October 23, 2014

Dear Jared,

Thank you so much for meeting with us and being such a supportive administrator. It really makes a difference to feel that we are all on the same team, striving to give our students a quality educational experience.

We are writing to request that the 5th grade be given permission to participate in two separate off-campus grade level activities, which have been annual traditions in the past. Our first activity would be bowling at Olympus Hills Bowl in the first week of November, and our second would be Ice Skating at the Gallivan Center in January. We feel that these activities are critical to providing new physical education opportunities, motivating students to perform well academically, and unifying the students while giving them opportunities to interact in a different social setting.

We understand that there are objections to academic time spent in recreational activities. We also understand that we have been asked to hold recreational activities on Friday afternoons, but these are not just recreational activities and going after school is not feasible. First, in the attempt to build grade-level unity, it is vital that all students are given the opportunity to participate. If the activity is held outside of school hours, some students will not be able to be involved. We are well aware that our students have student council meetings, piano lessons, sports, scouting, and church activities on Friday afternoons. Secondly, our 5th graders are already coming an hour before school starts for Shakespeare play practices, which we opted to hold outside of school hours to protect instructional time. Furthermore, we plan to have these activities after a full four hours of instructional time. We believe that if we all participate together, get to know each other in different settings, learn to trust and work together, our students will develop a love of school and perform better academically. We had these activities last year, and our SAGE scores were the highest in the school and some of the highest in the district (Language Arts 74%, Math 76%, and Science 85%).

One purpose of these events is to offer valuable physical education. As you know, we are state-mandated to provide 90 minutes of P.E. per week. Every week, our students get 45 minutes with a P.E. instructor, except when District in-service takes precedence over our P.E. time. We do our best to supplement P.E., but we do not let it replace our academic instruction. Bowling and ice skating are novel, beneficial, and memorable P.E. activities for our students. And, isn’t it our job to expose students to opportunities they might not otherwise be given in life?

In addition to physical education objectives, we also include academic goals in these outings. We incorporate math and science objectives, so they are core-aligned. The employees at both Olympus Hills and Gallivan have been very cooperative and have gone out of their way to accommodate our requests, including teaching students to score their own bowling sheet, explaining bowling etiquette, etc. When we do our health unit at the end of the year, we actually watch a video and discuss how bowling and ice skating benefit various body systems and muscle groups. In May, the Salt Lake District participates in the Prevention Dimension Day at the Bees game and links it with the health core. We believe our activities are even more beneficial because they have stronger ties to the core and involve more student participation.

We have attached two parent letters—just a small sample— including how much the parents and students appreciate the variety of opportunities we provide in 5th grade at Dilworth.

As a grade level team, we work hard, both inside and outside of school, to give our students the best well-rounded education that we can provide. Allowing us to continue our tradition of these out-of-school activities will help us meet the students’ needs and our own high expectations. We appreciate your consideration and prompt, hopefully positive response to our request.

Thank you,

5th Grade Team

Daniel Halverson, Karen Redmon, and Linette Sheffield