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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**October 3, 2013**

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**Report Highlights Transformational Dougco Model**

The transformative work going on inside Douglas County has continued to garner lots of local and national attention, so it was only a matter of time before the Education Policy Center chimed in, as well. Ben DeGrow authored the just-released issue paper [*Douglas County: Building a Better Education Model*](http://education.i2i.org/2013/09/douglas-county-building-a-better-education-model/), which explores many facets of the sweeping local policy changes that have captured widespread attention. The question is which districts will be next to adopt similarly bold changes.

Dougco’s Blueprint for Choice and market-based pay are among two of the topics Pam and Ben have shared at our recent round of school board candidate policy briefings across Colorado. Other topics include [blended learning](http://education.i2i.org/2013/07/the-rise-of-k-12-blended-learning-in-colorado/), open enrollment, the Innovation Schools Act, financial transparency, Senate Bill 191, performance pay, and collective bargaining reform.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Successful Education Reform Much Harder Than Just Passing New Policies](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/successful-education-reform-much-harder-than-just-passing-new-policies/)

[Two More Videos Remind Us that Dougco Innovation is Working (But I’m Not)](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/two-more-videos-remind-us-that-dougco-innovation-is-working-but-im-not/)

[I Want to Put a Great Big Asterisk on a Compelling Jay Greene Argument](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/i-want-to-put-a-great-big-asterisk-on-a-compelling-jay-greene-argument/)

**Join Us Friday for “Defending Educational Civil Rights”**

One thing Douglas County education leaders haven’t encountered is active opposition from the federal government. But for some low-income students exercising school choice in Louisiana, the U.S. Department of Justice has come down hard with outrageous claims that the voucher program violates desegregation orders. Working to represent families harmed by this action, the Goldwater Institute’s Clint Bolick will join us Friday at 11:45 AM to give a special brown bag lunch presentation on “Defending Educational Civil Rights.” [More details can be found on the official event flier](http://education.i2i.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Clint-Bolick-Event-Flier-10-04-13.pdf). RSVP to ben@i2i.org if you plan to attend.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Repeat: Federal Education Data Freeze Is No Reason for You (or Wonks) to Panic](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/10/repeat-federal-education-data-freeze-is-no-reason-for-you-or-wonks-to-panic/)

**Unions Fund Amendment 66 while Threatening Reform**

In Colorado a lot of attention is directed toward [Amendment 66](http://education.i2i.org/k-12-issues/finance/amendment-66-and-sb-213/), the statewide billion-dollar tax increase for education on this fall’s ballot. Following his issue brief that highlights how the proposal is [unfair and overpriced](http://education.i2i.org/2013/08/amendment-66-unfair-and-overpriced/), Ben produced [a counterpoint column](http://education.i2i.org/2013/09/tax-hike-won%E2%80%99t-deliver-on-its-promise/) on the topic for the *Greeley Tribune*. He also chimed in for a recent Colorado Springs *Gazette* story exposing how the teachers union is trying to [maneuver an anti-reform lawsuit](http://gazette.com/suspicion-clouds-colorado-board-action-critics-link-union-motive-to-education-tax-vote/article/1506576) around the tax hike election they have so [richly supported](http://www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci_24213662/union-donors-push-amendment-66-proponents-past-5).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Union Leaders Want to Have Their Tax Hike Cake and Sue Education Reforms, Too](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/union-leaders-want-to-have-their-tax-hike-cake-and-sue-education-reforms-too/)

[New Study Touts Harm to Student Achievement from Teacher Union Impacts](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/08/new-study-touts-harm-to-student-achievement-from-teacher-union-impacts/)

**K-12 Tax Credit Coalition Begins to Take Root**

On September 17, the Center [convened private school leaders, scholarship organizations, and policymakers](http://education.i2i.org/2013/09/institute-for-justice-attorney-touts-scholarship-tax-credit-legality/) to discuss the parameters and prospects of a [Colorado K-12 scholarship tax credit program](http://education.i2i.org/2013/02/a-scholarship-tax-credit-program-for-colorado/). Institute for Justice senior attorney Dick Komer headlined morning and luncheon events with presentations on associated legal challenges and opportunities. To join in the growing coalition, you can start by watching the moving and informative videos on the [**Colorado Kids Win**](http://coloradokidswin.org/) website. If you know of a group that would appreciate learning more about scholarship tax credits, [contact Pam Benigno](http://education.i2i.org/contact/) to set up a speaking engagement.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[No Phony Guilt, No Forced Relocation: Colorado Kids Win with Tax Credits](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/no-phony-guilt-no-forced-relocation-colorado-kids-win-with-tax-credits/)

**Prosperity, Health, and Humor: Podcast and Blog Roundup**

Earlier in September, Ben had the privilege of [interviewing Dr. Paul Peterson](http://education.i2i.org/2013/09/amy-oliver-show-americas-low-test-scores-endanger-prosperity/) about his newly co-authored book [*Endangering Prosperity*](http://www.amazon.com/Endangering-Prosperity-Global-American-School/dp/0815703732/), which makes the case that American students’ lagging performance has potentially harmful effects for the future economy. Recent episodes of the Spanish-language Raaki Garcia Show include an [interview with Sally Sorte](http://raakigarcia.com/2013/09/09-19-2013-raaki-garcia-show/), founder and executive director of Denver’s new Academy 360 health and wellness charter school.

Last but not least, little Eddie couldn’t resist sharing his humorous thoughts on an assortment of other topics related to K-12 education:

[The U.S. Needs a Different Path to Improve Our Unimpressive Math Scores](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/the-u-s-needs-a-different-path-to-improve-our-unimpressive-math-scores/)

[Campaign “Silly Season” Starts to Emerge in Colorado’s Largest School Districts](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/campaign-silly-season-starts-to-emerge-in-colorados-largest-school-districts/)

[Joining Harrison and Dougco, North Carolina Dumps Wasteful Masters Bumps](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/09/joining-harrison-and-dougco-north-carolina-dumps-wasteful-masters-bumps/)

[Arizona’s #EdDebitCard Begins Opening Doors to Choice and Personal Learning](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/08/arizonas-eddebitcard-begins-opening-doors-to-choice-and-personal-learning/)

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