

Naperville North High School

Letters of Recommendation 2016-17



Purpose of Teacher Recommendation: Emphasize the student's performance within *the context of the classroom* while providing detailed information about a student's intellectual ability and academic performance. This can include discussion on a student's musical/theatrical/athletic prowess as well.

Purpose of Counselor Recommendation: Emphasize the student's performance within *the context of Naperville North High School*. A counselor's recommendation should be more global and discuss the academic and social environment of NNHS and then a student's performance within that environment.

Number of Seniors in the Class of 2017: 706

Highest GPA: 4.811

Teachers

1. Indicate the number of years you have taught the course(s);
2. Explain the goals and rigor of the class;
3. Explain the student's performance: academic marks, special contributions, classroom discussions, personal insight, quest for additional knowledge
4. Include any observed personal characteristics that would place student at "another level."

Counselors

1. Explain the academic background of the Class of 2017 (this way, we can focus on GPA, AP testing, and academic offerings rather than class rank);
2. Describe the academic performance of the student (grade trends, any difficulties a student may have had in particular subject areas, and the relationship between test scores and GPA);
3. Include extra-curricular interests (not a laundry list of activities but the qualities and values a student must possess in order to participate at a high level at NNHS);
4. Discuss personal information about a student that may have had an impact on his or her education (please bear in mind that a student should provide consent to this! We do not want to indicate that a student receives special education services, for example, unless a student intends to do that as well in the admissions process);
5. How well the student will "fit in" to the college or university of choice. Take in to consideration the institution's profile and if the student possesses those characteristics that the school tends to want.

What colleges want to know

1. The academic environment of Naperville North High School;
2. The rigor of the student's class/schedule relative to the curricular offerings of NNHS;
3. The student's ability to learn, synthesize, and contribute;

4. The student's academic maturity and capacity for intellectual growth;
5. The student's leadership skills;
6. The student's socialization skills (and personal maturity);
7. Personal situations which may have impacted the Naperville North High School experience;
8. The student's character, integrity, and honesty.

What makes your letter effective

1. Honesty (do not overuse superlatives; admissions people do not like this);
2. Your own voice. A student's essay will provide the college or university with his or her voice, so be yourself when writing your letter of recommendation;
3. Details to your statements. Laundry lists are not impressive;
4. Good, clear insight in to the student's strengths and weaknesses;
5. Information that cannot be gleaned from a transcript or student resume;
6. Quote from Duke University Admissions representative: "A really great letter of recommendation tells us how a classroom or school is different because of the presence of this student."

Should a student see your recommendation?

1. NO: the college or university (especially highly-selective schools) may feel that recommendations to which a student has waived his or her right of access may be more honest and more accurate;
2. YES: at your discretion.

Either way, parents or students *do not have the right to review or "critique" your letter*. Additionally, letters of recommendation should not be given to or e-mailed to students. They can be copied or scanned and altered.

What if I cannot write the letter – or I do not want to write the letter?

Counselors need to be able to complete appraisals as requested, as some institutions of higher education require this. Teachers, on the other hand, should always be willing to help – but should communicate directly with the student if a deadline cannot be met ("I need the letter by tomorrow") or if the teacher does not feel he or she is the best person to write it.

What is the student's responsibility in this?

1. *He or she needs to ask you if you would be willing to write a letter of recommendation on his or her behalf – in person.*
2. He or she should provide you with an up-to-date resume or direct you to the completed Teacher Recommendation survey on Naviance;
3. He or she should provide you with a stamped envelope (already addressed) if recommendation is a paper application;
4. He or she should be clear about the due date;
5. He or she should be willing to be interviewed in order for you to gather any additional information.

Naperville North High School thanks you for your effort and time in giving our students the best possible chances of college admissions and scholarships!