Cover Letter Tips for Teachers

AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY
STROMMEN CENTER FOR MEANINGFUL WORK

A cover letter is a great opportunity to send a personal message to a potential school district. It should complement your resume by providing detailed information with a personal touch and generate interest in the reviewer to look more closely at your resume and get them to call you in for an interview. This is often the first contact you have with an employer and it's your chance to make a great first impression.

Tips for Writing a Cover Letter

- Never re-use a cover letter. Make sure each one is tailored to the specific position and school you are applying. If you are applying to multiple positions simultaneously within a district, tailor it to the district or school.
- Use educational language, it is important to show your knowledge of the industry by including that in your letter.
- The cover letter should be geared towards how you and your experience fit with the role and connecting that to how it would benefit the school/district. Keep that in mind with how you frame your experiences. The resume is your chance to talk about **you** and what you have done! Keep it clear and concise. Your cover letter should only be about three paragraphs long.

Heading

- Stay consistent with the style of your resume. Use the same font and include the same header (name and contact information) as you use on your resume and your separate list of references.
- Address it to a specific person. Find out who will be doing the interviews or making the final hiring decision. You can do a little research online to find out the name and contact information of the person or you can call the human resources department and ask. Addressing your letter to a person shows that you put in a little extra effort and that you're serious about the job. Avoid using "To whom it may concern," or "Dear Hiring Manager" if possible.

Paragraph 1-Basic Essential Information

- The first paragraph is an introduction of why you're writing, the specific name of the position, and how you learned about the position. This is also where you can quickly mention a networking contact if you have one, just make sure you ask for permission before you reference someone in a cover letter.
- Also in that first paragraph quickly connect your interest in the position to the specific school or district. Focus on why that school or district is a place in which you would like work and **why you are qualified**. It helps to do some research and show that you know about the school district and why you are excited to work for them.

    Examples of this could be a connection to their mission, values, initiatives, curriculum, or awards and how that impacts your interest in the school/district, as well as your work.

Paragraph 2- Tell your unique story

The second paragraph is where you elaborate on why you are a good fit for the position.

- **Keep in mind that many first year teachers will have very similar coursework, student teaching, and field experiences, so make sure your unique experiences and interests shine through and set you apart.**
- Coordinate the letter with your resume experiences. Match your experiences as best you can to what they are looking for.
- Make sure to be specific about your teaching experience! Try to differentiate your experiences and what sets you apart as a potential candidate. Focus on unique skills, education, and experiences.
- Highlight your Augsburg education and your student teaching/field experience as well as any other education related work experience to set yourself apart from other candidates.
    Potential areas of focus could be classroom management, curriculum development, learning strategies and development.
- Focus on the key qualities and skills that are listed in the job description, how you fulfill them, and how they can impact the employer.
    Make sure you use the same language the employer uses (examples: Special populations, mentoring, testing/assessment, classroom management strategies, methods of scaffolding, specialized curriculum, methods and programs.
- Connect to areas you could contribute (clubs, programs, lesson planning, unique curriculum).
- **Get to the heart of why you love the subject, the students, and teaching**.

Closing- Bring it full circle

- Wrap it all up in the third paragraph. Reiterate your interest in the position/school/district and why you are a good fit. Direct them to your resume and any other supplemental materials they have asked to be included. Always thank them for their time and that you look forward to hearing from them about an interview in order to tell them a little bit more about yourself and your interest. Don't say that you will be calling to set up an interview.

- Have someone look it over and see if it tells the story of what makes you unique, qualified, and reflects your love of teaching! Make sure there are no spelling errors and you have used perfect grammar!

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Copy your resume heading (name, phone, email, LinkedIn address)
Same format and style as your resume heading and reference sheet heading

Date

Hiring Manager Name
Title
School
School Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Doe,

FIRST PARAGRAPH: Tell why you are writing, name the position for which you are applying and tell how you heard of the opening. Quickly state why you are interested in the position.

SECOND PARAGRAPH: Mention that you are about ready to graduate or have graduated and include your degree and major. State why you are interested in working for this employer/school/district and be sure to show your love of teaching and of the specific subject. Then, point to particular achievements you have accomplished in this field whether that is from student teaching or related teaching experiences. Remember to set yourself apart as other candidates will have similar experience. Use specific examples to paint a picture of your teaching style, achievements, and interest, and show how you could incorporate those into this position.

THIRD PARAGRAPH: Reiterate your interest in the role and why you would be the best candidate. Refer to the enclosed resume or credentials which give a summary of your qualifications or to whatever examples (lesson plans, transcripts, certifications) you are using to further illustrate your qualifications. Thank them for their time in reviewing your application materials and consideration as a candidate as well as how to reach you for an interview and or for questions.

Sincerely,

Your Name (Typed)