

Dear Commissioner Anthes,

I am a parent of a 14-year-old who is identified as a Gifted and Talented (GT) student under the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA). Under the ECEA, GT is a categorical, and state funds are dedicated to school districts to meet the needs of advanced students. As taxpayers we need be able to measure the effectiveness of these dollars. How are our advanced learners growing? Are they realizing their potential?

I appreciate your statement regarding a flexible approach to education in your letter on February 10: "Colorado, with a history of innovation and fierce individualism, fully embraces this approach to education." GT education's strong suit is the way it provides the necessary space, time, rigor and guidance for unbounded creativity and true innovation. My son is a freshman at Wheat Ridge High School and participates in the GT class, where he has been able to initiate and collaborate on projects that have great potential in the real world—projects in the realms of robotics, coding, engineering and medical technology—as well as hone unparalleled skill in critical and analytical thinking that's so important to problem solving in today's world.

You also show your supportive attitude by positing that Colorado continues "to provide all children significant opportunities." The best aspect of GT ed is that it doesn't just serve one "type" of student but rather embraces many groups. There are GT students who are also children with disabilities, immigrants, minorities, economically disadvantaged and at-risk.

These children will drive innovation and significantly contribute to Colorado's economic growth. Please ensure our GT students have access to effective programming, challenging standards and data is disaggregated to allow us to be held accountable to these students.

Sincerely,

Jennifer C. Hadden

Arvada, CO