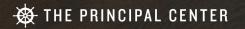
HOW TO CRAFT YOUR **"PERFECT FIT" COVER LETTER** TO GET MORE INTERVIEWS

WITH JUSTIN BAEDER, PhD





Our Focus

In this workshop, you'll discover how to make the strongest possible case that you deserve an interview by writing a strong, competition-crushing cover letter, so you get more interviews for your next-level instructional leadership role.

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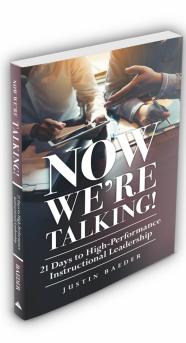
What We'll Explore

- Why improving your cover letter is the fastest way to improve your odds of landing an interview—even when you're up against internal candidates with more experience
- The specific revisions that make the biggest impact—which you can make in just a few minutes
- How to triangulate what you say in your cover letter with what your references are saying in their recommendation letters
- The specific structure every good letter follows, and how to make it flow even if you aren't a great writer
- How to use the Cover Letter Generator to draft or revise an evidence-based, fully customized cover letter





EDUCATION WEEK



AS FEATURED BY





ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS



The Cover Letter's Job

Your "perfect fit" argument



RACE TO THE FINISH LINE

TRAIN FOR INTERVIEW DAY

CRAFT YOUR APPLICATION ARGUMENT

RECRUIT YOUR REFERENCES

DISCOVER YOUR LEADERSHIP SUPERPOWERS ASCEND TRAIL MAP



ASCEND TRAIL MAP

Your Application Argument

- Cover letter
- Résumé
- Recommendation letters
- Other application requirements, e.g. questions

The Cover Letter's Job

The cover letter's job is to get you an interview:

- It's not a general philosophy of education
- It's not a rehashing of your résumé
- It's not a formality—it makes a huge difference
- It's an evidence-based persuasive essay

The Good News

- You did this kind of writing in high school and college
- You have plenty of evidence, if you know where to look
- Most people won't take this very seriously—especially wellqualified and well-connected candidates
- You can improve your chances without waiting to gain more experience—simply leverage what you have

Your Biggest Opportunity

You can't change the basic facts of your résumé in the short term:

- Your experience is "fixed"
- Your education is "fixed"

...but you can make dramatic changes to your cover letter—immediately.

Quick Wins in the Cover Letter

- Use the full page
- Remove unsupported claims
- Add evidence of accomplishments
- Interpret the evidence for the reader
- Actually make the case for yourself



Supporting Your Claims

Removing weak arguments that undermine your credibility



Credibility Killers

- Every unsupported claim in your résumé introduces doubt in the reader's mind
- The stronger the claim, the more evidence it demands
- The shorter the claim, the more poorly supported it is



The Strongest Claim

"I am the best assistant principal in the district."

- The claim of superiority is the strongest kind of claim
- As a result, it triggers the most skepticism in the reader's mind

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.

Awards As Evidence



Awards As Evidence

"I was honored to be chosen as the 2021 State Assistant Principal of the Year."

- Verifiable fact
- Independent—not a claim about yourself
- A direct claim of superiority

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Į.

Little Word, Big Claim

- Talented
- Collaborative
- Passionate
- Effective
- Organized
- Skilled
- Innovative

Adjectives & adverbs

are the weakest type of claim in your cover letter

The set of the

Little Word, Big Claim

- Talented
- Collaborative
- Passionate
- Effective
- Organized
- Skilled
- Innovative

Don't just claim that you have these qualities *demonstrate* them with evidence.

Skills Are Claims

- Instructional leadership
- Budget management
- Dealing with student discipline
- Professional development facilitation
- Conflict resolution
- Communication
- Technology
- Data-driven decision-making

Skills Are Claims

Avoid making unsupported claims that you have *skills* in particular areas. Instead, focus on beliefs or commitments.

Unchallengeable Claims

Two types of claims can bypass the reader's skepticism:

- Claims of *experience*, which are easily verified via the résumé
- Claims about your *beliefs, values, and commitments,* which are "taboo" to question, and easily backed by evidence

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Claims vs. Skepticism

Rely on:

- Claims with evidence
- Claims of experience
- Beliefs/values/ commitments

Avoid:

- Claims of superiority
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Skill claims



Principles of Psychology

Write with your reader in mind



The Primacy Effect

People pay the most attention to—and remember—what they read



The Primacy Effect

If the reader encounters unremarkable information *first*, they'll assume the rest is unremarkable—so lead with your strongest evidence.

The Recency Effect

- People remember the last thing they read almost as well as the first
- End on a strong note—recapping your argument for the reader

Cognitive Load

- Reading application materials is cognitively demanding
- The reader is often fatigued from reading so many applications
- Fatigued readers skim
- Fatigued readers do not make the right inferences

Cognitive Load—Implications

- Avoid confusing constructions
- Keep it straightforward and concise
- Connect the dots—spell out the implications of the evidence you provide
- Don't rely on the reader to make inferences



Triangulation

Making all your application assets support the same argument



The One-Page Problem





The Argument

"I deserve an interview."

- Not something you say directly, but demonstrate
- You need a stronger argument than you can fit into a one-page cover letter

How?

Mutually Supporting Evidence

Make the same evidence-based arguments for your candidacy in:

- Résumé
- Cover letter
- Recommendation letters
- Interview

RACE TO THE FINISH LINE

TRAIN FOR INTERVIEW DAY

CRAFT YOUR APPLICATION ARGUMENT

RECRUIT YOUR REFERENCES

DISCOVER YOUR LEADERSHIP SUPERPOWERS ASCEND TRAIL MAP

One Argument, Many Sources

- 1 recommendation letter → 1 paragraph in cover letter
- The more perspectives on the same issues, the better—strive to get 10+ good recommendation letters
- Ask for letters that speak to a specific issue or accomplishment

Spell It Out

- Assume the reader is not really paying attention, and just skimming
- Make your argument *explicitly*
- Make your argument *repeatedly*

Revisions

- Don't be afraid to ask for revisions to recommendation letters
- Explain the specific case you are trying to make
- Ask different references to speak to different issues



Basics & Overall Structure

Writing your cover letter as a 5-paragraph persuasive essay



5-Paragraph Essay Structure

- Intro
- Body
- Body
- Body
- Conclusion

Length

- Use the full page
- Don't waste space with a lengthy address block
- Reasonable margins —³/₄" to 1"
- Reasonable font size—11 to 12pt
- Never exceed one page
- Leave room for your real signature

How To Include Your Signature

- Write on paper with a nice pen
- Take a photo with your phone
- Use a filter to remove background
- Crop & resize to fit
- Place behind text







Header—Same As Résumé

Name & Highest Degree Mailing address (optional) Cell Phone | Email

What If I Don't Live Nearby?

- Omit mailing address
- Google Voice phone number forwarded to cell phone
- No need to include multiple phone numbers

Email Address

- In-district: use district email
- Other organizations: use personal email
- Avoid side business email addresses, e.g. SmithEducationConsulting@... JacksonCoLabradoodles@... ElectrixWeddingDJ@...

Separating Characters for Combining Lines

Recommended:

- | (shift+backslash)
- / (forward slash)
- (Insert \rightarrow Symbol)

110 W. Spring St. | Heber Springs, AR 72543 | justin@principalcenter.com | 501-222-4415

Avoid:

*

 \sim

Other punctuation

Recipient & Salutation

- Date (left- or right-aligned)
- No recipient address needed
- Identify recipient—individual or group
- Avoid "to whom it may concern" and "Dear Sir or Madam"

Dear Wayside High School Assistant Principal Hiring Committee, Dear Superintendent Gonzalez, Dear Ms. Johnson,

January 1, 2099



Cover Letter Generator

Overview & Instructions





Cover Letter Generator

- Drag-and-drop
- Multiple-choice
- Fill-in-the-blank



Edit	Fields	×	
	Document Fields	System Fields	
÷.	User First Name	Justin	
÷	User Last Name	Baeder	
÷	User Full Name	Justin Baeder	
÷	User Job Title	Principal	
÷	User School Name	Wayside Middle School	
÷	User District Name	Morningside School District	
÷	User Years in Education	17	
÷	User Years in Current Role	7	
÷	Main Office Phone Number	1-800-861-5172	
<u>+</u>	User Direct Office Phone Number	1-800-861-1755	
<u>+</u>	User Cell Phone Number	501-222-4415	
÷	School Mascot Plural	Wolverines	
÷	School Mascot Singular	Wolverine	
÷	School Motto	Excellence in Everything is the Wolverine Way!	

Step 1: Set System Fields

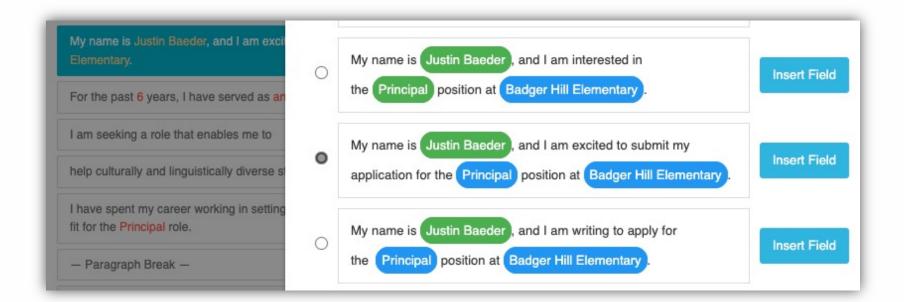
REPERT IRE CONTENT CREATOR

Add	Document Field		
Ŧ	Applying Role	Principal	茴
Ŧ	Applying School	Badger Hill Elementary	茴
Ŧ	Applying District	Morningstar School District	茴
Ŧ	Self-Characterized Role	instructional leader	茴
Ŧ	Self-Characterized Role Article	an	茴
Ŧ	Years Experience in Profession	17	茴
Ŧ	Years Experience in Role	6	茴
Ŧ	Current Role	Assistant Principal	茴
Ŧ	Current Role Article	an	茴
Ŧ	Student Term Singular	student	茴
Ŧ	Student Term Plural	students	靣

Step 2: Set Document Fields

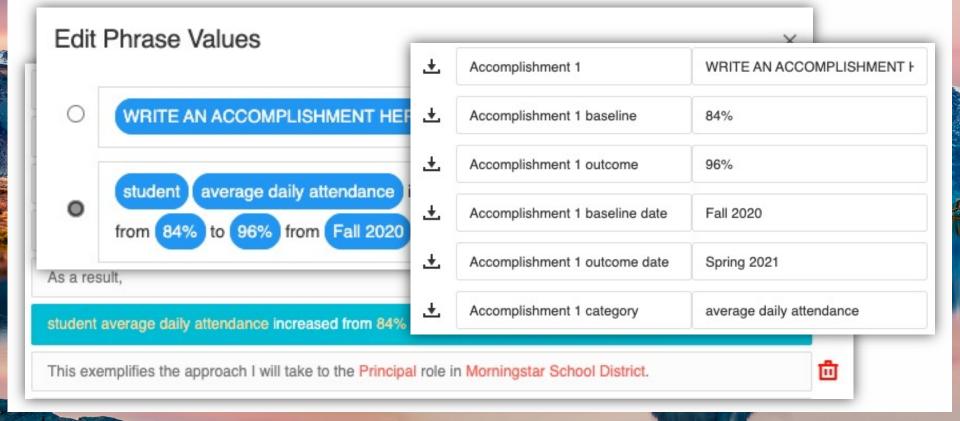
REPERT IRE CONTENT CREATOR

Step 3: Choose Phrase Options



REPERT IRE CONTENT CREATOR

Step 4: Customize Accomplishments



Step 5: Add Custom Phrases & Variations

I believe that all student	s dese	rve	Add Phrase +	Add ¶
	1000	Phrase Values		×
My name is Justin Baede Elementary.	0	I believe that all students deserve	Insert F	ield
I believe that For the past 6 years, I hav	0	I'm driven by the belief that all students deserve	Insert F	field

Step 6: Drag & Drop Phrases & Paragraph Breaks

For th	ne past 6 years, I have served as an Assistant Principal, and	茴
I am s	seeking a role that enables me to	Ū
help o	culturally and linguistically diverse students achieve at high levels.	Ū
	I have spent my career working in settings similar to Badger Hill Elementary, and believe I would the fit for the relation of the setting of	be an excellent
— Pa	ıragraph Break —	
Beca	use I hold a deep conviction that	匝
all <mark>stu</mark>	idents can learn at high levels when provided with the appropriate supports,	也
I am o	committed to keeping students on track in both academics and average daily attendance.	也
In my	position as an Assistant Principal, I have	也
	oped	បា

Step 7: Copy & Paste

— Paragraph Break —	1
Justin Baeder	1
ocument Output	Edit Fields 土 Copy to Clipboard 🖆
Elementary. For the past 6 years, I have s	ed to submit my application for the Principal position at Badger Hill erved as an Assistant Principal, and I am seeking a role that cally diverse students achieve at high levels. I have spent my
	er Hill Elementary, and believe I would be an excellent fit for

Section By Section

In this next section, I'll walk you paragraph by paragraph through the Perfect Fit Cover Letter™

Possible Paragraph Topics

- Student Focus
- Instructional Leadership Focus
- Organizational/Community
- Culture/Climate
- Turnaround/Transformation
- District Vision
- Data/Accountability
- Grants/Title/Compliance
- Specific operations issues
- Department-specific issues (central office)



The Intro Paragraph

Hook the reader with confidence



Intro Paragraph General Goals

- Express interest in the specific position
- Give a sense of who you are
- Give a sense of the type of experience you have
- Express confidence in fit
- Mention career changes, relocations, etc.
- Avoid making too many claims

Salutation

Greet the specific group or individual that will be reviewing application materials:

- Dear Wayside High School Assistant Principal Hiring Committee, ...
- Dear Dr. Benson, ...
- Dear Superintendent Gonzalez, ...

Avoid:

- To Whom It May Concern
- Dear Sir or Madam

Should I Address the Reason for My Search?

- FMLA leave—children, health, relative care
- Career change
- Finishing doctorate
- Geographic relocation
- Change of sector
- Change of employer

Framing Your Experience

State your experience at this level or in the profession:

- If you have more than 30 years of experience, you may want to focus on <u>experience at the current level</u>, to avoid ageism:
 - "I have served as a high school principal for the past 12 years..."
- If you have less than 3 years at the current level, you may want to focus on <u>total experience</u>:

"As an instructional leader with more than 7 years of experience in the profession..."

Explaining Other Issues

- Time away from the profession
- Stepping down to a lower-level role
- "Dunk Tank" situations that need to be explained

Common Mistakes—Intro Paragraph

- Not customizing for the district & role
- Not making a direct claim about fit
- Adding too many adjectives & adverbs
- Not giving a sense of who you are
- Not giving a sense of the type of experience you have

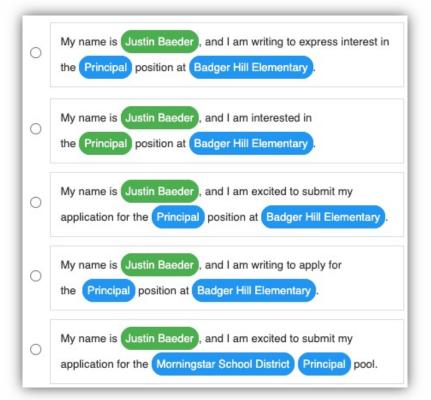
Intro Paragraph Table of Contents

- ID & Interest
- Experience Preamble
- Anticipation
- Impact Claim
- Fit Claim

Intro: ID & Interest

- State your name to anchor it in the reader's mind—Primacy Effect
- Explicitly express interest/enthusiasm
- Name the position/location to associate it with yourself in the reader's mind
- Note specific pool or role

Intro: ID & Interest Sample Phrases



Intro: Experience Preamble

- Position yourself as experienced (you are!)
- Make the claim of experience in passing
- Provide specific evidence—years
- Characterize yourself:

instructional leader, educator, lead learner, educational leader, senior leader, professional, aspiring principal, emerging leader, aspiring leader, seasoned leader, administrator, executive, teacher leader, veteran educator

Intro: Experience Preamble Sample Phrases

- As a seasoned leader with more than 17 years of experience in the profession,
- As an assistant principal for the past 2 years, and with more than 17 years of experience in the education profession,
- As an experienced instructional leader with more than 2 years of service as an assistant principal,
- With 2 years of experience as an assistant principal and more than 17 years as an educator,
- I have spent the past 2 years as an successful assistant principal, and
- I have served as an assistant principal for the past 2 years, and
- For the past 2 years, I have served as an assistant principal, and

Intro: Experience Preamble Sample Phrases

Self-Characterized Role	seasoned leader
Self-Characterized Role Article	a
Years Experience in Profession	17
Years Experience in Role	6
Current Role	Assistant Principal
Current Role Article	an

Intro: Anticipation

In 4+ words, you can convey:

- Excitement
- Readiness
- Momentum

...and cue up the impact claim you're about to make.

Intro: Anticipation Sample Phrases

- I am eager to
- I am excited to
- I am thrilled at the opportunity to
- I am ready to
- I am looking forward to the opportunity to
- I am ready for a new opportunity to
- I am excited at the prospect of working to
- I am looking forward to serving in a role where I can
- I am seeking a role that enables me to
- I am poised to
- I am prepared to

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Intro: Impact Claim

- Make a claim about the primary contribution you will make in the role
- Typically this impact is on student learning, but adjust as needed
- Positions you as a leader focused on certain priorities
- Can be customized to the school's needs
- Many to choose from
- Customize terminology to your local area
- Use the examples as inspiration

Intro: Impact Claim Sample Phrases

- close opportunity gaps for students in underserved groups
- help all students achieve at high levels
- make educational excellence the norm for all students
- help culturally and linguistically diverse students achieve at high levels
- help all students feel connected, cared for, and confident as learners
- have an impact on student learning
- improve teaching and learning
- have an impact on teacher practice and student learning
- have an impact on school culture, climate, and student learning
- · develop systems and processes that meet the needs of struggling students
- create memorable learning experiences that engage all students
- increase academic achievement and improve school culture and climate
- uphold the high standard of excellence [school] is known for
- help teachers and students achieve their full potential
- engage all staff in preparing students for college, careers, and citizenship
- lead a turnaround in teaching and learning
- create a supportive, welcoming environment that sets students up for success

Intro: Fit Claim

- Argue that you are a good fit for the role
- Explain why your experience is relevant



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Intro: Fit Claim

- I believe my skills and experience make me ideally suited for this role.
- I have the drive, commitment, and skills to make a dramatic impact on student learning in this role.
- I believe my values, skills, and work ethic make me an excellent fit for Wayside School District.
- I believe my professional experience has prepared me to be precisely the kind of seasoned leader you are looking for.
- I believe my professional background makes me an ideal fit for the Principal role.
- My track record as a 17-year veteran of the profession speaks to the contribution I am prepared to make to Wayside School District.
- Based on my research and the reputation of Wayside School District, I believe I would be an excellent fit for the Principal role at Badger Hill Elementary.
- I have spent my career working in settings similar to Badger Hill Elementary, and believe I would be an excellent fit for the Principal role.
- I have more than 17 years of experience working with similar student populations, and believe I would be an excellent fit for the Badger Hill Elementary community.
- As a veteran instructional leader, I believe I have the expertise and experience to have a sizeable impact as Principal at Badger Hill Elementary.

Intro Example 1

My name is Justin Baeder. Enclosed you will find my résumé for your consideration for the Principal position at Badger Hill Elementary. As an instructional leader with more than 17 years of experience in the profession, I am prepared to help culturally and linguistically diverse students achieve at high levels. I have more than 17 years of experience working with similar student populations, and believe I would be an excellent fit for the Badger Hill Elementary community.

Intro Example 2

My name is Justin Baeder, and I am excited to submit my application for the Principal position at Badger Hill Elementary. As an experienced instructional leader with more than 2 years of service as an assistant principal, I am prepared to have an impact on teacher practice and student learning. I have spent my career working in settings similar to Badger Hill Elementary, and believe I would be an excellent fit for the Principal role.

Intro Example 3

My name is Justin Baeder, and I am excited to submit my application for the Wayside School District Principal pool. I have served as an assistant principal for the past 2 years, and I am prepared to help teachers and students achieve their full potential. My track record as a 17-year veteran of the profession speaks to the contribution I am prepared to make to Wayside School District.



1st Body Paragraph

Student Focus



Body Paragraphs

- Typically 3, but not a strict rule
- All roughly equal in length
- Cluster related evidence together
- Internal structure of a body paragraph:
 - Soft claim about yourself, e.g. belief/commitment
 - Evidence supporting claim
 - Interpretation/impact
 - Recap of claim of fit

Body ¶1: Student Focus General Goals

- Recommended focus: students
- Give a sense of your beliefs & approach to students
- Provide evidence supporting your argument
- Share specific results whenever possible

Body ¶1: Student Focus How Will You Help Students?

- AP role—culture, climate, individual success, discipline, relationships
- Principal role—right to a high-quality education, relationships, climate
- Central office role—systems, right to a high-quality education, student learning as the bottom line

Body ¶1: Student Focus Common Mistakes

- Not talking about students
- Platitudes without specifics
- Experience without results
- Applying for the job you already have rather than the job you want

Body ¶1: Student Focus Belief Statement

- A belief statement gives the reader crucial information about who you are as a leader
- It does not demand as much evidence as a direct claim
- It explicitly puts your experience into a larger context—you're a person with convictions, not just skills and experience

Body ¶1: Student Focus Belief Statement

- Articulate a core belief about students
- Customize for age of students
- Customize for geographic setting

Body ¶1: Student Focus Belief Statement

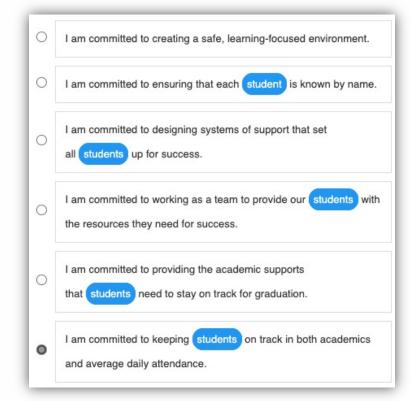
0	Driven by the belief that	- 1
0	As a leader committed to the belief that	
0	As an antiracist educator driven by the conviction that	
0	Working from the conviction that	
0	Motivated by my conviction that	
0	As an equity-focused leader who believes that	
0	Because I hold a deep conviction that	
0		

0	all students can learn,
0	schools should be welcoming, caring environments,
0	we must meet the needs of the whole student,
0	students must have their fundamental needs met in order to learn,
0	all students deserve to be supported in meeting high expectations,
0	students need us to work as a team to help them prepare for college, careers, and citizenship,
0	students learn best when their social-emotional needs are met,
0	all students can learn at high levels when provided with the

Body ¶1: Student Focus Commitment Claim

- State what you're committed to doing OR
- State the outcome you're committed to creating
- Keep the focus on students

Body ¶1: Student Focus Commitment Claim



Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment

- Cue up a recent example of your work
- Done within your current role
- Give a sense of upward trajectory

Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment

0	In my current role as an Assistant Principal, I have
0	As an Assistant Principal, I
0	I recently
0	While serving as an Assistant Principal, I
0	In my position as an Assistant Principal , I have

Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment Active Verb

- Position your involvement in terms of creation, design, leadership, etc.
- Be honest about your role in teamwork
- Give yourself enough credit

Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment Active Verb

- developed
- created
- obtained
- provided

- set up
 established
 - arranged

Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment Active Verb

- Identify what you led/built/designed
- Make it sound official—like a specific object, event, document, etc.
- This avoids weak wording such as "I worked on..." or "I tried to..."

Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment Active Verb

- a system
- a protocol
- a procedure
- a process
- a team
- a committee

- a partnership
- a grant
- an after-school program
- a multi-tiered system of support
- a curriculum

- a pilot project
- a summer program
- a professional development series
- a training for staff
- a staff training

Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment Impact

- Ensure that it's relevant to the job you're seeking, not just the job you have
- How did your accomplishment function to affect students?

Body ¶1: Student Focus Accomplishment Impact

- for monitoring student attendance
- for improving attendance
- to ensure that students stay on track academically
- to provide food and other resources to needy students
- to provide intervention and acceleration for students working below grade level
- to provide additional time for learning
- to ensure that all students receive rigorous, high-quality instruction
- to ensure that all students are reading on grade level
- to help students build the social-emotional skills they need to thrive
- to ensure that each student has a relationship with a caring adult who knows them by name
- to provide funding for professional development
- to provide funding for additional learning time
- to provide resources and materials for teachers
- to provide translation and interpretation services for families speaking other languages
- to ensure that no students fall through the cracks
- · to enlist a team in providing wraparound services for students

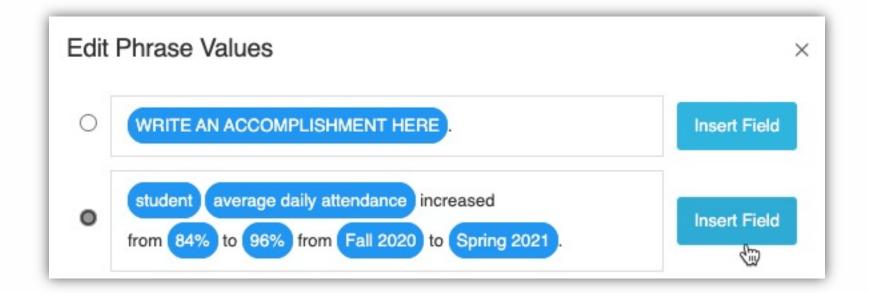


- Be as specific as you can
- Most compelling: before/after data
- Use assessments, discipline/attendance data, survey responses, etc.
- Include numbers if you can

Example Accomplishments:

- As a result, student attendance increased from XX to XX from 2018 to 2019.
- As a result, math scores increased from...
- As a result, office referrals decreased from...
- As a result, out-of-school suspensions decreased by...
- As a result, on-time graduation increased by...

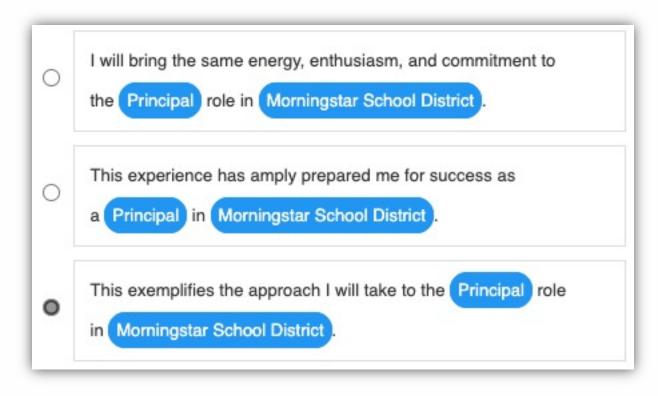
<u>+</u>	Accomplishment 1	WRITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT F
Ŧ	Accomplishment 1 baseline	84%
Ŧ	Accomplishment 1 outcome	96%
÷	Accomplishment 1 baseline date	Fall 2020
÷	Accomplishment 1 outcome date	Spring 2021
÷	Accomplishment 1 category	average daily attendance



Body ¶1: Student Focus Future Commitment

- Explicitly connect this accomplishment to the work you'll do in the new role
- Convey a sense of readiness, relevance, and trajectory.

Body ¶1: Student Focus Future Commitment



Body ¶1: Student Focus Teamwork Belief

- We don't really have a full paragraph to devote to collaboration, so this is a great place to mention it as a priority
- OK to cut for space if you have more evidence you can use

Body ¶1: Student Focus Teamwork Belief

0

0

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behalf of student success, nothing is impossible.

I believe that collaboration is crucial to our success, and I will bring

a collaborative skillset and mindset to the role.

My philosophy is that collaboration is essential to our success in

meeting students' needs.

One of my core beliefs is that collaboration and commitment are

essential for student success.

North Cold B

Body ¶1: Student Focus Example 1

Because I hold a deep conviction that students deserve an environment that both supports and challenges them, I am committed to providing the academic supports that students need to stay on track for graduation. In my current role as an assistant principal, I have formed a team to provide wraparound services for students. As a result, student attendance increased from 97.1% to 98.7% from 2018 to 2019. This experience has amply prepared me for success as Principal at Badger Hill Elementary. My philosophy is that collaboration is essential to our success in meeting students' needs.

A State State

Body ¶1: Student Focus Example 2

Because I hold a deep conviction that students must have their fundamental needs met in order to learn, I am committed to working as a team to provide our students with the resources they need for success . I recently established a committee to provide additional time for learning. As a result, our on-time graduation rate increased from 91% to 94% year-over-year. This experience has amply prepared me for success as Principal at Wayside High School. When we work as a team, I believe we can equip every student for success.

and the second

Body ¶1: Student Focus Example 3

As an equity-focused leader who believes that students deserve an environment that both supports and challenges them, I am committed to ensuring that each student is known by name. In my current role as an assistant principal, I have created a multi-tiered system of support to provide translation and interpretation services for families speaking other languages. As a result, office referrals decreased by 52% from 2018 to 2019. This experience has amply prepared me for success as Principal at Badger Hill Elementary. I believe that when leaders, teachers, and parents partner on behalf of student success, nothing is impossible.



2nd Body Paragraph

Instructional Leadership Focus



Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Goals

- Give a sense of your instructional leadership philosophy
- Convey how you'd work with the admin/leadership team
- Share specific accomplishments in improving teaching & learning
- Recap relevance to the job you're seeking

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Common Mistakes

- Making yourself just another member of the team
- Describing activities/committees without describing their impact on results
- Describing duties rather than specific accomplishments

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Instructional Leader Preamble

- Characterize yourself as a certain "kind" of leader (see "self-characterized role" field on Job Details tab)
- Blurs distinction between the role you have and the role you're seeking

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Instructional Leader Preamble

- As an instructional leader
- As a seasoned instructional leader
- As an emerging instructional leader
- As a teacher leader

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Belief Statement

- This is a soft but powerful claim about who you are as an instructional leader
- Conveys your approach as well as beliefs

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Belief Statement

- I believe that improving teaching and learning is my most important responsibility.
- I believe my responsibility is to stay attuned to what teachers and students need to succeed.
- I believe my most important responsibility is to foster continuous improvement in teacher practice.
- I believe the best way to improve student learning is to focus on teacher practice.
- I believe teacher professional growth is the single most important factor in student learning.
- I believe teacher professional growth is the most direct path to improved results for students.

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Collaboration Commitment

- Reassurance that you won't be a lone-ranger leader
- Commitment to partnership

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Collaboration Commitment

- I am committed to working alongside the school leadership team to
- I am committed to partnering with the leadership team to
- I am committed to collaborating with each staff member to
- I am committed to working with the school board to
- I am committed to working with the administrative team to
- I am committed to working closely with each principal to
- I am committed to partnering with district and state partners to

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Improvement Action

- General set of improvement efforts
- Focused on instructional leadership

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Improvement Action

- craft an agenda for improvement and provide the resources and opportunities teachers need to take their practice to the next level.
- support professional growth and have a greater impact on student learning.
- identify improvement priorities for each campus.
- identify the strengths and opportunities for improvement in every aspect of the school.
- help improve teacher practice, at both the individual and department levels.

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Accomplishment Example

- State a specific accomplishment
- Full sentence describing the overall project or effort

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Accomplishment Example

Format samples:

- For example, I recently partnered with our district ELL department to provide SIOP training to all teachers and instructional assistants.
- In my current role, I recently led a team exploring John Hattie's Visible Learning strategies.
- I recently worked with a teacher who was struggling with lesson planning and classroom management.
- One project that I'm particularly proud of is our decision matrix, which ensures that all staff have a voice in school decisions that affect them.

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Accomplishment Action

- Specifically describe what you did
- Briefly explain the process
- Use your own examples

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Accomplishment Action

Format samples:

- We conducted a needs assessment, developed a full-day training, and provided follow-up coaching support to each teacher.
- I led three pilot teachers through a coaching cycle in which they implemented the strategies, then provided a two-part training for all teachers.
- I met with the teacher to share my concerns, get his take on the challenges he was experiencing, and develop a plan of action.
- We gathered input from all staff and developed a transparent process for drafting and revising the new matrix.

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Accomplishment Impact

- Be as specific as you can
- Most compelling: before/after data
- Use assessments, changes in teacher practice, survey responses, etc.
- Include numbers if you can

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Accomplishment Impact

Format samples:

- As a result, the number of ELL students meeting standard in ELA increased by 23% from 2018 to 2019.
- I was pleased to see that teachers immediately incorporated the strategies they learned into their practice, with 54% reporting that they used the new strategies daily.
- By the end of our six-week improvement cycle, his lesson planning and classroom management showed a marked improvement, with students commenting on how much more enjoyable they found the class.
- Our updated matrix ensures that each decision gets input from the relevant stakeholders, and in a follow-up survey, 83% of staff reported that they have a voice in decisions that affect them.

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Relevance

- Directly explain how this accomplishment indicates your readiness for the new role
- Explicitly state that it's relevant

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Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Relevance

- This experience has prepared me well for the Principal role at Badger Hill Elementary, where I look forward to having an even greater impact as an instructional leader.
- These experiences have reinforced for me the importance of strong instructional leadership, which I am committed to exemplifying as I move into a new role.
- I am excited to bring this experience, and the instructional leadership skills I've developed along the way, into a new role.
- This experience is indicative of the kind of impact I will have as an instructional leader at Badger Hill Elementary.

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Example 1

As a seasoned instructional leader, I believe teacher professional growth is the most direct path to improved results for students. I am committed to partnering with district and state partners to identify improvement priorities for each campus. I recently worked with a teacher who was struggling with lesson planning and classroom management. I met with the teacher to share my concerns, get his take on the challenges he was experiencing, and develop a plan of action. By the end of our six-week improvement cycle, his lesson planning and classroom management showed a marked improvement, with students commenting on how much more enjoyable they found the class. These experiences have reinforced for me the importance of strong instructional leadership, which I am committed to exemplifying as I move into a new role.



Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Example 2

As a teacher leader, I believe the best way to improve student learning is to focus on teacher practice. I am committed to working with the administrative team to craft an agenda for improvement and provide the resources and opportunities teachers need to take their practice to the next level. One project that I'm particularly proud of is our decision matrix, which ensures that all staff have a voice in school decisions that affect them. We gathered input from all staff and developed a transparent process for drafting and revising the new matrix. Our updated matrix ensures that each decision gets input from the relevant stakeholders, and in a follow-up survey, 83% of staff reported that they have a voice in decisions that affect them. This experience has prepared me well for the Principal role at Badger Hill Elementary, where I look forward to having an even greater impact as an instructional leader.

Body ¶2: Instructional Leadership Example 3

As an emerging instructional leader, I believe that improving teaching and learning is my most important responsibility. I am committed to working with the school board to help improve teacher practice, at both the individual and department levels. For example, I recently partnered with our district ELL department to provide SIOP training to all teachers and instructional assistants. We conducted a needs assessment, developed a full-day training, and provided follow-up coaching support to each teacher. As a result, the number of ELL students meeting standard in ELA increased by 23% from 2018 to 2019. This experience has prepared me well for the Principal role at Badger Hill Elementary, where I look forward to having an even greater impact as an instructional leader.





3rd Body Paragraph

Organizational/Community Focus



Body ¶3: Organizational/Community General Goals

- Show your awareness of the relevant stakeholder groups
- Show your commitment to partnering with them on behalf of students

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Partnership Commitment

Express a believe in or commitment to parternships

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Partnership Commitment

- I am commited to
- I am deeply committed to
- Throughout my career, I have exemplified a commitment to
- Throughout my career as an instructional leader, I have exemplified a commitment to
- I believe in the power of bringing stakeholders together, and am committed to
- One of my core values is
- I believe that one of the most important ways we can create better outcomes for students is by

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Involvement

- Characterize your approach to partnership
- Convey related values
- Cue up the specific accomplishment you're about to share

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Involvement

- involving families and the broader community in our shared mission of meeting students' needs.
- ensuring that families have a seat at the table, so we can make the best decisions on behalf of students together.
- creating school-community partnerships that bring resources, ideas, and energy to our shared mission of serving students.
- securing grant funds to supplement the resources available within our community, so we can better meet students' needs.
- taking a strategic approach to grants and community partnerships, ensuring not just that funds are obtained, but that our goals and values are aligned.
- partnering with state and regional agencies to provide resources and services to better meet our students' needs.
- partnering with families on behalf of their children's education.
- bringing school, district, and community resources together to solve problems and create opportunities for our students.
- partnering with local businesses and community organizations to enhance the educational experience for our students.

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Accomplishment Preamble

Cue the reader that you're about to share a specific example of the commitment you just articulated

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Accomplishment Preamble

- For example, I recently
- One way I have lived out this commitment is
- I recently had the opportunity to
- One noteworthy partnership that has benefitted our students is
- I have strived to increase parent involvement by
- In my current position, for example, I
- One such partnership is

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Accomplishment Example

- Share a specific example
- Convey your role in the partnership—not as important that you were the sole driver

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Accomplishment Example

Format samples:

- writing and receiving a \$40,000 grant to establish a family resource center in partnership with our local United Way chapter.
- adding parents to our school leadership team, where they can share a valuable outside perspective and serve as liaisons for other parents.
- worked with our regional service center to provide a two-day PBIS training for staff from schools across the region.
- developing an internship program with area businesses, giving our 11th and 12th graders valuable work experience within the school day.

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Accomplishment Impact

- Describe the impact of your joint efforts
- Include numbers when possible—survey results, usage, funds, scores, etc.

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Accomplishment Impact

Format samples:

- It has been gratifying to see the impact this program has had on our students, with 68% of students reporting increased interest in working in their chosen field after graduation.
- Parents have used the resource center to secure housing, food assistance, and other basic needs for their families.
- Teachers reported a much deeper understanding of PBIS as a result of the training, and office referrals have decreased by 28%.
- Parent reps have helped us make decisions based on firsthand knowledge of student needs, and have helped enlist the support of other parents.

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Relevance

State how this accomplishment indicates how you'll approach the role you're seeking

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Relevance

- As a candidate for the Principal role at Badger Hill Elementary, I see tremendous opportunities to apply this experience and passion for developing partnerships.
- I look forward to continuing to develop such partnership on behalf of students.
- While building relationships and engaging stakeholders is time-consuming, long-term work, it pays unparalleled dividends for students, and I am committed to taking the same approach at Badger Hill Elementary.
- I will bring the same commitment and enthusiasm for forging partnerships to my work at Badger Hill Elementary.

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Example 1

Throughout my career as an instructional leader, I have exemplified a commitment to partnering with families on behalf of their children's education. One noteworthy partnership that has benefitted our students is developing an internship program with area businesses, giving our 11th and 12th graders valuable work experience within the school day. It has been gratifying to see the impact this program has had on our students, with 68% of students reporting increased interest in working in their chosen field after graduation. I will bring the same commitment and enthusiasm for forging partnerships to my work at Wayside High School.



Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Example 2

I believe in the power of bringing stakeholders together, and am committed to ensuring that families have a seat at the table, so we can make the best decisions on behalf of students together. In my current position, for example, I writing and receiving a \$40,000 grant to establish a family resource center in partnership with our local United Way chapter. Parents have used the resource center to secure housing, food assistance, and other basic needs for their families. As a candidate for the Principal role at Badger Hill Elementary, I see tremendous opportunities to apply this experience and passion for developing partnerships.

Body ¶3: Organizational/Community Example 3

Throughout my career as an instructional leader, I have exemplified a commitment to bringing school, district, and community resources together to solve problems and create opportunities for our students. I recently worked with our regional service center to provide a two-day PBIS training for staff from schools across the region. Teachers reported a much deeper understanding of PBIS as a result of the training, and office referrals have decreased by 28%. I look forward to continuing to develop such partnership on behalf of students.





Conclusion Paragraph

Your closing argument



Closing ¶: Conclusion **General Goals**

- Express a commitment to a core belief about students
- Recap your closing argument that you are the right fit for the job
- Ask for the interview
- Thank the reader

Closing ¶: Conclusion Common Mistakes

- Expressing hesitation
- Expressing overconfidence
- Failing to ask for the interview

Closing ¶: Conclusion Student Belief Preamble

Re-anchor your argument in a belief about students

Closing ¶: Conclusion Student Belief Preamble

- I believe every student deserves
- I am committed to ensuring that every student receives the opportunity
- I have dedicated my career to ensuring that each student gets
- I am committed to ensuring that every student has a chance
- I see it as my responsibility to provide every student with the tools and supports they need

Closing ¶: Conclusion Students Deserve

State a specific, non-controversial benefit that students deserve and that aligns with the evidence that you've presented about your leadership.

Closing ¶: Conclusion Students Deserve

- to be known and cared for by teachers and staff who work together to create a welcoming, supportive environment.
- to experience school as a safe, inviting place where they can discover their talents, interests, and identity.
- to experience a rigorous curriculum that will prepare them for college, careers, and citizenship.
- to learn in a school dedicated to continuous improvement, from teachers dedicated to perfecting their craft.
- to explore and develop their interests and talents.
- to learn in a safe, supportive environment that fosters relationships that will last a lifetime.
- to receive the supports they need to learn at high levels, no matter what challenges they face.
- to learn from caring teachers who are dedicated to building relationships and creating memorable learning experiences.
- to develop a love of learning and gain the skills they will need for success in life.

NAME OF

Closing ¶: Conclusion Summary Claim

- Directly claim that you are highly qualified
- Avoid claiming that you are the very best, but come close

Closing ¶: Conclusion **Summary Claim**

- I believe I have the skills and experience it will take to bring Badger Hill Elementary to new heights of excellence.
- I am confident that I possess the experience, leadership qualities, and skills it will take to succeed as Principal at Badger Hill Elementary.
- While there are no doubt many gualified candidates for this role, I believe my unique combination of leadership qualities and experience make me an excellent fit for the Principal position at Badger Hill Elementary.
- My entire professional career has served to prepare me for this role, and I am ready to make a lasting contribution to learning at Badger Hill Elementary.
- I am ready bring my experience and passion for leadership to Badger Hill Elementary and hit the ground running from day one.
- I believe my skills and experience make me the ideal candidate for this role.
- I believe my background and leadership qualities make me the perfect fit for this position.

Closing ¶: Conclusion Résumé & References

Refer the reader to your résumé and recommendation letters for further corroborating evidence in support of your claim.

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Closing ¶: Conclusion Résumé & References

- As you review my résumé and letters of recommendation, I trust you will find ample evidence of my readiness to succeed in this role.
- As you review the enclosed résumé and recommendation letters, I trust you will discern a portrait of a leader who is prepared to succeed.
- As you review the enclosed résumé and recommendation letters, you will see further examples of the work I've done over the past 17 years.
- As my résumé and letters of recommendation will demonstrate, I have the skills it will take to be highly successful in this role.

Closing ¶: Conclusion Ask for the Interview

- Express optimism that you will be invited for an interview
- Avoid presumptuousness

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Closing ¶: Conclusion Ask for the Interview

- I would appreciate the opportunity to interview for this position, and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.
- I hope to have the opportunity to interview for this position and give the hiring committee further perspective on who I am as a leader and how I might be of service.
- I look forward to the possibility of an interview.
- I look forward to having a chance to speak with you further about the position in an interview.

Closing ¶: Conclusion Final Thanks

Thank the reader, and sign off.

Closing ¶: Conclusion Final Thanks

- Thank you for your consideration.
- Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.
- Thank you for your time and consideration.

Closing ¶: Conclusion Signature

Sincerely,

Justin Baeder, PhD

I have dedicated my career to ensuring that each student gets to develop a love of learning and gain the skills they will need for success in life. I am ready bring my experience and passion for leadership to Badger Hill Elementary and hit the ground running from day one. As you review the enclosed résumé and recommendation letters, I trust you will discern a portrait of a leader who is prepared to succeed. I look forward to having a chance to speak with you further about the position in an interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, lustin Baeder

C. M. Contraction

Conclusion Example 2

I have dedicated my career to ensuring that each student gets to be known and cared for by teachers and staff who work together to create a welcoming, supportive environment. I believe I have the skills and experience it will take to bring Badger Hill Elementary to new heights of excellence. As my résumé and letters of recommendation will demonstrate, I have the skills it will take to be highly successful in this role. I would appreciate the opportunity to interview for this position, and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Baeder

State of the

Conclusion Example 3

I am committed to ensuring that every student receives the opportunity to experience a rigorous curriculum that will prepare them for college, careers, and citizenship. I believe my skills and experience make me the ideal candidate for this role. As you review the enclosed résumé and recommendation letters, you will see further examples of the work I've done over the past 17 years. I look forward to having a chance to speak with you further about the position in an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Baeder

What About Other Paragraph Topics?

- Student Focus
- Instructional Leadership Focus
- Organizational/Community
- Culture/Climate
- Turnaround/Transformation
- District Vision
- Data/Accountability
- Grants/Title/Compliance
- Specific operations issues
- Department-specific issues (central office)



The Output

Exporting Your Cover Letter



Step 7: Copy & Paste

— Paragraph Break —	1
Justin Baeder	1
ocument Output	Edit Fields 土 Copy to Clipboard 🖆
Elementary. For the past 6 years, I have s	ed to submit my application for the Principal position at Badger Hill erved as an Assistant Principal, and I am seeking a role that cally diverse students achieve at high levels. I have spent my
	er Hill Elementary, and believe I would be an excellent fit for

Step 7: Copy & Paste

- Copy to clipboard
- Use your favorite word processor / template
- Paste as unformatted text
- Add signature
- Revise
- Fit to one page

Working With What You Have

- Start from scratch with the generator, or...
- Work the output into your existing cover letter
- Add more evidence if you can
- Edit down to one page

What Should I Cut?

- The more you cut, other than evidence, the stronger your letter becomes
- When in doubt, cut the more general language, and keep the more specific
- Shift the emphasis to evidence



Revision

How to know when you're done



Revise, Revise, Revise

- Your first draft is likely a liability
- Your 2nd-3rd drafts are likely on par with other candidates'
- Competitive advantage: 4th draft & beyond
- Starting with the Cover Letter Generator is like starting with a 3rd draft

Revising for Each Role

- Do your research on the organization
- Know the demographics
- Be aware of district-specific acronyms & terminology
- Speak to the demands of the job you want, not the job you have

Quick Updates for Different Applications

Edit Fie	elds		×
	Document Fields	System Fields	
Add Do	cument Field		
<u>+</u>	Applying Role	Principal	<u>ٿ</u>
<u>.</u>	Applying School	Badger Hill Elementary	D
Ŧ	Applying District	Morningstar School District	Û
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<u>+</u>	Years Experience in Profession	17	D
Ŧ	Years Experience in Role	6	D
<u>+</u>	Current Role	Assistant Principal	D
<u>+</u>	Current Role Article	an	Û

- Edit Document Fields
- Make sure pronouns match
- All versions of built-in phrases will update automatically
- Grammar will be correct



More Interviews

Getting your cover letter to do its job



The 20% Rule

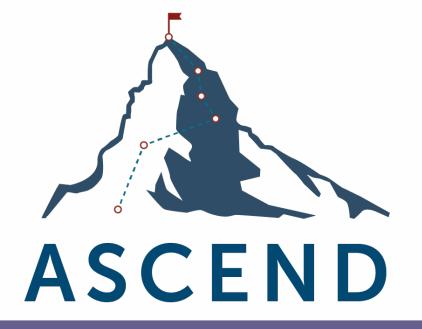
- Some people get the first job; most do not
- A good success rate is 20% at each stage
- Apply for enough jobs to get 1-2 offers

25 applications : 5 interviews : 1 offer

Making Time

- Time is the biggest constraint
- Save all of your application responses in your Ascend Trail Map Tracker Board
- Use the generator to update your letter for each new job

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References	Application Assets	District Watchlist		Postings To Apply For	
Current Supervisor	Experience Matrix Résumé	Anytown ISD		Anytown HS AP	
Past Supervisor	Cover Letter	+ Add a card	9	Once you've created a card for a posting, you can drag it into another column as you proceed through the application process>	
Supervisor's Peer	Recommendation Letters	Dean We	NE SI		
Current Peer	Certifications/Transcripts			+ Add a card	
Past Peer	+ Add a card				E.
Graduate School Faculty					and mindles
Former Student					PAGE N
Student's Parent				Julife a	comments.
+ Add a card			-		



JOB SEARCH STARTER PACK

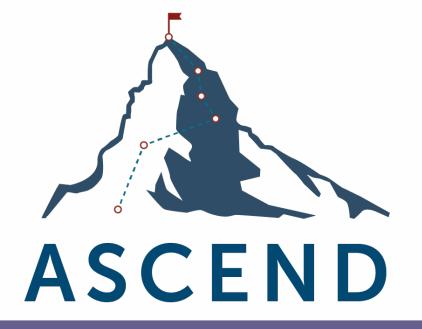
PrincipalCenter.com/search



Cover Letter Generator

- Drag-and-drop
- Multiple-choice
- Fill-in-the-blank





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PrincipalCenter.com/search

Thank You!

justin@principalcenter.com