

## Letters of Recommendation

The following are important guidelines for you to consider when requesting a letter of recommendation:

- Plan ahead to meet your deadlines. ALLOW AT LEAST 2 WEEKS for the completion of the letter. The person you are asking probably has other letters to write ahead of yours. Remember that writing recommendations is a difficult, time-consuming task.
- It is generally not helpful to submit letters of recommendation that are not requested by the college.
- Review the guidelines that each college requires for its letters of recommendation and pass that along to your teachers. Colleges may have special instructions.
- Ask for recommendations from people who know you well and who can write a positive letter.
- Make requests in person. DO NOT drop requests or forms in the teacher/counselor mailbox and assume the letter will be written.
- Give the teacher any special forms the college or your high school may have for recommendations.
- Completing the "Letter of Recommendation Profile" in Naviance will make your profile available to all MV teachers. By completing the profile, you will help your teacher/counselor write your letter of recommendation. It is important that you are descriptive. The best letters of recommendation include examples, anecdotes and illustrations of the qualities the writer is describing. This is located in the My Planner" tab under "tasks assigned to me". This is a long document but you do not need to complete every box, these are prompts.
- Go to "my resume" in Naviance and list all activities, recognition, community service or jobs held (both in and out of school), positions you've held, how many hours a week, how you have participated and when. Again, this will be available to your teacher in your Naviance file.
- It would also be wise to go to "my journal" and attach your college essay. Check the "teacher" and "counselor" boxes so that they will be able to read the document.
- Complete these items before asking for the recommendation. Your thoroughness before hand will indicate your seriousness in seeking a good letter and respect for the writer and their time.
- Teachers are not obligated to write letters of recommendation. Remember you are asking for their support and effort (it takes quite a bit of time to craft a complete letter.)
- The author of a letter of recommendation owns the right to how it will be used. Often students make the mistake of assuming because a letter has been written for college admissions that they can have it sent for scholarships. You must ask the author for permission for the letter to be used for other purposes. It is in your interest to have them "tweak" the letter for a particular scholarship rather than reusing an admissions letter.
- Finally, write a "Thank You" note to the person who has supported you with a letter.