

Academic & College Guidance Overview

Gretchen Nordleaf-Nelson

Who I Work With

I work with middle and high school students navigating rigorous academic pathways and college planning, as well as with their families. This includes students in IB, honors, AP, independent, and project-based programs.

Do You Only Work With IB Students?

No. While my professional background is deeply rooted in the International Baccalaureate, the skills I emphasize—critical thinking, writing, reflection, and planning—are transferable across academic pathways. Many non-IB families seek an IB-informed approach because of its emphasis on depth, integrity, and student voice.

My Approach

My work is educational and relational rather than transactional. I prioritize fit over prestige, process over shortcuts, and student voice over templates. Well-being and sustainability are central to long-term success.

College Essay Support

I provide essay coaching and writing support, including brainstorming, structure, clarity, and revision guidance. I do not write or rewrite student work. All guidance is designed to preserve authenticity and integrity.

Working With Families

Parents and caregivers are valued partners. While my primary work is with the student, I maintain clear communication with families and aim to provide reassurance, context, and transparency throughout the process.

Ethics & Outcomes

I do not guarantee college admissions outcomes. My role is to support preparation, clarity, and informed decision-making, helping students identify environments where they are likely to thrive.

Getting Started

Families are invited to begin with an introductory conversation to explore goals, timing, and fit. Support may be short-term or ongoing, depending on student needs.

You can contact me to begin the conversation at nordleaf@gmail.com