

# Maximizing the Recommendation Letters and School Profile

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## What we will cover:

- Counselor recommendation letter
- Teacher recommendation letter
- School profile

Our role as a writer

(counselor recommendation

letter) **and a liaison**

(teacher recommendation letter,  
the school profile)



# Tips to maximize the counselor recommendation letter

- Provide the student with opportunities to reflect
  - Use Naviance for surveys throughout high school
  - Give them a deadline to complete the questionnaire prior to writing the rec
- Document observations, thoughts, and teacher comments throughout their high school years
  - Shared google doc with counselors or through your student management system
- Ask specific teachers for comments
  - Bi-weekly group email
- Keep art and athletics programs for reference
- Keep school publications or newspapers that highlight the student
- Parent Brag Form
- Senior College Planning Questionnaire

# Tips to maximize the teacher recommendation letter

- Teacher recommendation summary form
  - *Why? Some/many/most like something in print (as well as electronic)*
  - *It is another way to organize/manage what needs to be done*
  - *Students are more intentional with who they are asking and what they are asking for*
- Have students answer reflective questions
  - *Why? The students are providing genuine thought as to why they are asking that specific teacher*
  - *The teacher can use the student's words/thoughts to write the recommendation letter*
- Have students submit a resume to the teacher (so the teacher can speak to a broader context of what the student juggles daily)
- Provide annual training and prior year college admission recap
- Thank them: host an ice cream social, remind students to write thank you notes

# Do's and Don'ts... the Counselor Recommendation Letter

## Do:

- Share unusual backstory/circumstances
- Share student's role in context of the student body/school community
- Be specific, and be honest if you can't be specific (large caseloads, new student, etc.)
- Highlight student's strengths, explain weak spots or gaps in record

## Don't:

- Regurgitate the resume
- Focus strictly on the student in classroom/realm of academics

# Do's and Don'ts... the Teacher Recommendation Letter

## Do:

- Share your relationship
- Share specific stories/memories of the student in their classroom
- Share any personal observations of how they interacted with others, especially how they interact with peers in group situations/projects

## Don't:

- Regurgitate the resume
- Share general characteristics with no substance/depth behind the statement  
“John was a great student.”

# Sample Recommendation Letters

- Look at each letter...
  - What are the letter's strengths?
  - What stands out to you about this student?
  - If you were an admissions officer, how would you describe this student after reading these letters?



# School Profile

- Purpose: to provide the context for your student's application--very important!
- Colleges use it to:
  - Compare course load with general population
  - Compare GPA and test scores to general population
  - To understand policies of your school (grading scale, ranking, AP/IB policies, etc.)
  - Look at extracurricular opportunities available to your student
  - To get a feel for your school's community/uniqueness

# Helpful things to have in your school profile:

- Contact information for counselors
- Student demographics
- Course offerings, sequence and class-related policies (honors, IB, AP, etc)
- Testing averages (school, district, state?)
- GPA breakdown
- College matriculation list
- Information about extracurriculars

# School Profile Dos and Don'ts

## Do:

- Be clear and concise
- Make it easy to read (it will likely be read online or printed on 8.5"x11" paper)
- Share any change in policies from year to year

## Don't:

- Leave out critical information for dissecting the transcript

# Sample School Profiles

Look at each profile, and think about your own school profile.

- What is your eye drawn to first?
- What are things that stand out to you about each profile?
- What are some strengths of your own school profile, and what are some things that you may add or change to your school's profile for the 2018-2019 school year?

Questions?

Don't hesitate to reach out:

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