



**FOUNDATION
AGAINST
INTOLERANCE
& RACISM**

 485 Madison Avenue, 16th Floor
New York, New York, 10022

 **Website:** [Fairforall.org](https://fairforall.org)

 **General inquiries:** info@fairforall.org

Media inquires: media@fairforall.org

June 18, 2021

Douglas County School District Board of Education
620 Wilcox St.
Castle Rock, CO 80104

Re: Implementation of Educational Equity Policy and Mischaracterization of Parental Concerns

Distinguished Directors and Superintendent Wise,

We write to you in the wake of several recent actions and statements by Douglas County School District (“DCSD”) leadership and the Gemini Group, related to the implementation of the DCSD’s Educational Equity Policy.

As concerned members of both our school community and local chapter of the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR), we object to the mischaracterization of our concerns about DCSD’s equity policy implementation, and wish to reiterate what we’re advocating for, on behalf of all kids in DCSD.

DCSD leadership previously engaged the services of the Gemini Group as part of its implementation of the Educational Equity Policy, including a keynote address to more than 900 DCSD employees. In that address, the Gemini Group suggested the school system is biased if equal outcomes aren’t achieved and stated that “the darker your skin color in this country, the more harsh your outcomes in any facet of life.” They went on to assert that a “white, male, able-bodied, Christian, and straight” culture “has done so much harm” to others and urged the district to not let dissenting parents stop them from their systems-changing work. At the BOE meeting on May 25, 2021, public commenters roundly criticized the Gemini Group’s address to DCSD employees.

We were heartened that shortly afterward, Mr. Wise canceled the DCSD Equity Leadership Summit, which was to be led by the Gemini Group. This action instilled hope that DCSD leadership saw the Gemini Group’s divisive, dispiriting ideology as inconsistent with a united DCSD that is focused on enabling every student, regardless of skin color or gender or religion, to achieve academic excellence.

Unfortunately, we have since learned that Dr. Chris Page attributed the cancellation to “questions around the scope and sequence of the work.” We were disheartened that Dr. Page failed to object to the regressive ideology, and our concern increased when Remy Rummel, Director of Language, Culture, and Equity, clearly expressed support for it at the June 1 BOE meeting; in fact, she unapologetically defended it. Mr. Wise made no reference to the overwhelming public comment at the May 25 BOE meeting, but we appreciate his acknowledgement that the cancellation was “a pause to review, regroup, and establish a plan to move forward.”

Mr. Wise’s and Ms. Rummel’s statements regarding a pause and the propriety of the Gemini group’s work are supported by Dr. Page’s cancellation email wherein he notes, “sadly,” that DCSD “just [isn’t] ready for this work.” It is not clear precisely what Dr. Page refers to when he says that we are not ready for “this

work.” Please be assured, however, that no child should be ready for the regressive group categorization based upon immutable characteristics encouraged during the Gemini Keynote. If that is what is meant by “this work,” we will keep challenging it every step of the way. On the other hand, we are ready for “this work” if that means fostering a culture of individual dignity, resiliency, academic excellence, and belonging—a culture where all children can thrive. We strive for that belonging every day when we teach our children, grandchildren, and other children we can influence to live the Golden Rule to treat others how we would want to be treated, regardless of what they look like, where they’re from, or who they love.

Gemini representatives dismissed us as “a handful of vocal white parents.” They could not be more wrong with every adjective in that sentence. Members of this group already number in the hundreds, and we have only just begun to get the word out. Furthermore, as you can attest by the marathon BOE meetings over the past several weeks, it is far more than a handful of people who have seen fit to speak up on this issue. With respect to “vocal,” most members of this group and nearly every person who has spoken at the BOE’s last three meetings have never been vocal before on an educational issue, but feel compelled to do so now. Finally, to suggest that only white people in the district are opposed to being categorized by their immutable characteristics is not only historically ignorant, it is insulting to the many members of our ranks who hail from different backgrounds and are demanding that their voices be heard. No, we are not just a handful of vocal white parents. We are far more than that.

We are a pro-human, passionate, and committed group of parents, grandparents, students, former-students, and caring citizens, all from different backgrounds, who want the best for all members of our community without regard to race, color, creed, or identity. We all strive to live up to the ideals of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, and Martin Luther King, Jr., each of whom helped pave the way for the most free, equal, and prosperous society the world has ever known.

From Washington, we learned that “perseverance and spirit have done wonders in all ages,” so we will keep standing up for our kids. From Jefferson, we learned to take it as self-evident truth “that all men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights,” including “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” so each of us will continue treating one another that way. From Douglass, we learned that the Constitution is a “Glorious liberty document” and to draw “encouragement from the Declaration of Independence, the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions,” so we will continue to believe in the institutions that inspired a man born in bondage to rise to become one of the most intelligent, inspirational, and respected men in history. From King, we learned to dream of and peacefully insist on a world in which our children “will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” So, while some so-called anti-racists insist that “the only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination,” we will continue to hold onto the truth that just as “darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”

We plan to be that light and bring love to the DCSD community, fostering a community in which all can achieve academic excellence.

We welcome you to join us.

FAIR of Douglas County