

**ASCEND**

**((●)) LIVE**



June 6, 2021

**Writing Strong Bullets**



# Our Essential Question



How can I write the strongest possible bullets to describe my accomplishments in my résumé?



# How Bullets Help



- Bullets make your résumé easier to skim
- They allow you to organize related information in a way that's easy for the reader to grasp
- They force you to eliminate all but the strongest evidence from your résumé



# Where Bullets Belong



- Use bullets to describe your accomplishments under each role in the “Professional Experience” section of your résumé
- Do *not* use bullets in your cover letter
- Do not use bullets in a “candidate profile” section, where they become unsupported claims



# Where Bullets Belong



## **Professional Experience**

### **Assistant Principal**

*Needlesville High School*

*2013-Present*

- Worked closely with principal on staff evaluations, professional development agenda, and school improvement goal-setting
- Led transition to accelerated block schedule, increasing instructional time by 22% for core subjects
- Created RtI handbook and trained all teachers on Tier I & Tier II interventions, resulting in a 33% reduction in referrals to special education evaluation team
- Secured \$72,000 grant for after-school tutoring for students at risk of academic failure, increasing 9th grade course completion rate by 37%

*Pinsburg Middle School*

*2011-2013*

- Led the transition to "houses" to provide more personalized support for students, including literacy and math/science blocks
- As assistant principal responsible for discipline, worked with parents and teachers to reduce classroom referrals from an average of 4.9 per day in 2011-2012 to 2.1 per day in 2012-2013
- Implemented professional growth plan system for teacher evaluations

### **8th Grade Social Studies Teacher**

*Pinsburg Middle School*

*2006-2011*

- Worked closely with department and grade-level team to develop common assessments and positive behavioral supports
- Served as department head, representing school on district social studies curriculum adoption committee



# More on Résumé Organization: [PrincipalCenter.com/application](http://PrincipalCenter.com/application)



## THE RÉSUMÉ BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

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# *Help* The Reader Skim, But Don't *Make* The Reader Skim



- The reader is in a hurry—looking not for key words, but for good evidence about your qualifications
- The reader **WILL** skim, so use your bullets to help them notice the best evidence
- Lists that are too *long*, or bullets that are too *short*, will make skimming worse



# Cognitive Engagement



- Bullets will help you catch the reader's attention with relevant, compelling details about your professional experience
- Bullets that are too *short* aren't engaging
- Bullets that are too long are overwhelming
- Lists that are too long are overwhelming



# The Keyword Myth



Human readers are NOT like computers—  
stuffing your résumé with keywords will  
make it *less* credible, not more likely to get in  
the “yes” pile.



# Lists That Are Too Long



- Instructional leadership
- Budgeting
- Discipline
- Attendance
- Professional development
- Microsoft Office
- PowerSchool
- Smore
- Special education
- Community relations
- Fundraising
- Strategic planning
- College & career readiness



Lists That Are Too Long



# Claims Without Evidence



# What's Worse Than Nothing? An Unsupported Claim



- The shorter the bullet, the less evidence it contains
- One- or two-word bullets flip from being *evidence* to being *unsupported claims*
- If you can't support a claim, it's better to leave it out



# 7 Items or Fewer



- The purpose of bullets is to break up large blocks of text
- Lists with 8 or more items start to look like a large block
- People simply do NOT read excessively long lists
- Use fewer, longer bullets—no more than 7 per section



# Accomplishments, Not Duties



## Duty:

“Observed & evaluated teachers using Danielson Framework”

## Accomplishment:

“Provided direct support for five new teachers through six-week instructional coaching cycles, resulting in proficient ratings for four teachers and an intensive improvement plan for one teacher.”





# Past Tense, Complete Sentences

Before:

“Handle student discipline and attendance”  
(duty, too short, present tense)

After:

“Implemented a new behavior matrix, reducing office referrals by 42% compared to previous year. Developed attendance plans for students with chronic absenteeism, resulting in a 28% reduction in cases referred to truancy court.”



# Too Detailed & Dense



“Conducted a detailed staff and student survey, analyzing data to identify areas for improvement. Inconsistent application of consequences was cited as a concern. Met with a committee of staff as well as student council to develop a new behavior matrix. Implemented this matrix over the course of the next school year, reducing office referrals by 42% compared to previous year. Students and staff reported increased satisfaction with how discipline issues were handled, according to follow-up surveys conducted via SurveyMonkey in April.”



# Combine Related Accomplishments



Before:

- Conducted staff climate survey
- Led professional development on effective collaboration
- Implemented common planning time for grade-level teams

After:

- Developed a culture of collaboration by conducting staff climate survey, providing professional development on effective collaboration, and implementing common planning time for grade-level teams.



# Overall Length



- Including detailed “accomplishment” bullets *will* make your résumé longer
- That’s OK—the “1 page” rule is a myth
- 10+ years of experience = 2-3 pages
- Your résumé can’t be too long, but it can be too boring
- Provide less detail for older, less related positions



# The Bottom Line: Evidence

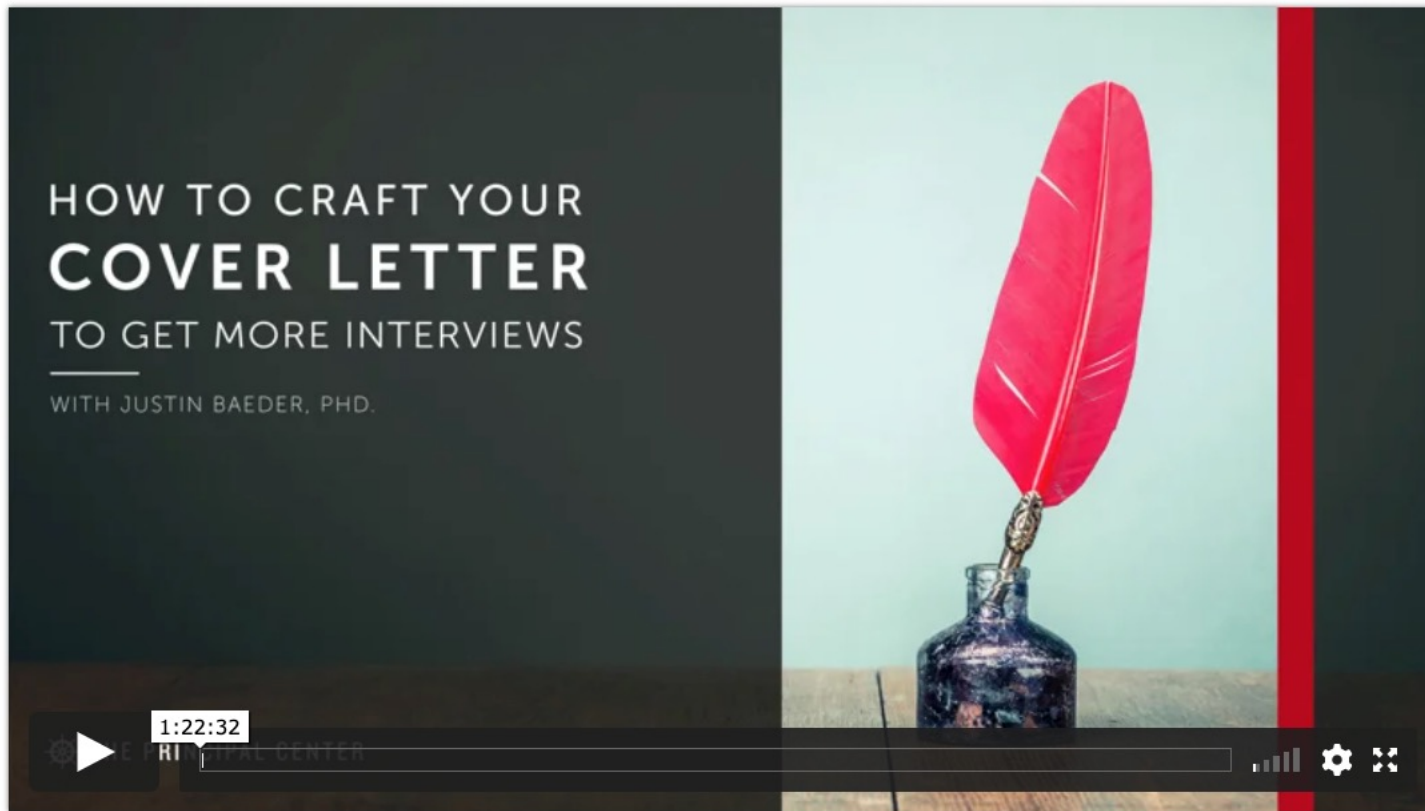


- Your résumé's job is to provide specific evidence about the claims made in your cover letter
- Strike a balance between detail and skimmability
- Don't neglect the cover letter!



# Cover Letter Spreadsheet + Training

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