Each of you are working with gifted or highly capable students, whether it be through a clearly defined program or in a regular classroom setting. What are those students telling you about what excites them about learning? What do they describe as the most challenging aspect of being "in school"? Is it about relationships with peers? With family? To get started, describe a gifted student who comes to mind when you think of these questions? If you are not in a school setting, respond to those questions by describing an adult you now who you think is gifted.

This year, I am fortunate to work with a student who I’ll call N.S. Although my district does not identify students as gifted when they are in the secondary grades, I’m sure that he would be identified as such. When you talk to him, he is highly passionate about issues/topics that are important to him and will often do additional research on these topics. He will often bring me websites or information that is important to him, and he clearly comprehends information at a high level. However, he is one of those students who just doesn’t “fit into the box.” The written work that he turns in is sloppy and incomplete, if turned in at all. His major challenge is finding the motivation to do school work on topics he already knows about. I see this in a few of my other humanities plus students as well. However, from discussions with my colleagues, I’m seeing less of this then they are in their general education classes. Clearly, mostly in science (where there is NO advanced curriculum), gifted students are bored and find no motivation to complete work that is not relevant to them. In class, when we are discussing complex literature or big questions (related to either language arts or social studies), the students light up and are engaged. They are excited by thinking! They love to use their minds to solve problems and think of creative solutions.