

Dear Douglas County Board of Education and Dr. Fagen,

It has come to the attention of the Strong Schools Coalition that the Board's secretary, Nona Eichelberger, has responded via email to several of the individuals who signed our petition which requested the Douglas County School District abide by the intent of the Colorado Innovation Schools Act and hold community meetings to inform parents, students, staff and community members of the full extent of Douglas County School District's plan to file as a District of Innovation with the Colorado State Board of Education. Unfortunately, I am disappointed to see that the Strong Schools Coalition was not included in your response and that you have made no attempt to contact our organization regarding the petition.

There are many concerns regarding lack of transparency in Douglas County School District, including the Board's practice of spending an average of 49% of each school board meeting [behind closed doors](#). In addition, the wording of the [Resolution of the Board of Education Authorizing Submission of Innovation Waiver to the State Board of Education](#), that was passed at the September 2, 2014 Board of Education meeting, was not provided to the public until after the 3:00 p.m. deadline for signing up for public comment ([please see following email exchange](#)). Furthermore, the resolution was not read to the public before being put to a vote by the Board of Education. Since the resolution has been passed, there have been no additional opportunities for the public to provide input and the next opportunity for public input is not until the October 21st Board of Education meeting. An additional concern regarding transparency and the Board's resolution to apply for waivers under the Innovation School Act is the August 19, 2014 Board of Education executive session that included an item entitled, "Questions regarding local school board control of curriculum."

The Strong Schools Coalition currently has over 550 signatures of concerned community members who are making the reasonable request that the district hold community meetings around their intentions to seek Innovation status. While the information you sent to many of the individuals who signed the petition may have answered some of the questions being raised by the community, it is not the form of open, two-way communication that is being requested by the public.

I hope that you will agree that being fully transparent regarding the intentions of Douglas County School District to apply for waivers under the Colorado Innovation Schools Act is beneficial to the entire community. Not only will the District benefit by giving the public the opportunity to engage in open, two-way communication, but individual schools will benefit by holding community meetings to present and receive input on their individual school plans. It is the intention of the Innovation Schools Act that the community be involved in this process.

Finally, in the future, if you have questions or concerns about the information provided by Strong Schools Coalition, I would appreciate it if you contacted us directly. We have requested on several occasions to be contacted regarding our concerns and have been always been willing the engage in open dialog with the Board and the District.

Respectfully,

Laura Mutton
President
Strong Schools Coalition