

March 13, 2014

Board of Education  
Jefferson County School District  
1829 Denver West Drive #27  
Golden, Colorado 80401

*Via Electronic Mail at board@jeffco.k12.co.us*

Dear Members of the Board of Education of Jefferson County:

I am writing in regards to one of the agenda items at last week's regular Board of Education meeting, on March 6, 2014 at Golden High School. The item was the resolution supporting Colorado SB 10-191. I don't know anything about SB 10-191, and my comments are not substantive to the bill. Rather, I am writing about two comments made during the "discussion" of this supporting resolution.

After providing her suggested revisions as a friendly amendment to the resolution, Ms. Dahlkemper pointed out to Mr. Witt that, in the past, Board members were given time to consider new topics without having to make decisions on the spot. I believe that Ms. Dahlkemper mentioned that new topics on the agenda would be discussed but not voted on until the next Board meeting. Rather than acknowledging this historic practice, Mr. Witt attempted to discount Ms. Dahlkemper's concerns by pointing out that since she had enough time to offer suggested revisions, she clearly had enough time to consider the resolution.

But Mr. Witt's comment is completely beside the point. Ms. Dahlkemper, though she may not have realized it, was in fact referring to an existing Board Governance Policy, GP-02. The second item 10 provides: "The Board will not take a position on discussion agenda items the first time such items are placed on the agenda for Board consideration." Yet, time and again the new Board majority is doing just that: inserting items on the agenda, often at the last minute, then steamrolling the issues through with little to no discussion. I believe here, Ms. Dahlkemper and Ms. Fellman mentioned they had received the resolution less than two days prior to the Board meeting. Hiring Mr. Miller as the Board's independent attorney was also done in clear violation of this policy, as were several loans to charter schools that had, at the very least, failed properly to budget and plan for their expenses.

Regardless of the existence of GP-02, providing the Board members time to review the material presented, consider all sides and aspects of the issue, as well as to do their own research to determine facts vs. opinions is simply good governance practice. Hence the rationale for the policy in the first place. The Board isn't even just taking positions on issues, but rather they are acting on issues the first time they appear on the Board agenda. This does not provide transparency to the community, rather it supports concerns that many community members have expressed that the three-member majority is meeting (or discussing district issues) in violation of Colorado's Sunshine Law.

This leads me to the second comment that was made during this discussion that has left me scratching my head and wondering what the three-member majority, and in particular Mr. Witt, are thinking. When Ms. Dahlkemper asked who had drafted the resolution, Mr. Witt's response was something along the lines of, "a group of people." Ms. Dahlkemper called Mr. Witt on this non-response, yet Mr. Witt never answered the question. As a Jeffco parent and taxpayer, I definitely want you to answer this question: **Who drafted this resolution?**

1. Please identify, with particularity, all persons who participated in drafting the resolution supporting SB 10-191, including by email, phone or in-person.
2. If Mr. Miller (or anyone else at the law firm) participated, please provide the number of hours and dollar amounts Jeffco is being billed for the services in this matter.
3. If anyone else was paid for their service in connection with the drafting of this resolution, please provide their names, the service(s) they rendered and the amount each was or will be paid.

As a tax-payer of Jefferson County and a parent of several JeffCo students, I strongly urge you to consider carefully how your actions are perceived, and to follow strictly not only the requirements of Colorado state laws and district policies, but also the spirit with which they were intended – namely open and honest communication with the community regarding the Board of Education's agenda and actions. Comments like those made by Mr. Witt at last week's regular meeting of the Board of Education do not support transparency or integrity.

I look forward to receiving a response to this letter in the two-week stated time frame. I currently have two letters outstanding to the Board to which I have yet to receive a response – they were dated February 8 and February 18, 2014.

Sincerely,

*Wendy R. McCord*

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