

"Dear Commissioner Anthes,

I am a parent (teacher, guardian) of a 14 year old, 8th grade student 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?

My student is 3 grades accelerated in math, 1 grade accelerated in LA, has been to Jefferson County's All-county band in grades 7 & 8, will be representing all of Jefferson County in the CU Middle School Honor Band, and has a 504. She needs additional social and emotional support during the school day, and some accommodations with her school work (mainly, allowing all of it to be typed) and testing time limits. My student is quirky, and needs the surrounds found in a GT Center to find friendships. To put a perspective on the importance of Colorado's gifted and talent supports, in 2014 — after five years of active investigation and planning with literally every state in the US under consideration — we self-paid to relocate our family over 1400 miles to Colorado, a decision made in large part by a desire to improve our daughter's quality of life and educational opportunities. Please take the necessary steps to ensure that these children are included specifically within CO's ESSA documentation and plans, and strive to ensure that they too experience growth to reach their full potential.

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,

Nancy Yanasak