, Big Sky Community School opened with 16 students. Today, we have 56 students and more than 20 on our waitlist.

- Of the 56 students, 28 are new to Big Sky education with 20 new to Big Sky entirely. We are growing the community.
- We have 25 kids on our waitlist, and 16 would be new to Big Sky. Many of these families also have younger siblings who would attend another school. You will note that these numbers are +1 versus my public comments yesterday due to an inquiry and addition to the waitlist today.
- This has all been accomplished with no marketing, no development or fundraising team, and almost zero community support. Over 99% has come from private sources.

The Community School is a community asset, and the facilities host many other non-profits for events outside of school hours at no cost. We would like to expand our capacity to serve Big Sky.

The Community School is also a net contributor to the district as we spend over $150,000 per year on local businesses, at BSCO, and the Arts Council.

In just over a year, BSCS families and friends have invested more than $5 million in K-12 education in Big Sky. We cannot do anymore.

We built the Community School around three principles: serve the entire community, make education accessible, and operate sustainably without ongoing community operating subsidies.

Today, 49% of our students receive financial assistance, totaling more than $700,000 last year. Financial aid is verified by a third party provider, Clarity. BSCS is accessible, and financial aid must be our top priority. BSCS funded 100% of the demonstrated need, primarily via private donors and the Student Scholarship Organization. The school reached breakeven this year and will not rely on public funds for our operating budget.

Our ambitions extend beyond our own students. We have provided Spanish classes, financial education, college counseling, SAT/ACT tutoring, and athletic programming to children throughout Big Sky, regardless of which school they attend.

BSRAD has invested approximately $5 million in independent early childhood education over the past decade and your draft grants award another $650,000 this year. I support investment in early childhood and am the son of a daycare owner/operator. I grew up working in the early childhood business, and it is near and dear to my heart.

There is no legal restriction on supporting independent schools that benefit the resort district. This is a discretionary decision by the Board, and I would encourage you to revisit your approach. A strong Big Sky School District in conjunction with a strong independent school is a substantive way to grow Big Sky. Many BSCS students have siblings at Big Sky School District. If we work together, we can

do so much more.

But why should community support for education largely end when a child turns five?

The decision before you is not whether you want to support K-12 students at Big Sky School District or Big Sky Community School. **If that were the decision, you should prioritize the public school. The decision before the Board is whether you decide to support K-12 education via BSCS or re-allocate the funds outside of your education allocation. It is an active decision to <u>not</u> fund K-12 education via the Community School as you have the capital in your draft budget.**

Without your support we cannot expand and will turn families away from Big Sky.

Our request works out to a one-time capital grant of **$3k per student assuming it expands capacity to 75. If you include $250k next year it goes to $6,400 ONE TIME.**

Furthermore, **when BSRAD and our community foundations decline to support us, the impact extends beyond the dollars**. Private donors look to these institutions for validation. A lack of support sends a signal that our school is not valued or needed, making private fundraising more difficult.

I leave you with three requests.

First, **make K–12 education a much higher priority in Big Sky**. Every school, every sport, art, music, dance, etc.

Second, **fund children, not institutions**. Give families more flexibility to determine what educational resources best serve their children. We can do this in partnership with you as an independent school and have far more flexibility in ways that we can serve Big Sky. I am proud to live in a community with a strong public school system, and we want to work together. I realize this is different than many other communities where there is a public versus private competition. My hope is that we can be forward-thinking as a small community and work together.

Third, **replace competition with partnership**. A child moving between schools in Big Sky is not a loss to our community. That child and that family are still here, and you exist to serve the district - all of it.

We all love Big Sky, and the way to grow our community is from the ground up. Start with our kids.

Partnership can be a unique asset for the full community, but we cannot do it alone. You have a time sensitive request in front of you, and I greatly appreciate your engagement.

Thank you.

Patrick Sullivan

From: Emily Thompson
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment in Support of Big Sky Community School Funding Request
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:29:33 PM

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

As a local resident and parent, I am writing to urge the Board to fully fund the grant request for the Big Sky Community School.

Our family moved to Big Sky specifically for this school. The K-12 programs and specialized student accommodations, inclusive of the entire K-12 age range, that are offered by this school are unique and unmatched by other educational institutions in Gallatin County.

Fully funding this request is vital to ensuring that Big Sky can continue to attract and retain year-round families like ours. Families who live here full-time provide the essential, year-round support that the local economy and community rely on to thrive. By securing the school's programs and ensuring all students have the accommodations they need, you are directly investing in the long-term stability and future of Big Sky.

Thank you for your time, dedication, and thoughtful stewardship of our community's resort tax funds toward a foundational population: the youth who represent the very future of this town.

Sincerely,
Emily Thompson

From:	Jessie Lepel
To:	Public Comment
Subject:	Public Comment in Support of BSSEF FY27 Application ($52,000)
Date:	Tuesday, October 20, 2026 8:35:53 PM

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

My name is Jessie Lepel, writing as a BSSEF staff member in strong support of the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation's (BSSEF) FY27 grant request of $52,000 for **Expanding Youth Winter Sports Safety Equipment (Programming)**.

While I understand there has been discussion around prioritizing scholarship funding, I want to share why BSSEF's request for capital equipment and safety infrastructure is the most effective and impactful use of Resort Tax support for our youth and community:

1. **How BSSEF Funds Financial Aid:** Last year, 61 out of our 170 athletes received financial assistance. BSSEF successfully meets this community need by distributing roughly $100,000 annually through private fundraising and community foundations, where scholarship funding has increasingly been emphasized as a preferred focus. Because our immediate scholarship needs are currently being met through these pathways, our primary unfunded gap remains essential capital equipment and venue safety infrastructure.

2. **Equipment Funding Keeps Baseline Tuition Affordable for All Families:** Public support for venue safety equipment and capital assets prevents these major expenditures from being loaded into general operating expenses. Covering these capital costs with Resort Tax funds directly protects baseline tuition rates, ensuring winter sports remain accessible across the board for all local families without forcing fee increases.

3. **Avoiding "Sticker Shock" and Stigma:** Simply raising tuition and offering more financial aid is not a viable solution. High published prices create immediate "sticker shock" when families compare programs, risking the loss of local athletes to neighboring clubs like Bridger Ski Foundation, Great Divide Ski Team, Missoula Ski Education Foundation and Silver Run Ski Education Foundation. Furthermore, a real stigma exists around financial aid—many families who need help hesitate to apply and will choose not to participate instead. Keeping baseline program costs low removes this barrier entirely.

4. **Driving Statewide Relocation & Local Population Growth:** BSSEF is a proven draw for families moving to Big Sky from across Montana—including Bozeman, Billings, Whitefish, and Helena—specifically so their children can participate in our alpine, freeride, and nordic programs. When prospective residents evaluate moving to Big Sky, published program costs and venue quality are primary factors. Supporting our equipment costs through Resort Tax funding protects baseline tuition from sharp increases, ensuring Big Sky remains a compelling choice for families choosing where to settle and contribute to the local economy.

5. **Fiscal Responsibility & Community ROI:** BSSEF is intentional and frugal with taxpayer dollars, coming to Resort Tax only when a clear, evaluated capital need arises—in fact, our last request was five years ago. Investing in safe venues allows BSSEF to host regional races and competitions that draw visiting athletes and families, actively generating Resort Tax revenue for Big Sky.

BSSEF's mission is to build athletic skill, self-confidence, and a lifelong love of winter sports in local youth. Fully funding BSSEF's $52,000 request directly serves that mission by maintaining high safety standards while keeping registration affordable.

Thank you for your dedicated service to the Big Sky community and for your consideration of this critical project.

Thank you,

Jessie Lepel

Business Office Manager
Big Sky Ski Education Foundation

406-431-0886
Jessie@bssef.com

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Jessie Lepel

Business Office Manager | Staff

Big Sky Ski Education Foundation

Supporting the next generation of Alpine, Freeride, and Nordic athletes.

P.O. Box 160134, Big Sky, MT 59716

From: Patrick Sullivan
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment in Support of Early Childhood Tuition Assistance
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:50:04 PM

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I am writing in support of tuition assistance at both Discovery Academy and Morningstar Learning Center. These organizations provide essential services to Big Sky families, and I strongly support making early childhood education accessible to every family in our community.

However, I encourage the Board to revisit the math behind the proposed awards and adopt a transparent, quantitative, and equitable framework for allocating public funds.

The current draft grants are as follows:
- Morningstar Learning Center: $500,000 for 20 currently enrolled students, or $25,000 per student.
- Discovery Academy: $150,000 for 22 currently enrolled early childhood students, or $6,818 per student.

Why does a child at Morningstar receive 267% more public support than a child at Discovery Academy?

I believe the Board should answer straightforward questions before approving these awards:
- What is the documented tuition assistance need for the 20 students at Morningstar and the 22 students at Discovery Academy?
- How does that demonstrated need compare with the proposed grants, and what explains the disparity in funding per student?
- If the Board is paying for latent capacity, how much are you granting per capacity?

To be clear, **I am 100% in favor of accessibility and financial assistance for early childhood education. These institutions are critical components of a thriving, year-round community.**

$500,000 is an extraordinary amount of public money. To put that figure in perspective, **it could cover tuition for an entire Lone Peak High School graduating class at Montana State University, with substantial funds remaining**.

My broader point is simple: **Public funding should follow the student, not the institution.** Every child in Big Sky deserves equitable consideration, regardless of which school their family chooses.

If BSRAD elects to allocate funding directly to individual institutions rather than students, the Board should clearly disclose the methodology behind those awards, including which expenses are eligible for reimbursement with public resort tax dollars and which are not.

I believe every child in Big Sky deserves greater support and investment from our community. But public resources are finite, and that makes it even more important that we allocate them wisely, transparently, and equitably. Our priority should be maximizing the

benefit to children and families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Patrick Sullivan

From:	Ruthi Solari
To:	Public Comment
Cc:	Shannon Steele
Subject:	Public Comment on Health & Safety
Date:	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 3:01:14 PM

Dear BSRAD Board of Directors,

Thank you for Tuesday's thoughtful discussion and for recognizing that all three Health & Safety requests provide meaningful services to our community. We'd like to add context on coordination and on the opportunity to fully fund the sector.

The Navigator Network is community infrastructure.
The Big Sky Behavioral Health Coalition created the Navigator Network in 2021 after finding that many residents didn't know where to turn for help, and that stigma and a culture of self-reliance kept people from seeking support. Five years later, 20–25 volunteer Navigators are active across the community. In 2025, just 16 reporting Navigators supported 232 community members and made 86 referrals, which likely understates the network's reach.

Navigators connect people to Wellness in Action, the Food Bank, Big Sky Medical Center, and other resources, and those partners refer people back to Navigators. These programs don't compete with each other. They reinforce one another within the same safety net.

Coordination is already underway.
In response to Director Kendiorski's interest in more coordinated requests: these organizations have worked together for more than five years through the Big Sky Health & Wellness Coalition. In August, Coalition partners completed a two-day facilitated strategic planning process to set shared priorities. All three FY27 requests align with those priorities. The Navigator Network directly supports the Goal of Prevention & Promotion along with every clearly identified objective:

- **Goal 1: Prevention & Promotion.** This goal covers upstream education, peer support, outreach, and improved access to services.
- Objective 1.1: Improve access and utilization of health & wellness services and activities;
- Objective 1.2: Expand culturally responsive outreach to populations experiencing greater need or lower connection.
- Objective 1.3: Strengthen youth and family resilience, peer support, and prevention.
- Objective 1.4: Build community substance-free and recovery-friendly opportunities.
- Objective 1.5: Engage employers and community partners in workforce wellness and prevention.
- The three requests come from separate organizations, but they are complementary parts of one strategy.

The three requests total $258,000. The sector's allocation is $201,948, a gap of $56,052. In a grant cycle of roughly $29 million, Health & Safety received less than 1%. For comparison, CMS data show that government public health activities account for about 3% of national health expenditures.

The Wellness District is an important step toward sustainable funding, but there is a transition period before that money becomes available. Infrastructure is relational as well as physical. It includes the neighbor who notices someone is struggling and helps them take the first step toward care, before the situation becomes a crisis.

Our request
We are not asking the board to favor one organization over another. We ask you to consider reallocating available excess funds from other sectors to fully fund the $258,000 in Health & Safety requests, including full funding for the request of $35,000 to support the Navigator Network. The additional $56,052 would sustain a coordinated, community-built system of care that is already working.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to Big Sky.

Shannon Steele & Ruthi Solari
Co-Directors, Be Well Big Sky

From: Shea Unger
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment: BSSEF FY27 Request, Expanding Youth Winter Sports Safety Equipment
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 9:20:01 PM

You don't often get email from shea@bssef.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

My name is Shea Unger. I am the Board President of the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation, and my family has lived in Big Sky since 2009. We joined BSSEF the year we moved here, and both of my kids came up through the Alpine Program. I've seen this organization from the start gate as a parent, and now from the board table.

Thank you for the time you are putting into this year's awards and for considering BSSEF. I'm writing to respectfully ask that you fully fund our $52,000 request.

We are requesting funds to repair existing gates and build new ones, repair and replace our B-net and C-net fencing and poles, and purchase timing equipment. This equipment keeps our athletes safe. BSSEF currently has over 170 athletes registered for the season, and every one of them will train on it. It also lets us host races at Big Sky Resort that bring racers and their families to our community from around the country. This season alone, those include the Big Sky FIS race in December, the U14 Tech Qualifier in January, the Lone Peak Speed Series in February, and the U16 Western Region Championships.

I understand some of you would have preferred a scholarship request. We share the goal of keeping skiing within reach for local kids. Right now, our local families' financial aid needs, about $100,000 a year, are being met through community foundations. Those foundations used to help with our equipment, but they have shifted their giving toward scholarships. That shift is why we came to you for equipment this year.

Funding equipment is also one of the best ways to keep skiing affordable. If these costs move into tuition, the published price goes up for every family. Families compare those prices when deciding where to live and where to enroll their kids, and some families who need help will never ask for it. Keeping baseline tuition low means fewer kids are left out in the first place.

We take taxpayer dollars seriously. We only come to Resort Tax when we have a clear need, and this is our first request in five years.

Thank you for your service to Big Sky and for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Shea Unger
Board President, Big Sky Ski Education Foundation
Big Sky resident

--

Shea Unger

President | Board of Directors

Big Sky Ski Education Foundation

Supporting the next generation of Alpine, Freeride, and Nordic athletes.

P.O. Box 160134, Big Sky, MT 59716

From: Jamie Sullivan
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment: Please Fully Fund BSSEF"s $52,000 Request
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:09:20 PM

You don't often get email from jamiesullivan48@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board,

My name is Jamie Sullivan. I am the parent of four kids who have skied with BSSEF, and I urge you to fully fund its $52,000 equipment request.

Big Sky should have the best ski program in the country. In a community with these resources, youth athletics, especially skiing, should be a priority. BSSEF's request is one of the few before you that supports kids across the full age range of 5 to 18. If we want families to stay in Big Sky, we need to invest in the programs that make this a place where they want, and can afford, to raise their children.

BSSEF runs lean so resources go to the program and the kids. It does not have professional fundraisers. Organizations should not be disadvantaged in the funding process because they devote their limited resources to delivering their programs.

Small organizations must navigate four Big Sky funders, often through multiple applications each year, each with its own guidelines and changing priorities. When one funder stops supporting equipment and another funds only scholarships, essential needs fall through the gaps. The consequences land on kids and families.

Equipment funding is a direct way to keep program costs down. Every dollar families do not have to cover through program fees makes participation more accessible. Scholarships remain essential, but they cannot be the only answer to affordability. In a town our size, parents should not have to apply for financial assistance separately for every sport and extracurricular activity their children pursue. Some families will simply stop participating rather than ask for help again.

Organizations also need enough predictability to plan responsibly. A child's ability to continue skiing should not depend on whether a funder changes its priorities or an organization can afford a more sophisticated fundraising operation.

This is a concrete opportunity to invest in Big Sky's kids and reduce the cost of growing up here. BSSEF's last Resort Tax request was five years ago. Please fully fund its $52,000 equipment request.

Thank you,
Jamie Sullivan
Big Sky, Montana

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From:	Patrick Sullivan
To:	Public Comment
Subject:	Public Comment: Please Support Be Well Big Sky
Date:	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 8:56:35 AM

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I am writing to express my support for Be Well Big Sky. While I have no direct experience with the organization, I believe it serves a critical role in our community, supporting people who often lack a voice or an advocate in funding decisions. I trust the organization's leadership implicitly.

Should our community draw the line in a $29.5 million grant cycle at a $35,000 request from an organization serving people when they are most vulnerable? I recognize that you face difficult decisions and competing priorities, but this request represents just 0.12% of the total grant cycle.

Be Well Big Sky supports community members during some of the most difficult moments of their lives, often quietly and without recognition.

Would we invest $35,000 if it meant saving even one life? When we consider the nature of Be Well Big Sky's work, that is not an abstract question. The consequences of providing, or withholding, support can be profound.

Please support Be Well Big Sky's $35,000 request and the important work it performs for our community throughout the year.

Patrick Sullivan

From: Jill Singer
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment: Please Support Big Sky Community School
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 7:12:30 PM

You don't often get email from jill.singer3@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Area District Board,

I'm writing to ask that you include Big Sky Community School in this year's education funding.

My son Ethan is an 8th grader at BSCS, and this academic option has changed our family's life. He's in a calm, focused classroom where teachers know him and address his problems as they come up, so he can concentrate on learning. He wakes up excited to go to school, which for a middle school boy is a huge achievement! The Aeon program gives him real academic rigor and lets him learn alongside classmates and teachers from around the world, including native Spanish-speaking teachers. That exposure is almost unheard of in a small mountain town in Montana.

I often hear that BSCS is only for "rich kids." That certainly isn't our story, or the story of many BSCS families. Ethan attends because of a generous scholarship. BSCS serves all kinds of families and learners, including children whose needs a small-town system can't always meet, and its flexible schedule lets students compete in sports and still have time with their families.

I've been an educator for 20 years, and I know how much it matters when a child finds the right fit. Ethan is our third son, and watching our two older boys struggle to find that fit was very difficult. In a community our size, more than one strong option isn't a luxury. It's what lets more of our kids thrive, and what makes it possible for families like ours to build a life here.

The return on education is clear, for students and for the whole community. Research from the University of Arkansas found that every dollar invested in K-12 education returns about $4.67 in students' future earnings. And researchers at Columbia University found that proven investments in education return up to $3.50 in public benefits for every dollar spent, through higher tax revenue and lower public costs. Most of all, when families find the right school, they stay. They put down roots, run businesses, fill our workforce and volunteer. When they can't, they leave.

Supporting BSCS isn't a vote against our public school. It's a vote for every Big Sky child, wherever they learn. Right now, the allocation includes $0 for K-12 students across all three of our schools. I respectfully ask you to change that on Thursday.

I can't think of a better way to spend money in our community than to spend it on the kids who live here.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community!

Sincerely,

Jill Singer
Parent of a Big Sky Community School student
406.600.9842

From:	Patrick Sullivan
To:	Public Comment
Subject:	Public Comment: Please Support Big Sky Ski Education Foundation
Date:	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 8:29:19 AM

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I am writing as a parent of four children who have participated in BSSEF programming and competed on behalf of Big Sky.

BSSEF is requesting **$52,000 for a one-time equipment grant**. Much of this request involves replacing or maintaining equipment originally purchased with BSRAD support years ago, along with equipment necessary to ensure the safety of our children.

BSSEF serves 170 local kids. **The entire request amounts to $305.88 per child, on a one-time basis.** This is a rounding error in a $29.5 million grant cycle.

BSSEF operates efficiently, makes difficult decisions about staffing, equipment, coaches, and scholarships, and works hard to keep programming affordable and accessible to local families. The organization has not requested BSRAD funding in five years. That level of financial discipline and respect for public resources deserves recognition.

If BSRAD is interested in funding organizations' capacity to serve our community, consider the potential capacity of a nationally competitive ski program in Big Sky. **We already have one despite scarce resources.** Your support (or lack thereof) sends a strong message to current families and those considering where to raise their family. I believe BSSEF could serve many more children with meaningful financial support. The limitation is not a lack of demand or opportunity. It is a lack of prioritization and resources.

More concerning, BSSEF's proposed $10,000 award appears to be the sole direct allocation to K-12 youth programming and families in this grant cycle. That represents just 0.03% of BSRAD's $29.5 million in grants. If you fund the request of $52,000, the grant grows to 0.18% of BSRAD's $29.5M in grants this year.

Why is that an appropriate allocation to our children? I believe it is embarrassingly low and reflects a fundamental misalignment between our community's stated priorities and how we allocate resources.

We talk constantly about growing Big Sky, making it more livable, and attracting and retaining full-time families. But communities are built, or hollowed out, from the ground up. If we want a thriving, year-round community, we need to invest in the children and families who make that possible.

This is much bigger than BSSEF. **I encourage the Board to prioritize every K-12 child in Big Sky, regardless of which school they attend or whether their interests are in sports, academics, music, arts, or other activities. Fund the child, not the institution.** Every child deserves equitable and transparent support, regardless of which organizations have the strongest fundraising infrastructure or relationships. BSRAD is uniquely positioned to ensure that public resources benefit children and families across the entire resort district.

Established organizations in Big Sky have professional fundraising teams, substantial resources, and strong representation in funding discussions throughout the year. Our children do not have the same voice. Their parents are busy raising families and working, and their interests are too often underrepresented when community funding decisions are made.

We have the financial resources across BSRAD, our community foundations, public funds, and private donors to make Big Sky an exceptional place to raise children. What we need is the collective will to make them a priority.

I encourage the Board to fully fund BSSEF's $52,000 request. More importantly, I challenge the Board to fundamentally reconsider how we allocate resources to children and families going forward.

It is time our community puts our kids first, all of them.

Support the kids.

Patrick Sullivan

From: Andrew
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment: Request for Equitable Funding Reconsideration - Big Sky Community School (FY27 Grant Applications)
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:02:24 PM

You don't often get email from lafiosca.andrew@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Board of Directors, Big Sky Resort Area District,

I am writing as a Big Sky resident and parent to offer public comment regarding the FY27 preliminary grant allocation decisions reviewed during the Application Review Meeting on October 20th.

My primary purpose in writing is to request that the Board reconsider the lack of funding currently slated for the Big Sky Community School (BSCS) and work toward an equitable, balanced distribution of resort tax revenue across all educational organizations serving our local families.

1. Equity and Proportionality Across Big Sky Educational Organizations
According to the preliminary funding breakdown, BSRAD's initial allocations for local educational entities and programs stand at:
- Morning Star Learning Center: $500,000 (serving approx. 20 students)
- Discovery Academy: $150,000 (serving approx. 20 students)
- Big Sky Community Library: $107,470 (operations)
- World Language Initiative: $60,000 (adult-only accessibility in Big Sky)
- Big Sky Community School: $0 (serving 55 students)

While each of these organizations contributes to our community, leaving BSCS with zero allocation despite serving 55 local students creates a stark disparity. When resort tax funds support student populations of 20 with allocations between $150,000 and $500,000, denying any support to an independent educational model serving nearly three times that student volume is neither equitable nor representative of the broader educational ecosystem Big Sky requires.

2. Alignment with BSCS's Community Mission
The mission of the Big Sky Community School is centered on making Big Sky a better place for all kids and families—not solely those who attend the school. BSCS intentionally fosters community integration, responsibility, and civic contribution. Omitting BSCS from resort tax support undermines a core community asset that actively works to enrich the broader Big Sky area.

3. Demonstrated Student Impact and Community Retention
From a personal standpoint, BSCS has been vital to our family's ability to remain in Big Sky. Our daughter's learning style was not compatible with a traditional classroom environment. This is not a critique of the public system, but recognition of the reality that no single educational setting fits every child. Without the alternative provided by BSCS, our family would have faced the difficult decision of moving away from Big Sky.

Because of BSCS, our daughter is thriving academically and directly giving back to our local economy and community:

- She has volunteered at Lone Peak Vet working alongside community advocate Sydney Desmarais and her staff.
- She has volunteered and subsequently worked full-time at the Big Sky Thrift shop.
- She has earned her Level 1 Certification as a ski instructor at Big Sky Resort.

None of these achievements or community contributions would have been possible for her in a standard school setting.

4. Request for Action
As the Board prepares its final decisions on Thursday, October 22nd, I respectfully ask the Board to reconsider the preliminary $0 allocation for BSCS. Establishing even a modest, fair baseline of support for BSCS will ensure that all local families and students—regardless of the educational framework that fits them best—benefit equitably from Big Sky Resort Area District funds.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and ongoing service to our community.

Sincerely,

Andrew Lafiosca
Big Sky, MT

From: Jamie Sullivan
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment: Support Be Well Big Sky Navigator Network
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:38:29 AM

You don't often get email from jamiesullivan48@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I'm writing to urge you to fully fund Be Well Big Sky's Navigator Network. The work they do is critical to our community.

Having mental health resources available is only part of the equation. People also need to know where to turn and feel comfortable taking that first step. The Navigator Network helps bridge that gap through trusted community members who listen, offer support, and connect people with resources.

The well-being of our community depends on the well-being of the people who live and work here. Making sure people have someone they trust and a place to turn for help is essential.

This is critical work, and BSRAD should fully fund it.

Thank you,
Jamie Sullivan

From: Jamie Sullivan
To: Public Comment
Cc: Jeremy Harder
Subject: Public Comment: Support Big Sky Community School
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:56:43 PM

Dear BSRAD Directors,

I am Jamie Sullivan, a mother of four, co-founder of Big Sky Community School, and its Director of Operations.

Before you finalize the FY27 allocations on Thursday, I am asking you to reconsider the proposed denial of funding for Big Sky Community School's acquisition of Unit 1D. Please evaluate our request on its demonstrated public benefit.

The families this request would help include the families who keep Big Sky running. Their financial need is independently assessed through Clarity. Financial accessibility was a founding commitment at BSCS, and last year and this year, we met 100% of our enrolled families' demonstrated financial need. We are asking for community partnership so more families can access an education that meets their children's needs.

BSRAD can fund independent K–12 education. Declining to do so is a policy choice.

The suggestion in Tuesday's discussion that BSRAD cannot legally fund an independent K–12 school simply because a free public option exists is incorrect. BSRAD has already invested millions of dollars in education and care delivered by private early childhood providers. The distinction you are drawing is a policy choice about which educational options you want to support.

When you withhold support because a free public option exists, you make a different educational choice harder to access for families who need financial assistance. Families who can pay get to decide where their children go to school. Families who need help face a different reality, even when the public option does not meet their child's needs.

If that is the basis for denying our request, the community deserves to hear your policy plainly: BSRAD will not fund independent K–12 education when a free public option exists, even for families who need financial assistance to access the school that best meets their child's needs.

Is school choice only for the rich? That's not the Big Sky any of us want.

BSRAD required an appraisal of Unit 1D for our application to be reviewed on October 20. We spent $3,750 to meet that requirement. We understand the need for due diligence on a property acquisition. But if the board believed the project was legally ineligible, that

threshold question should have been resolved before requiring the school to incur expenses that take away our support for students.

Because the legality of funding our request was questioned publicly on Tuesday, it is important to address the governing documents directly.

The original 1992 Gallatin County ballot authorized resort tax revenue for infrastructure, public transportation, tourism development, and “other public services and facilities within the Area.” Ordinance 99-01 states that “Any organization may apply” and requires applicants to explain their project’s economic benefit and the consequences of withholding funding. Neither excludes independent K–12 education just because a public alternative exists.

BSRAD already funds private nonprofits every year, including private early childhood education programs. The legal basis that supports those awards applies equally to an independent, nonsectarian K-12 school. If BSRAD counsel sees a distinction, the community deserves to hear it on the record.

Legal eligibility does not guarantee an award. We understand that you must weigh competing requests. But our project should receive that consideration based on its public benefit, financial accessibility, cost, and accountability, not be excluded simply because a public school exists.

A public option does not meet every family’s needs. Our waitlist makes that clear.

Public school K–5 enrollment is down 38% since 2022. The existence of a free public option does not mean every family will choose it. Families seeking to move here for BSCS are telling us what would bring them to Big Sky. Without access to our school, those families are not coming.

Do we want Big Sky to attract and retain families? Then we need to support the educational options that make them want to come and stay.

Our application and supplemental responses document that BSCS is retaining families, attracting families, and serving children whose previous educational arrangements were outside Big Sky’s public schools. Since we submitted those responses, three additional students from outside Big Sky have joined our waitlist. Another waitlist request arrived while I was writing this letter.

Many of our waitlisted families also have younger children who could attend Big Sky’s early childhood programs. Supporting K–12 options can help attract the families who would fill those seats, too.

Our families have invested almost $5 million. BSRAD can help that investment serve

more children.

Our families' private investment does not eliminate the remaining funding need. Without additional support, we cannot complete the full expansion. Buyers are ready today to purchase Unit 1D, and we cannot hold the space indefinitely. "Maybe someday" could mean losing the opportunity to serve the families waiting now.

Your decision affects our ability to secure private support.

I am currently in conversations with donors and foundations who want to know whether BSCS has the support of BSRAD and Big Sky's community foundations. Your vote and your words carry weight in those conversations. A $0 allocation accompanied by "maybe someday" makes it harder to demonstrate that local support at the very moment we need it.

A decision not to fund a project is not necessarily a judgment that it lacks public benefit. But prospective donors need to understand the distinction. If your decision rests on a policy against funding independent K–12 education when a public option exists, please say that explicitly. Do not leave families and prospective supporters to guess whether your objection is to independent K–12 funding generally, this particular project, or the value of our work.

The consequences reach beyond this expansion. We will also need philanthropic support to build our planned federal scholarship granting organization, which could help eligible children across Big Sky's public and private schools access educational opportunities. A perceived lack of community confidence in BSCS makes that fundraising harder, too.

We want BSCS to be an ocean for this community, not an island.

We founded BSCS to give children a rigorous education with room to pursue sports and other passions. Financial accessibility was a founding commitment. We also wanted the teachers, space, and resources we brought to Big Sky to benefit children across this community.

This fall has made one difficult reality clear: sustaining that financial accessibility while building broader community programming requires more capacity than I have alone. Grant applications and reporting are necessary work, but they draw on the same limited time needed to develop programs and bring additional scholarship resources here.

Keeping our commitment to the children we serve must come first. What I am asking for is partnership that allows us to keep that promise and reach more children.

School choice is coming. Let's make it work for Big Sky's children.

Whether Big Sky embraces it or not, the federal Education Freedom Tax Credit launches in January 2027, and Montana has already opted in. Enacted through the One Big Beautiful

Bill Act, the program could generate nearly **$26 billion in annual scholarship contributions nationwide by 2030**, according to Treasury and IRS projections. BSCS is preparing to bring some of those resources here.

BSCS is positioned to become a scholarship granting organization, or SGO. Taxpayers across the country can direct up to $1,700 of their federal taxes to these scholarships for eligible K-12 students. They get a dollar for dollar tax credit, at no cost to them. **Children would not have to attend BSCS to benefit.** Scholarships could help public and private school students pay for qualifying tutoring, special-needs services, tuition, books, supplies, and other educational expenses.

This will be a game changer. It gives parents the power to decide what their children need, and help paying for it. Families could seek scholarships for qualifying educational support they choose, rather than relying on whether a local funder prioritized that particular program that year.

We already have experience doing this work. The BSCS student scholarship organization (SSO), directs more than $400,000 annually to Big Sky students through Montana tax-credit-supported donations. We are already keeping those dollars here and putting them to work for local children.

The SGO will move forward. Community partnership decides how far and how fast it can reach. Unit 1D would give us space for more students and for programs open to every child in Big Sky. With your support, we can build both, for children across all of Big Sky's schools.

Support early childhood and K–12. Our children need both.

I fully support tuition assistance for families at all Big Sky early childhood providers, including families whose children are eligible for public preschool. That assistance should be based on documented financial need and allocated equitably across providers. Funding for staffing, operations, and unused capacity should be identified and justified separately. Funding for Discovery should no longer be restricted to early childhood.

We can preserve essential early childhood capacity while also investing more in K–12 children. Our community needs both.

Make K–12 children a larger funding priority next year.

This request extends beyond BSCS. A community with Big Sky's resources should offer children comprehensive sports programming, music, dance, the arts, academic tutoring, and the therapeutic supports they need. Those opportunities should be financially accessible, regardless of where a child attends school.

Instead, families must seek assistance separately from one organization after another, whether their child needs music lessons, skiing, or soccer. Access can depend on which organization secured funding and what a foundation prioritized that cycle. A child's needs do not change with the grant calendar.

After a year of navigating these processes, it is clear to me that children are not always the winners. We can do better.

Funding priorities are set far in advance. **I am asking you to commit a substantially larger share of next year's funding to K–12 education and youth programming across the organizations and schools serving Big Sky's children.** If we want to attract families, retain them, and strengthen every organization serving their children, prioritizing those children is how we do it.

Before Thursday's vote, I ask you to:

1. Reconsider funding BSCS's acquisition of Unit 1D based on its demonstrated public benefit, financial accessibility, and the substantial private investment behind it.
2. Distinguish clearly between any project-specific concerns and a policy against funding independent K–12 education when a public option exists.
3. Apply transparent, consistent standards across education providers, including demonstrated financial need, district residency, access, and accountability.
4. Preserve education funding for educational needs and commit a substantially larger share of next year's budget to K–12 education and youth programming.

Our families have made education a priority with their own resources. We are asking BSRAD to make it a community funding priority, too.

You have the power to help more families build their lives here and more children access the opportunities they need. Prioritize kids.

--
Jamie Sullivan
Director of Operations
Big Sky Community School

From: Lauren Knox
To: Public Comment
Cc: jesse.knox77@gmail.com
Subject: Public Comment: Urgent Support for Education Funding Allocation to Big Sky Community School
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:42:12 PM

You don't often get email from lauren.knox@yellowstoneclub.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board of Directors,

My name is Lauren Knox and I am writing as a 22-year Big Sky resident and a parent of two children in our local schools. I am writing to express my strong, positive support for allocating remaining education funds to the Big Sky Community School (BSCS) during your upcoming final decision meeting this Thursday.
As parents, we know firsthand that every child is wired differently and requires a unique path to thrive. Our daughter currently attends Ophir Elementary School and does well in that environment. However, our son Jude, who is now in the 8th grade, has very different needs. Jude is an exceptionally intelligent, creative child who excels at math, but his 6th-grade year at the public school was incredibly difficult. He found himself lost in a rigid, one-size-fits-all system, experiencing overwhelming anxiety that led to severe illness and missed weeks of school. We even had to hire an outside tutor just to keep his love for math alive. The environment simply wasn't built for non-neurotypical kids, and we were heavily considering a move out of state so Jude could attend a school that fit him.

Learning that BSCS was opening, and that it would be led by Jeremy Harder, completely changed our trajectory and kept our family in Big Sky. Mr. Harder has been a mentor to Jude since the 1st grade. Jude respects him in a way I have never seen a student respect a teacher. Mr. Harder thinks outside the box and understands that education must be flexible to reach every child.

Having access to this school choice has been nothing short of a miracle for Jude:

- Executive Function & True Pride**:** Jude previously struggled with staying on task. Just a few months into his time at BSCS, he was managing his own schoolwork and time. He has developed deep accountability, and for the first time, he is genuinely proud of the work he is doing and the progress he is making.

- A Love for School: Most importantly, Jude is happy. For a child like Jude to look us in the eye and say that he *likes* school is the absolute best thing a parent could ever hope for.

Beyond what BSCS does for individual families, the school is an incredible asset to our wider community. The curriculum actively shapes these kids to be engaged, productive local citizens. They aren't just sitting behind desks; they are out in the town at Moving Mountains, utilizing BASE, learning exactly how our community functions, and discovering how they can

be active participants in it.

Our family's experience highlights exactly why our town needs school choice. Children are not identical, and a healthy community provides paths for all of them to succeed. BSCS is filling a vital, undeniable gap, having grown from 13 students to 53 enrolled in just its second year, with a waiting list of 13 more.

While we are incredibly grateful for the substantial tax dollar investments made toward early childhood education in our valley, the current disparity is deeply concerning. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being heavily concentrated on preschool-aged programs, leaving the broader K-12 student population across Big Sky with $0 in primary education funding. All of our community's children, regardless of which local school best fits their learning style, deserve to be supported by our community tax dollars.

I urgently ask the Board to utilize the leftover allocations in the education fund this Thursday to support the 53 students at BSCS. Your support will help ensure that creative, intelligent, and diverse learners like Jude can continue to thrive right alongside their peers right here at home.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your dedication to all of Big Sky's youth.

Sincerely,

Lauren and Jesse Knox

12 Running Dog Road
PO BOX 161757
Big Sky, MT 59716

Lauren Knox
Yellowstone Club Sales
lauren.knox@yellowstoneclub.com
406.539.9190

From: Michelle Lafiosca
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Support for BSCS
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:09:44 PM

You don't often get email from michelle.lafiosca@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the BSRAD Board,

My name is Michelle Lafiosca, and I am a full-time resident of Big Sky. My high school daughter has attended the Big Sky Community School (BSCS) since its inception last fall. As my husband stated in yesterday's public comment, this school has had a profound impact on our daughter's education and our family. The curriculum fits her learning style and provides the flexibility she needs to pursue her future interests as she prepares for college.

Our community is fortunate to have options that cater to different learning styles. We currently have one child at BSCS and another at Ophir Middle School, which reflects our town's strong support for diverse educational environments. The sole purpose of each school in our community is to help every student thrive in the way that serves them best.

Given this, I struggle to understand how the board evaluated the educational funding requests. It is difficult to comprehend the imbalanced allocation, granting zero funds to BSCS while awarding significant amounts to other local educational institutions. This school is COMMUNITY in all senses of the word. The students live here, they work here and they give back here. We call on our local business to help us offer educational and workforce opportunities. Big Sky has plenty of untapped resources at our fingertips that schools can use toward guiding and shaping our students as they advance further in their academic career. Big Sky Community school has done exactly this.

I strongly urge the board to reconsider its support for the Big Sky Community School. BSCS was founded to offer a unique learning environment focused on building essential life skills. It was founded BY a Big Sky family to SERVE Big Sky families. It provides families with viable educational choices, helping retain residents who might otherwise leave and attracting new families to our town. Furthermore, BSCS serves the broader community by offering extended programming—such as college counseling and financial literacy courses—and by making its space available for local non-profit and community meetings.

Advocating for BSCS is not just about supporting currently enrolled students; it is about supporting an asset that benefits all of Big Sky. I ask that you please revisit this decision and allocate funding to support BSCS and the families it serves.

Sincerely,

Michelle Lafiosca

From: Ewan Knowles
To: Public Comment
Subject: Questions
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 9:38:25 PM

You don't often get email from ewan5150@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important

Good day all

I listened in to the board yesterday and I am also as Parent of BSCS students, a resort tax payee, a local business owner I have a couple of questions.

The new school is an incredible addition to the town and its business plan, funding plan and support team is at another level.

I find the fact that zero dollars have been allocated to this school baffling and disappointing.

I am from a career where once a year I would be asked to compile a Capital Expenditure list, this would include monetary values, reasons why it was needed and also to the dollar, how and when it would be spent. These lists would often be several millions dollars in expenses, and of course the owners, asset managers or companies would want to know all of the above before approval and also over the following year, when the money was being spent and on what.

There were questions asked on Tuesday by the board as to what and if certain requests should be under different line items, such as capital expense for the group requesting, this ties into the above also.

My first question is this, do the entities that are receiving these large amounts report on the use of the money received from the resort tax board? They should have budgets I would assume, so these monetary sums should be allocated line items within the budgets that the receiving entities use. Checks and balances for want of a better word. I would assume maybe wrongly that funding is to enhance, expand and for the betterment of the facility and not just to keep the facility in business, hence reporting on use of funds would be mandatory I would think

On the educational front, there is a huge differential between entities and amount per child allocated, how is this looked at, or considered in the decision to allocate funds and how was BSCS denied any of the funding available this year or what reasons were given, when it was made very apparent, it would be a once only request, not a repeated yearly request and it was for the expansion of the school, due continuously rising student numbers?

I hope you as a board reconsider the BSCS request prior to ratifying the funding list on Thursday, all educational facilities in the town create the foundations stones for the future of our town and should be supported across the board,.

Best regards

Ewan Knowles

Herosnow llc

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

From: Nick Woodman
To: Jill Woodman
Cc: Public Comment
Subject: Re: Big Sky Community School funding
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:51:33 PM

[You don't often get email from nicholas@gopro.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

I will add that a clear sign of demand for the Community School is that there's 25 kids on the waitlist and many families that want to move to Big Sky will only do so if their kids can enroll.

Increasing the number of full time families will economically benefit our community as well as our kids' lives.

In only the second year of the Community School, they are over capacity with 57 students (with an additional wait list of 25 more wanting to get in). This growth rate and wait list makes it clear that our community WANTS this Community School. And if you listen to the kids that go there, they'll tell you they love it.

Thank you for considering allocating funds to the Community School…it will send a powerful message to our kids that they matter! And it will make for a stronger Big Sky community and economy as we add families that value education and the long term impact it has on all of us.

Thank you! — Nick Woodman

I love my GoPro
https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?
url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gopro.com%2Fdchain=05%7C02%7Cjenny%40resorttax.org%7C3b5dc2433c24d4a1d9508fdf2fb5144b%7C1ec288a94c5e4e9794abf10a7bb3c64d%7C0%7C0%7C639282126930105578%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3dkeyJFbXBtcU1hcGkzMyIsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=cVRLKZkdaH73adyAkkxVhmpe0Cp33LyTpLV0toxbmt0%3D&reserved=0

> On Oct 21, 2026, at 9:22 AM, Jill Woodman <jill@terrapinpath.com> wrote:
>
> [EXTERNAL]
>
> **Subject: Request to Reconsider Funding for Big Sky Community School**
>
> Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Tax Board,
>
> I am writing to respectfully ask you to reconsider funding for Big Sky Community School, a nonprofit organization that provides an important and much-needed educational option for families in our community.
>
> This school model is especially meaningful to my family because it complements our homeschooling approach while offering the connection, community, and social learning that can be difficult to provide through homeschooling alone. Big Sky Community School fills a gap that is not currently addressed by other programs in Big Sky. While we greatly appreciate, support, and participate in the public school's sports programs, there are few other opportunities that provide this kind of flexible, community-based educational experience.
>
> Big Sky Community School is also particularly valuable for neurodivergent learners. Its approach offers a more supportive and adaptable environment for students who may not thrive in traditional educational settings. These options are currently limited in Big Sky, even as the needs of local families continue to grow.
>
> With approximately $29 million in funds available for allocation, I sincerely hope the Board will consider investing in education and supporting our teens. Middle- and high-school students need greater support, more variety in educational and care options, and additional opportunities to help prepare them for their futures. They also need environments that recognize and respond to the growing demands on their mental health and well-being.
>
> Big Sky Community School has demonstrated both demand and the need to expand. Funding would help the school increase its capacity, serve more students, broaden its programming, and strengthen its physical presence in the community. Supporting this effort could also help attract and retain families who want to live in Big Sky but need more diverse educational options for their children.
>
> Investing in Big Sky Community School would be an investment in local families, student well-being, and the long-term vitality of Big Sky. I respectfully ask you to reconsider providing funding to support the school's continued growth and expansion.
>
> Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our community.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Jill Woodman

From: anne chiles
To: Jenny Christensen
Subject: Re: Morningstar funding
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:36:36 PM

[You don't often get email from annetana@aol.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Thank you for your response, Jenny.
After I sent the email…I had further thoughts:
Morningstar has been in the community for 20 years. They have demonstrated their effort to assist families and care for our children.
Please appropriate the necessary funds to continue their care.
Thank you,
Anne Chiles

From: Erica Perlman-Hensen
To: Public Comment
Subject: Re: Morningstar Learning Center's Ask
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 8:27:55 AM

You don't often get email from ericaperlman@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Tax Board Members,

I'm writing to ask you to reconsider your funding decision for Morningstar and provide the full amount requested.

Morningstar is an essential part of our community, providing safe, high-quality early childhood education that allows local families to live and work in Big Sky. Access to reliable, affordable childcare is critical to our local workforce, and investing in early childhood education benefits the entire community.

I recognize the difficult decisions involved in allocating limited funds, but I strongly encourage the Board to reconsider and fully fund Morningstar's request. Our community depends on this resource, and it deserves our full support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Erica Perlman

Dr. Erica Perlman-Hensen, OD, MPH, MA

Big Sky Eyes
99 Town Center Ave, Unit #A6
P.O. Box # 160700
Big Sky, MT 59716
Phone: (406) 414-0006
Alternate email: bigskyeyes@gmail.com

On Tue, Sep 29, 2026 at 5:39 PM Jenny Christensen <jenny@resorttax.org> wrote:

> Hi Erica,
>
> Just reaching out to confirm we received this comment and will include it in the materials at the upcoming application review meetings.

Thanks,

Jenny

Jenny Christensen

Deputy Director

Big Sky Resort Area District

Phone: 406-995-3234

Web: www.resorttax.org

Email: jenny@resorttax.org

11 Lone Peak Drive, Suite 204

P.O. Box 160661

Big Sky, MT 59716

From: Erica Perlman-Hensen <ericaperlman@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2026 9:06 AM
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@resorttax.org>
Subject: Morningstar Learning Center's Ask

You don't often get email from ericaperlman@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I am writing in support of Morningstar Learning Center's request for Early Childhood Education and Tuition Assistance, and I hope you will fully fund their request.

As a parent, local healthcare provider, and business owner who lives and works in Big Sky, I know firsthand how important good childcare is to making life in this community work. Morningstar gives our family the ability to go to work each day knowing that our daughter is somewhere she is safe, happy, learning, and genuinely cared for.

Big Sky is an amazing place to raise a family, but it is also an expensive place to live. The high cost of housing, childcare, and everyday necessities can make it difficult for many

families to remain in the community, even when they are working hard and contributing in important ways. Tuition assistance is essential for families who may not otherwise be able to afford quality early childhood education. It helps ensure that access to a safe, nurturing, and enriching learning environment is not limited only to those who can comfortably pay the full cost.

Having access to quality, affordable childcare makes a huge difference in whether families can make a life here. It allows parents to work, businesses to have employees, and families to feel like they can put down roots in this community. Supporting childcare helps ensure that our community has access to healthcare and other essential services it needs.

And Morningstar is more than just a place to drop your kids off while you go to work. The teachers know our kids, celebrate their little personalities, and help them learn how to be good little humans. Those early years matter, and having a place like Morningstar where children can thrive is something that benefits the entire community.

We are very grateful for BSRAD's continued support of Morningstar and its Tuition Assistance Program. That support helps make it possible for families with different financial circumstances to access the same high-quality care and education. I hope you will continue that investment by fully funding Morningstar's request.

With gratitude,

Erica Perlman

Dr. Erica Perlman-Hensen, OD, MPH, MA

Big Sky Eyes
99 Town Center Ave, Unit #A6
P.O. Box # 160700
Big Sky, MT 59716
Phone: (406) 414-0006
Alternate email: bigskyeyes@gmail.com

From: Adam Rutz
To: Public Comment
Subject: Request for Education Fund Allocation – Big Sky Community School
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 8:59:06 AM

You don't often get email from adam.rutz@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Area District Board,

We are writing to urge your strong support and direct allocation of community funds toward the vital expansion of the Big Sky Community School. As local small business owners who have lived in Big Sky for over 11 years, we understand firsthand how essential a strong community infrastructure is to the stability and long-term economic well-being of our area. Supporting diverse, high-quality local education options is a foundational piece of that stability.

The impact of this school matters deeply to our family. Since enrolling, we have seen a profound transformation in our daughters' education experience. Our daugters are absolutely thriving in this environment. Since making the transition to Big Sky Community School, they have become significantly more engaged, self-motivated, and have developed a genuine, active appreciation for the learning experience. The school's unique approach has unlocked their potential, providing the exact support and connection they need to excel.

However, many other families are currently unable to access this impactful educational environment. The school is operating entirely at capacity with a full waitlist proving the community's need for this school. The waitlist bottleneck affects both current local residents and families who are actively looking to relocate and bring business to Big Sky but are holding back solely because they cannot secure a spot for their children. Resort tax funding is critically needed to support the expansion of the school's facilities and resources, allowing the school to open doors for local children and new community members currently on the waitlist.

Please prioritize a meaningful allocation for the Big Sky Community School's expansion in the current funding cycle. Advocating for all children's educational experiences in Big Sky, from infants through grade 12, should be a top priority for the Board ensuring diverse and high-quality local education options for all of Big Sky's youth. Thank you for your time, leadership, and continued dedication to creating opportunities for the youth and businesses of our community.

Sincerely,

Adam and Emilee Rutz

From:	Candace Mastel
To:	Public Comment
Subject:	Resort Tax Allocations support for Big Sky SNO
Date:	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:40:44 PM
Attachments:	ATT00001.txt ATT00002.htm

You don't often get email from candace.mastel@bozemanmt.gov. Learn why this is important

Good afternoon Big Sky Resort Area Board,

Big Sky SNO and the city of Bozeman have been formal partners in transportation demand management programs since 2022. The partnership was formed to bring together resources to understand and mitigate motor vehicle trips focused on commuting in Bozeman, Big Sky, and the larger Gallatin Valley communities. In addition, the partnership is focused on promoting carpooling, vanpooling, active transportation, and reduction of single occupancy vehicle trips. These efforts have resulted in a reduction in vehicle omissions, use of fossil fuels, and impacts on our roads and wildlife.

Through our partnership we share administrative management and funding for an online platform called “GoGallatin” and co-promote programs and incentives for folks that utilize carpooling and vanpooling back and forth to Big Sky. Big SKY SNO and the city also run individual programs that compliment each other and provide support for commuters throughout the area.

By funding Big Sky SNO’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) the board ensures that the organization can fully support and continue to build out its programs relating to transportation demand management in addition to other sustainability efforts like building performance and energy conservation, food waste reduction and composting, and adapting to wildfire challenges. By funding the CAP the board also ensures that Big Sky SNO can be a part of and contribute to our GoGallatin platform for commuters and be able to expand the program to further reduce the amount of motor vehicle trips back and forth between Bozeman and Big Sky on any given day of the year.

Thank you for your time and energy in making Big Sky, and in turn, the Gallatin Valley, a better place to live and work.

Cheers,
Candace Mastel

Candace Mastel, AICP, LEED AP | Transportation Demand Management Coordinator
City of Bozeman
O: 406.582.2978
C: 406.595.1644

Note: The City of Bozeman staff emails have changed format. The new format for my email is Candace.Mastel@bozemanmt.gov.

From: **Barbara Rowley** <browley@3rivers.net>
Date: Tue, Oct 13, 2026 at 11:47 AM
Subject: SNO Funding request.
To: <publicomment@resorttax.org>

Nothing is more important to me, and arguably to Big Sky's economy, than a climate action plan.
However, the Climate Action Plan proposed by SNO, with a 2050 goal, is a year goal that is widely agreed upon by climate scientists and the signers of the Paris Agreement to be too little, too late.

2050 plans are, in the words of the UN and other climate groups, "dangerously inadequate."

Perhaps this goal is because three of the four-linked programs for which SNO is requesting funds impact the smallest sectors of global emissions. Waste redirection, for example, accounts for 3.7 percent of global emissions. Mathematically speaking, doing a lot of small things adds up to...a small thing.

Energy, on the other hand, accounts for 77 percent of global emissions. So SNO's proposed commuter incentives and energy efficient building processes and retrofits could be helpful, although I cannot find those hard figures as to their impact so far in their application. Nationally, we do know that fewer cars, more electric vehicles, more solar, and more local energy coming from wind and solar are where real progress toward decade goals can be made, with added benefits of less pollution, less expense and less traffic. Math indicates this is where we should be directing our efforts—and our money.

I support funding, arguably much more funding in the future, that goes toward big collaborative actions that matter in the biggest global emission categories like energy and transportation, and away from efforts that focus on awareness or small actions of individuals. If we are going to make it to a climate goal that matters—say 2040, we need to act now and with big initiatives in big sectors of global emissions that make clear and measurable impacts. We don't have time to waste on the small stuff.

From: Jessica Davison
To: Public Comment
Subject: SNO Funding and Long-Term Community Resilience
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:33:26 PM

You don't often get email from jessica@firebreakmanagement.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Big Sky Resort Area District Board,

My name is Jessica Davison, and I am the owner of Firebreak Management, a Bozeman-based forestry and wildfire mitigation company that works extensively throughout the Big Sky community. I am also a former wildland firefighter, and much of my professional career has centered on understanding the relationship between forest health, wildfire risk, community resilience, and responsible land stewardship.

I am writing regarding the proposed 23% reduction in funding for the Big Sky Sustainability Network Organization (SNO).

I recognize that funding decisions require balancing many important community priorities. I also recognize that I approach this conversation with a particular bias, having spent much of my career working in forestry and wildfire. But I would like to share what I see firsthand, because I believe there is an important part of this conversation that can be difficult to capture through budgets and short-term performance measures.

Education changes behavior. And in a community like Big Sky, that change has the potential to reach far beyond any single household or business.

Firebreak Management recently earned recognition through SNO's Sustainable Business Achievement program. The process encouraged us to examine our own operations, recognize the sustainability practices we had already adopted, and identify where we could improve. For example, our crew has embraced replacing single-use plastic bottles with reusable alternatives, reducing waste, and making more conscious purchasing decisions. These may seem like small changes, but across our nine-person team, they represent a shift in how we operate and think about our responsibilities as a business.

Our employees were genuinely proud of this recognition. That matters to me. The achievement wasn't something I accomplished alone as an owner. It reflected participation and commitment from the people doing the work every day.

But I believe the broader importance of SNO's work extends much further.

Through initiatives like Build Better Big Sky and its expanding focus on resilient building and fire-adapted landscapes, SNO is helping advance conversations that I believe are essential to Big Sky's future.

In my work, I regularly meet homeowners who have little understanding of what wildfire mitigation entails, why it matters, or how their individual decisions affect the broader community. What I have learned over the years is that **a lack of action is very often not a lack of willingness. It is a lack of information.**

Many of these homeowners are more than willing to invest substantial resources in protecting

their properties once someone takes the time to explain what meaningful mitigation looks like. They simply didn't know what they didn't know.

And in Big Sky, those decisions can have an extraordinary reach.

A homeowner may not be making decisions about a quarter-acre lot. They may own 10, 20, or more acres. An HOA may be responsible for hundreds of acres. When these individuals understand how fuels reduction, defensible space, forest management, and responsible development contribute to wildfire resilience, their decisions can benefit far more than their own homes.

They benefit neighbors. They benefit surrounding properties and shared infrastructure. They benefit the firefighters who may someday be called to protect those communities. And collectively, they contribute to a safer, healthier, more resilient Big Sky.

This is one of the things I find so compelling about sustainability education in this particular community. Big Sky has a remarkable capacity to turn knowledge into action. There are homeowners, businesses, developers, and private organizations here with the resources to make meaningful investments, sometimes across entire landscapes. Education helps connect that capacity with responsible decision-making.

Those investments also have economic impacts. When a homeowner chooses to undertake a meaningful forest management project, that work supports local contractors, employees, equipment suppliers, and other businesses. Those crews, in turn, spend money within the community. We are not simply creating safer properties. We are supporting an economy built around stewardship, long-term maintenance, and protecting the landscape that makes Big Sky so valuable in the first place.

I have watched these conversations evolve dramatically over the years. The discussions I have with property owners today are considerably different from those I had when I started my company. More people understand the importance of proactive mitigation. More people are asking informed questions. More people want to participate.

I do not attribute that progress to any one organization. It is the result of continued work by fire departments, land managers, educators, nonprofits, and private businesses. But organizations like SNO play an important role in connecting those efforts, introducing new audiences to these conversations, and helping residents and businesses understand their opportunities to act.

In fact, I recently spoke with a Gallatin County grant manager about the need for more coordinated community outreach and wildfire education elsewhere in the Gallatin Valley. We discussed the work happening in Big Sky and the opportunity to develop similarly connected efforts in other communities.

That conversation reinforced something I have come to believe strongly: Big Sky has an opportunity not only to improve its own resilience but also to demonstrate what is possible when a community invests in education, collaboration, and long-term stewardship.

The challenge is that the true return on educational investment is rarely immediate.

We cannot always measure its success at the end of a fiscal year. Sometimes the return comes

when a homeowner decides to manage an additional 20 acres of forest. Sometimes it comes when a developer makes better decisions before construction begins. Sometimes it comes years later, when wildfire reaches a community that has spent decades preparing for it.

And sometimes the impact is a wildfire firefighter returning home safely because the landowners and organizations that came before them made responsible decisions.

As Big Sky continues to grow, I believe one of the most important questions we can ask is not simply what our community needs next year, but what kind of community we want to leave behind 20, 50, or even 100 years from now.

Our tourism economy is incredibly important. But the long-term success of that economy is also tied to the health of our landscape, the safety of our neighborhoods, the resilience of our infrastructure, and the people who live and work here.

That future will not happen by accident. It will require a community that understands its responsibilities and has access to the education and resources necessary to act on them.

I appreciate the difficult work of allocating limited public resources, and I hope the Board will give substantial consideration to the long-term value of SNO's educational initiatives, its Sustainable Business Achievement program, and its growing work connecting sustainability with community resilience.

From my perspective as both a business owner and someone who has spent years working in wildfire, these are investments whose value can compound over generations.

Thank you for your time, your service to the Big Sky community, and your consideration.

Cheers,
Jessica Davison | Owner
(406) 600-9767
Bozeman, MT
www.firebreakmanagement.com

From: Teran Foster
To: Public Comment
Subject: SNO Funding Concern
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 3:03:10 PM
Attachments: image.png
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> You don't often get email from teran@cmsbigsky.com. Learn why this is important

To whom it may concern,

I work with Big Sky SNO on the Building and Energy Coalition. The work that SNO has been able to facilitate is key to the success of Big Sky. Since we do not have any building code enforcement and the standard that would be enforced is below what is needed to have a functional building, SNO is able to provide the resource Build Better Big Sky to make sure that the designers and builders are building appropriately for our environment.

The buildings that are incorrectly designed can have mold or other organic growth that effect human health. The structural integrity can also be compromised by moisture damage. If designed and built appropriately, houses can hold employees and members of our community and not more.

We need to provide more support to programs like this to make sure that our community have healthy homes to live in and it is more affordable in the long term when damage needs to be mitigated and health of the occupants is prioritized which will also reduce medical bills. I have a coworker that has had medical issue caused by mold and poor building conditions in his apartment.

Their goals with the other initiatives also align with the state constitution in Article II, Section 3 and Article IX, Section 1 right for all people to a "clean and healthful environment."

Please support the work that they are doing that supports our community.

Thank you,

TERAN FOSTER
Director of Building Science and Innovation

+ **406.595.5002** | Direct
+ **406.993.2533** | Office
+ **teran@cmsbigsky.com**
+ **176 Running Iron Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730**
+ **cmsbigsky.com**

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From: Ben Anderson
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support BSSEF
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 10:00:28 AM

You don't often get email from ben@bssef.com. Learn why this is important

Resort Tax Board
My name is Ben Anderson and I'm a Board member of BSSEF.
Please consider fully funding the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation's request of $52,000.
I have lived and worked in Big Sky for over 20 years and cannot think of anything that brings the community together more than Big Sky's winter sports. BSSEF is an amazing organization that helps kids thrive in Big Sky's climate and terrain. Please help BSSEF fund its equipment needs so we can keep tuition as low as possible.
Thank you
Ben Anderson

--

Ben Anderson
Member at Large | Board of Directors
Big Sky Ski Education Foundation

Supporting the next generation of Alpine, Freeride, and Nordic athletes.

P.O. Box 160134, Big Sky, MT 59716

From: Danielle
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Be Well Big Sky Navigator Funding Allocation
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:21:32 PM

[You don't often get email from dmuilenburg10@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Hello,

My name is Danielle Muilenburg. I am a Navigator with Be Well Big Sky and would like to voice my support to allocate funding for this organization. Navigators and the Be Well organization overall serve an important service for the Big Sky community. As touch points that can reach many parts of our community - some of which may be near invisible or hard to access - Navigators serve as a web of support for community members in need of a listening ear, a warm handoff to more professional care, as well as in creating a community that demonstrates care and support for the people around us while destigmatizing asking for help. The work the Navigator Network does may not always be apparent to the casual observer, but when considering the deeper threads that bring people together, the ones that occur serendipitously at our local coffee shops or in the hallways at work or wherever two people may find themselves, the work this organization and community members do is necessary to create a stronger, more resilient Big Sky. Please consider allocating funds to Be Well Big Sky's Navigators Network!

Warm regards,
Danielle

From: pastor allsaintsinbigsky.com
To: Public Comment
Subject: support for Be Well Big Sky
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 4:34:13 PM

You don't often get email from pastor@allsaintsinbigsky.com. Learn why this is important

To Whom it may Concern on the Resort Tax Board:

Greetings and thank you for the difficult but important work you do making funding decisions for so many organizations across Big Sky.

I'm writing to advocate for some portion of funds to be allotted to Be Well Big Sky, a relatively new but vibrant and critical organization in our community. As a pastor in Big Sky for over 10 years and more recently one of Be Well Big Sky's volunteer "Navigators" in its Navigator Network, I have seen first-hand how Be Well Big Sky benefits our community's general mental and behavioral health. Through Holistic Emotional First Aid trainings and Navigators across the community, Be Well Big Sky touches the lives of many in our community who - without help - would neither know what resources are available nor have the courage to access those resources.

In addition, Be Well Big Sky has helped make Big Sky a place where mind-body-spirit wellness is recognized as vital by small businesses and corporations. After all, if workers and community members are struggling with addiction, depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts, they are not able to be their best selves in Big Sky. Be Well Big Sky wants to help make that goal a reality!

I would hope that Resort Tax would reconsider its initial allocations and offer support to Be Well Big Sky.
Thanks again for all your work.

Pastor Miriam Schmidt

***
The Rev. Miriam Schmidt
Pastor/Priest of All Saints in Big Sky
she/her
Big Sky, MT
406.570.8632

From: Jamie Hyem
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Big Sky Community School Funding
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 5:01:55 PM

You don't often get email from jamie_hyem@hotmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I'm writing to share why Big Sky Community School is important to our family and why I hope you'll consider providing funding for the school.

Our daughter, Rayla, started attending Big Sky Community School this fall, and even though it's only been a couple of months, we've already noticed a difference.

Rayla has always been a great student. She's the kid who wants straight A's and will do extra credit even when she doesn't need to. So academically, we weren't necessarily looking for something different. We wanted a place where she could continue to challenge herself but also feel comfortable being who she is.

Rayla is autistic, and in public school, she spent a lot of time masking and trying to fit into an environment that didn't always work for her. At Big Sky Community School, we're already seeing a change. She seems more relaxed, she genuinely enjoys going to school, and she always has something positive to say about a class, a teacher, or something she's learning.

As parents, that means a lot to us. We want our kids to get a good education, of course, but we also want them to feel accepted and comfortable being themselves. And that's what we're seeing with Rayla.

We live in Bozeman, but we chose Big Sky Community School because we felt it was the right fit for her. Having this option available to families is incredibly valuable. Not every child learns the same way or thrives in the same environment, and I think it's important that families have choices.

I hope you'll consider supporting Big Sky Community School with funding. It's already making a difference for our daughter, and I know there are other families who value having this choice as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jamie and Alyssa

Thank you,

Jamie

From: Sheena Kidd
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Big Sky Community School
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:52:46 PM

You don't often get email from sheena.kidd@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Good Afternoon,

My name is Sheena Kidd, and I'm an involved community member and parent raising three kids (4th, 8th, and 10th grade) in Big Sky.

I was very disappointed to hear that Big Sky Community School was allocated zero dollars yesterday from BSRAD.

I **support** Community School's growth and expansion in Big Sky. It offers a unique and non-traditional learning model for kids that do not thrive in the classic public school setting, while staying super connected with our amazing community. Both my 4th grader and 8th grader started attending this year, and instead of having two kids who dread going to school, they wake up with enthusiasm, curiosity and a joy to learn. To be quite frank, if this option did not exist, I would be looking for other schools in Bozeman or out-of-state. I would have to most likely leave Big Sky.

Our town needs this school. Education is the cornerstone to any community. We need to focus on education for all ages - not just early childhood—if we want families to invest in and make Big Sky their home.

Please prioritize our students. They deserve it.

Thank you,
Sheena Kidd

From: Dani Allen Smith
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Big Sky Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 9:11:29 AM

You don't often get email from daniallensmith@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

To the Resort Tax Board,

As a mom of two boys at Discovery Academy, I want to express how important this school has been to our family.

My boys are hands-on learners and explorers, and the Montessori environment at Discovery is the first place I have seen them truly thrive as independent learners. They are academically advanced and don't always learn best through a traditional approach. Discovery meets them where they are, challenges them, and gives them the freedom and support to grow. Most importantly, I have watched their confidence and independence grow-

Discovery provides them with a welcoming environment where they can be themselves, build relationships, and feel known and cared for by their teachers. As a full-time working parent, knowing my children are safe, loved, challenged, and receiving individual attention while I am working means everything.

Living and raising a family in Big Sky is an incredible privilege, but it is also expensive, and a lot of families here work extremely hard to make it possible. Our community needs strong educational and childcare options if we want working families to be able to stay and build their lives here.

Our kids are the next generation of Big Sky. Supporting them, their education, and the environments that help them thrive is an investment in the future of this community.

For our family, Discovery has made a very real difference, and I strongly support allocating resort tax dollars to help it continue serving Big Sky families.

With gratitude,

D.A. Smith

From: Kristen Bykowski
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Big Sky Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 7:43:25 AM

You don't often get email from kbykowski@nyrabbits.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Resort Tax Board Members,

I am writing as a community member and most importantly, as a mom, to ask you to support Big Sky Discovery Academy through resort tax funding. For our family, the value of this school is incomparable. Discovery has given our daughter Scarlet something every parent hopes for: a place where she is truly seen, supported, and given the confidence to thrive.

As a parent, there is something incredibly powerful about knowing your child is understood, and supported at her level. Discovery's teachers take the time to know Scarlet as an individual, recognizing her strengths, understanding where she needs encouragement, and supporting her growth socially, emotionally, and academically. That care means so much to our family and will change the course of her life.

Of course, I want my daughter to succeed academically. But I also want her to feel confident asking questions, comfortable being herself, and secure enough to try something difficult. I want her to develop a love of learning and a sense that she belongs. Those things shape how a child sees herself and what she believes she can accomplish. That is why Discovery matters so much to us.

The individual attention Discovery provides is the difference we feel as a family. Its faculty's commitment to each child creates an environment where children have the opportunity to truly flourish. I see the value of that commitment in Scarlet.

I also believe that supporting Discovery serves a much broader community need. Families deserve educational choices because children have different needs, and finding the right environment can change a child's entire experience of school. Preserving those choices helps make Big Sky a place where families can put down roots and stay.

Our resort economy depends on a strong year-round community. The schools and services that support local families are part of that foundation. Resort tax funding for Discovery is an investment in the children growing up here and in the community we want Big Sky to become.

When you consider Discovery's funding request, I hope you will think about children like Scarlet and the very real difference this school makes in their lives. For us, that difference is a daughter who is thriving. I want other families to have the opportunity to find that same sense of possibility for their children.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Big Sky.

--Kristen

Kristen Bykowski
Founder | Luxury Travel Advisor

White Rabbits Travel

kbykowski@nyrabbits.com
@whiterabbitstravel
Affiliate of Departure Lounge IATA 45649730

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From: Holly Hill
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Big Sky Ski Education Foundation
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:12:00 PM

You don't often get email from hollybushellehill@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I am writing in support of the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation's grant application to fund essential equipment, maintenance, and repairs. BSSEF has been a staple of the Big Sky community for decades, providing local kids with opportunities to develop their skiing skills, build confidence, learn discipline, and become part of a team. As a ski racing parent and board member, I've experienced the value this program brings to our children and our community.

BSSEF's modest funding request will help athletes stay safe, will maintain investments in costly equipment and will help to keep program registration costs affordable so that BSSEF can continue serving Big Sky families for years to come.

Thank you for considering this request and for supporting the organizations that make Big Sky such a special place to raise a family.

Sincerely,
Holly Hill

From:	Kristin Gardner
To:	Public Comment
Subject:	Support for Big Sky SNO CAP Implementation
Date:	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:11:11 PM

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

I am writing to ask that you fully fund Big Sky SNO's application for Big Sky Climate Action Plan implementation.

The effects of climate change are already visible in our community, and they are expected to intensify. Rising temperatures will shrink our winter snowpack, speed up snowmelt, and bring hotter summers that will stress our rivers and aquifers. This issue will shape the future of our community, and we need to do our part to address it.

We greatly value our strong partnership with Big Sky SNO across multiple program areas of the Climate Action Plan outlined in their request. I urge you to reconsider and fully fund their application. I believe the funding remaining in the conservation sector is close to the amount needed to cover the difference.

Thank you for your consideration, and for all you do for the Big Sky community.

Sincerely,

KRISTIN GARDNER
Chief Executive and Science Officer
Gallatin River Task Force
office (406) 993 - 2519 | **cell** (406) 539 - 2350
kristin@gallatinrivertaskforce.org
gallatinrivertaskforce.org
Facebook | Instagram | LinkedIn

GALLATIN RIVER
TASK FORCE

From: stephenson dmsnaturalresources.com
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for BSSEF FY27 Grant Request
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 7:46:47 AM

You don't often get email from stephenson@dmsnaturalresources.com. Learn why this is important

Dear BSRAD Board Members,

My name is Deborah Stephenson. My family and I moved to Big Sky in August 2025. We have three kids in the public school system, at Lone Peak / Ophir, grades 7, 10 and 12. All three kids are on the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation (BSSEF) alpine team. I write to you today as a community member and parent of BSSEF athletes expressing support of the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation's (BSSEF) FY27 grant request of $52,000 for **Expanding Youth Winter Sports Safety Equipment (Programming)**.
We moved to Big Sky specifically for the amazing opportunity Big Sky Ski Education Foundation (BSSEF) provides for our children. In 2025 when we were exploring various alpine ski programs across the county, we chose BSSEF because of the amazing coaches, very experienced staff, training venue, and importantly the affordable tuition BSSEF offers. When we compared ski program costs across the country, and BSSEF offers a world class program at extremely low tuition costs relative to other programs (about ½ the cost of other comparable programs throughout the country). The low tuition at BSSEF helps offset the extremely high cost of living we now face in Big Sky. We were able to balance the two and make the move to Big Sky, specifically because the cost of the program is very reasonable. We are grateful to now be part of the community, our three kids are thriving at the public school, and we have world class ski training in our backyard.

Although I'm new on the board, it is my understanding one-way BSSEF is able to keep baseline tuition fees low is to fund certain capital expenditures through the generosity of the Resort Tax. Public support for venue safety equipment and capital assets prevents these major expenditures from being loaded into general operating expenses, and then rolled into tuition fees. Covering these capital costs with Resort Tax funds directly protects baseline tuition rates, ensuring winter sports remain accessible and affordable to all local families, and attracting new families to move to Big Sky. I can speak first hand in saying the competitive baseline tuition pricing at BSSEF (made possible by receiving capital contributions from the Resort Tax) drew our family to Big Sky.

I hope you will support the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation's (BSSEF) FY27 grant request of $52,000 for **Expanding Youth Winter Sports Safety Equipment (Programming)**. Thank you for your dedicated service to the Big Sky community and for your consideration of this project. I appreciate all that you do and for helping create an amazing community we now call home.

Sincerely,

Deborah Stephenson
DMS Natural Resources, LLC
602 S. Ferguson Ave., Suite 2
Bozeman, MT 59718
Office: 406-582-4988
Cell: 406-600-1422
stephenson@dmsnaturalresources.com
www.dmsnaturalresources.com

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From: Vanessa Tracey
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:58:41 PM

You don't often get email from vanessatracey18@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Area District Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for fully funding Discovery Academy. As a parent who has seen firsthand the impact this school can have on a child's development, I cannot express enough how grateful I am that our family had the opportunity to be part of Discovery this past year.

Our son, Weston, attended Discovery Academy's Montessori classroom last year after transitioning from Morningstar. As we started thinking about preparing him for 4K at Ophir, we were concerned that he wasn't developing the skills and confidence he needed to be successful in a more structured learning environment. We knew he needed something different, and thanks to BSRAD's support of Discovery Academy, we were able to give him that opportunity.

The growth we saw in Weston throughout the year was incredible. His confidence in communicating with both adults and other children grew tremendously. He became more independent in his schoolwork, cleaning up after himself, and taking care of his own needs. Most importantly, his confidence in himself went through the roof. We watched a little boy who was struggling to find his footing become excited about learning and proud of what he could accomplish.

By the time Weston entered 4K at Ophir this year, he knew his alphabet, could count, and was beginning to spell. His transition into Ophir has been fantastic, and I genuinely don't believe he would have been as prepared without his experience at Discovery. The teachers, their dedication, and the individual attention they give each child are what truly set this school apart. They recognized what Weston needed and helped him grow at his own pace.

For our family, BSRAD funding made this opportunity possible. Without that support, Weston would not have been able to attend Discovery. That investment gave him so much more than a year of preschool. It gave him confidence, independence, a love for learning, and a foundation that leaves us, as his parents, feeling confident about his future education.

I hope the board recognizes just how meaningful this funding is to families in our

community. Early childhood education is so much more than childcare. It's an investment in our kids, their future success, and the long-term strength of Big Sky. Every child deserves the opportunity to enter school feeling capable, confident, and excited to learn.

I strongly encourage the board to fully fund Discovery Academy's request so that more families can experience the same opportunities and growth that we saw in Weston.

Thank you for your continued investment in our community and for making opportunities like this possible for families like ours.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Tracey
Big Sky Parent

From: Tim Drain
To: Public Comment
Cc: Brad Niva; Kevin Germain
Subject: Support for Economic Development in Big Sky
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 10:39:55 AM

BSRAD Board of Directors,

I am writing today to state my support for your funding of the two economic development entities applying for Resort Tax funding during this year's allocation cycle-Visit Big Sky and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. Your continued funding is not only beneficial and essential to the work that these two organizations do to bolster our tourism driven economy and community, but also in creating a virtuous cycle where the collaboration between BSRAD, the Chamber, and VBS drives more dollars into the Big Sky community and therefore drives more resort tax collections for all to benefit from.

Additionally, the chamber has long been a leader in the Big Sky community, championing initiatives that benefit our residents far past just our businesses. Recent samples include our collaboration with BSRAD and other community partners around Livable Big Sky, the newly formed Wellness District, and now our push to form a TEDD. We are proud and happy to step up and support wherever we are asked when it aligns with our mission, and to do so we simply need your continued support to augment the funds that we raise ourselves through membership dues and event revenue.

I ask that you fund the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky's Resort Tax applications in full. Thank you all for all that you do for our community every day.

Sincerely,

Tim Drain
Board Chair-Big Sky Chamber of Commerce

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From: Ashley Hegseth
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Morningstar Learning Center
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:15:57 PM

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Hello,

I am writing this in support of fully funding Morningstar Learning Center's ask of this year's BSRAD budget. Morningstar is a cornerstone of our community, helping children to get an early education and prepare them for school. It also helps parents and community members by enabling them to work and contribute to our economy and society. Unlike investing in items that cater more towards tourists or tourism, funding Morningstar actually keeps families in our town instead of of increasing transient visitors or seasonal employee. In short, it addresses infrastructure instead of encouraging (often unchecked) growth. Funding Morningstar and enabling them to provide quality and consistent childcare for the many residents of our town who depend upon it helps us all.

Thank you for your time and efforts,
Ashley Dodd

From: YES Compost LLC
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for SNO
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:04:38 PM

Hello,

My name is Karl Johnson and I am the owner of YES Compost. I am writing to ask that SNO receives the full funding that they have budgeted and requested for the upcoming year. We work closely with SNO on the consumption and waste team that is driven to see out the waste reduction goals outlined in the climate action plan. Their growing efforts have continued to make a greater impact across many sectors even outside of consumption and waste. Without funding their efforts will lose the momentum that they have worked hard to build over the past several years, and programs could suffer. I just recently received word of the shortfall, so I apologize that I don't have hard data at hand to deliver, however, I felt it was important to reach out to voice my support for SNO and their major tasks of preserving Big Sky as it moves into the quickly approaching future.

Thank you for your time and attention!
-Karl

KARL JOHNSON | OWNER-OPERATOR
(406) 219-7011
yescompost.com
215 ARDEN DRIVE #31
BELGRADE, MT 59714

From: Vanessa Tracey (SKB)
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support for Visit Big Sky FY27 Funding Request
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 12:41:50 PM
Attachments: image001.png

You don't often get email from vtracey@skibutlers.com. Learn why this is important

Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Area District Board,

As the Director of Ski Butlers in Big Sky and Secretary of the Visit Big Sky Board of Directors, I am happy to share my support for Visit Big Sky's FY27 Resort Tax funding request.

Working in the tourism industry here in Big Sky, I see firsthand how important a strong visitor economy is to our local businesses, employees, and community. We all benefit when visitors have a great experience, return year after year, and continue to support the businesses that make Big Sky such a special place.

Visit Big Sky plays a big role in making that happen. Through marketing, visitor education, research, and local partnerships, they help connect visitors to our community and the many businesses that make it unique. At Ski Butlers, we rely heavily on partnerships and collaboration, and I see the value of having an organization that works to support our destination as a whole, not just individual businesses.

One thing I particularly appreciate about Visit Big Sky is their commitment to bringing our local tourism industry together. Whether it's sharing visitor trends, providing marketing opportunities, or creating space for businesses to collaborate, these efforts help all of us make better decisions and prepare for what's ahead. This is especially important for smaller businesses that may not have access to these resources on their own.

I also appreciate the continued focus on responsible recreation and protecting what makes Big Sky so special. We have an opportunity, and a responsibility, to help educate visitors on how to enjoy our community while respecting the people and environment that make it such an incredible place to live and visit.

To me, a successful visitor economy isn't just about bringing more people to Big Sky. It's about creating exceptional experiences, supporting our local workforce and businesses, and making sure tourism continues to positively impact our community for years to come.

Serving on the Visit Big Sky Board has given me an even greater appreciation for the work this team does behind the scenes. I've seen their dedication to our community, their

willingness to collaborate, and their commitment to making Big Sky a better destination for both visitors and locals.

I fully support Visit Big Sky's FY27 funding request and encourage the Resort Tax Board to continue investing in the work they do. Their success is directly connected to the success of our local businesses and the long-term health of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Tracey
Director, Ski Butlers Big Sky
Secretary, Visit Big Sky Board of Directors

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Vanessa Tracey
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C: (530)386-5589

From: Jane Bertelson
To: Public Comment
Subject: Support of Big Sky Community School
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:08:07 PM

You don't often get email from janie.bertelson@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

I am writing in support of the Big Sky Community School.

I believe having choice of schools in our community is incredibly important. I have enrolled my children in all of the schools that currently exist in Big Sky over the past 9 years. It has been such a gift to choose which school is best for each of their unique personalities and learning type each year.

I think this community needs to support more learning environments for students. Every student is different academically and socially and developmentally, and the more places we can provide for them, to grow and mature, the better.

Please include The Big Sky Community School in your allocations this year.

Thanks,
Janie Bertelson

October 26, 2026

Big Sky Resort Area District
Board of Directors
Big Sky, Montana

RE: Support for Visit Big Sky FY27 Funding Request

Dear Members of the Big Sky Resort Area District Board,

As Chair of the Visit Big Sky Board of Directors, a local Big Sky community member, and a marketing professional, I am writing to express my support for Visit Big Sky's FY27 Resort Tax funding request of $977,333.

Working in hospitality marketing, I understand the importance of maintaining a consistent presence in an increasingly competitive travel market. Big Sky has earned an exceptional reputation as a premier mountain destination, but we cannot take that recognition for granted. Travelers have more choices than ever, and destinations nationwide are investing heavily to capture their attention. Keeping Big Sky top of mind requires consistent, strategic marketing and a long-term commitment to our destination's brand.

Visit Big Sky plays a critical role by promoting the entire destination. Through targeted campaigns, earned media, digital advertising, and collaborative partnerships, Visit Big Sky connects travelers with everything our community offers, from world-class outdoor recreation to local restaurants, retailers, and unique mountain experiences.

VBS is focused on opportunities to strengthen and grow our shoulder-season visitation. Encouraging travel during traditionally slower periods helps create a more balanced year-round economy, supports local businesses, and provides greater stability for our workforce.

Equally important is Visit Big Sky's investment in destination research and stewardship. Understanding visitor behavior, identifying emerging markets, and using data to guide marketing decisions ensures our resources are invested effectively while balancing economic opportunity with protecting what makes Big Sky special.

As Board Chair, I have witnessed firsthand the dedication of Visit Big Sky's team to collaboration, responsible investment, and delivering meaningful results for our community.

Destination marketing is a long-term play. Maintaining awareness, building relationships with travelers, and remaining competitive requires consistency. Reducing our investment risks losing momentum that has taken years to build.

I respectfully encourage the Resort Tax Board to fully fund Visit Big Sky's FY27 request. This investment is essential to maintaining Big Sky's competitive position and supporting the long-term vitality of our visitor economy.

Thank you for your consideration and continued investment in our community.

Sincerely,

Emilie Wagner
Chair, Visit Big Sky Board of Directors
Senior Director of Marketing & Strategy, Lone Mountain Land Company

From: Liz McFadden
To: Public Comment; Jenny Christensen
Subject: Fwd: Support for Discovery Academy
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 5:51:14 PM

You don't often get email from elizatown@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Liz McFadden** <elizatown@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 21, 2026 at 12:51 PM
Subject: Support for Discovery Academy
To: <publiccomment@resorttax.org>

Dear Resort Tax Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for Discovery Academy and to ask for transparency and fairness in early childhood education funding.

Discovery Academy serves 22 children in its early childhood program, and many of its teachers are Montessori-certified and have formal teaching education. These qualifications reflect a commitment to providing quality education and deserve consideration when funding decisions are made.

I am concerned about the $500,000 award to Morningstar Learning Center, which serves 20 children. That amounts to approximately $25,000 per child. I understand funding may cover various program expenses but why is it not fair across the board for early childhood education.

Are enrollment, teacher qualifications, and program quality factored into these award decisions?

I am not seeking to diminish Morningstar Learning Center, but to ensure that all early childhood programs receive fair consideration.

Our children deserve a fair funding process that supports quality early childhood education throughout our community.

Sincerely,

Liz McFadden