



# GUNNISON WATERSHED SCHOOL DISTRICT REIJ

*Quality Education in the Heart of Colorado's Majestic Rocky Mountains*

October 7, 2019

Dear Flyin Ryan Hawks Foundation:

Holden Bradford is one of the most exceptional young men I have worked with in twenty years of teaching. I hope my ten year old son grows up to be a young man with Holden's qualities. He is an optimistic, outgoing person with an excellent sense of humor. He is kind. He is a person and student of the highest caliber who demonstrates limitless potential. Holden's open personality, intellectual curiosity, drive to be an active community member, and his passionate commitment to skiing make him an ideal candidate for any college campus community.

Holden is an outstanding student and he has the skills and intellect to excel in a college classroom. Holden strives for excellence. He is a motivated and inquisitive young man who performs at a consistently high level. Through diligence, effort, and a valuable ability to take constructive criticism and utilize it, Holden has dramatically improved his writing abilities. He excels at writing thesis based, well argued, evidence based papers and essays. He ended his sophomore year with a thorough and thought provoking paper on the Colorado River that reflected the sound effort of a student two or three years older. In regard to more concise essays, Holden has worked to streamline his word choice to write with precision and strong vocabulary. Holden extends his high standards to all important academic skills. He always participates in class discussions, asks thoughtful, probing questions, and, through his engagement, contributes to the quality of the course in general. Whether he is analyzing the impacts of the Black Plague, simulating a high level meeting of Mongols taking over China, or arguing the feasibility of implementing a system of human ethics in regard to the environment, Holden is a skilled debater. He has a confident and composed demeanor, he is approachable and has strong interpersonal skills, and he demonstrates sound preparation and public speaking abilities. Holden elevates the atmosphere and quality of the course through his positive attitude, engagement, and innovative observations. Holden rises to academic challenges; he trusts himself, is willing to admit what he doesn't know, and is truly focused on learning as a process. He often asks for and utilizes help. While at CBCS Holden has learned to see the relevance of historical study to current issues, and he has great interest in learning as much as he can about history, global cultures, and current events so as to be an informed and active citizen.

Holden's great passion beyond the classroom is freeride skiing. He is a fierce competitor and has done extremely well, including qualifying for the world championships in Austria in the spring of 2020. His dedication to his sport is unwavering and it obviously brings him great joy. Training three afternoons a week in addition to weekends from December to April while maintaining a 3.97 GPA requires exceptional work ethic, organization, and communication. During his sophomore year Holden missed my class, which met during afternoon training time, three days a week for ski season. We met every Tuesday before school, he did make up work on Tuesdays after school, and we corresponded via Google Classroom and email. Despite the challenges, Holden maintained high standards and an A average; he continues to do so in AP classes despite missing chunks of time during competition season. Holden's dedication to strive for excellence in school and skiing, two activities that require large amounts of time and discipline, is evidence of his integrity, strong executive functioning skills, and ability to take the small steps necessary to meet big goals. Holden understands that hard work pays off, yes, with good grades and strong finishes in competitions, but, perhaps more importantly, in creating a rewarding life.

I deeply admire Holden's good character and cannot stress enough how highly I, and my colleagues at CBCS, regard him. He is an outstanding human. I enthusiastically recommend him.

Sincerely,

Talley Nichols