2019 Polk Education Foundation Frequently Asked Scholarship Questions

1. **What information do I need to start my Polk Education Foundation Scholarship Application?**
   To begin the application process, you need your Polk County school ID number (5300 prefix with your 6-digit number), and your birthdate (mm/dd/yyyy).
   Your personal information will automatically upload from your permanent school record. For example:

   i. Name
   ii. Address
   iii. GPA
   iv. SAT & or ACT test scores (if available)
   v. Community service hours (All hours must be turned in at your school and entered in the district's student records <u>before</u> you apply. If you see the number of hours is incorrect, SAVE the application, do not SUBMIT it, and ask your counselor when the hours update will be complete so you can go back and finish your application. Do not wait till the last minute to submit hours!)
   Graduation verification (Passage of Algebra 1 EOC and FSA Reading or concordant scores below.)
   For the Algebra 1 EOC, seniors could earn a concordant score of:
   PERT Math 97
   ACT Math 16
   SAT Math 420
   PSAT Math 430

   For the FSA Reading, seniors could earn a concordant score of:
   ACT Reading 19
   SAT Reading 430 (not PERT)
   SAT Reading subtest 24
   ACT English and Reading subtests 18
   SAT Evidence-Based Reading & Writing 480

2. **Why can I see the application but can't enter anything in?**
   It is because you hit the PREVIEW button and that is all you can do there, look over the application pages. Students have to click BEGIN to start an application to be able to enter anything. That button is found at the very bottom of the directions.

3. **What do I do if I cannot remember my password?**
   When you access the initial application screen, you will set up your password. **Write down the password for safekeeping and use later!** At that same time you are asked to give a question and it's answer, so that if you forget your password, by using your question and the correct answer, you can have your password emailed to you, at the email you note, by using the "Click Here if you have forgotten your password" button on the log in screen.

4. **Can I list more than one college/university/career school on my application if I am undecided?**
   Yes, you may list as many schools on your application as will fit in the cell. If you need more room, explain why you have so many school options in your essay.
   Please note: if you are chosen to receive a scholarship to a particular school, and you do not attend that school, you will not receive that scholarship.

5. **Can I list more than one intended major?**
   Yes, you may list more than one major in the space given, if you run out of room please address in your essay.
   Please note: if you are applying for a scholarship for a particular major, and you list more than one major, your chances of receiving the scholarship may be reduced. Also, if you do not pursue the required major and have been the award recipient, you will become ineligible.

6. **Can I add more community service hours or change test scores after I START my application?**
   <u>You</u> cannot change the information that has been uploaded from your permanent record (GPA, test scores, community service hours) which appears on the application automatically when you enter your student ID number (you can update your address and phone number). However, if between the time you begin your application and *<u>before your final submission</u>*, any of those pieces of information have been updated in your permanent school record by your school counselor, the application will pull in the updated information. Each time you login to your application, the computer program will get the updated information.

7. **Can I add more community service hours or change test scores after I SUBMIT my application by calling your office or handwriting them on the hard copy application?**
No

8. **Can I save my application without finishing everything and work on it later?**
Yes! However all questions on the page you are working on should be complete or it will not let you save that particular page, all pages complete prior to that page would save.

9. **What if I only live with one parent; or I live with grandparents or some other guardian?**
If you live with only one parent and they claim you as a dependent, their income verification would be included in your SAR (Student Aid Report, obtained by completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).   To be totally clear about your living situation and who supports you, you may want to address this in your essay so those reviewing applications have all the information they need to make a decision.

10. **What forms of income verification will you accept?**
Only a finalized SAR (Student Aid Report, obtained by completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is accepted. A completed SAR will show the EFC (Estimated Family Contribution). FAFSA application copies, FAFSA receipts etc, are NOT acceptable, a finalized SAR is required.

11. **What can I do if I have not yet applied thru FAFSA?**
Go to fafsa.ed.gov to apply now! Depending on how far away the scholarship application deadline is, you may be able to get a SAR report returned to you in time to apply (It is all done electronically.) It can take days or sometimes weeks to be processed depending on how many are applying at the same time. The PEF started advertising this requirement right before the FAFSA opening in October 2018. Since that time we have communicated regularly with school counselors, had the information posted on our scholarship page, posted information multiple times on social media and used the School Messenger system to send two phone messages to parents of seniors. Hopefully after all that, this requirement is not a surprise!

12. **If the scholarship I want to apply for is not need based, do I have to submit a SAR?**
Yes, because many of our scholarships are need based, this ensures we have all information needed for the majority of donors. And by using information from a SAR, a

donor can tell if the student is getting any federal aid, if they are not, seeing that could sway a donor to make an award to help someone they know will not have other financial assistance.

13. **What if I don't know if I am a Bright Futures Florida Academic Scholar, Florida Medallion Scholar or Gold Seal Vocational Scholar?**
You should check with your Guidance Counselor for more information about the Florida Bright Futures Program and eligibility requirements. <u>You cannot be more than one of the three</u> and you / they should be able to tell what you are in line to receive by reading the Bright Futures requirements.

14. **Why don't I see all the scholarships from the master list when I am working on my application?**
The application uses a computer program that screens criteria for each scholarship. The program may screen for the school you attend, your GPA, your test scores
(if you have taken the SAT and/or ACT) and community service hours. If you do not see a scholarship on your list, please check the criteria for that scholarship and make sure you *are eligible*, as the program may have "screened" you out due to not meeting all the requirements.

15. **How will I know my online application has been accepted?**
You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application.

16. **Why do I have to print a copy of my application when submitted it online?**
<u>You will be prompted to print a copy of the completed application immediately following final submission of the application</u>. You will then be required to attach your finalized SAR (Student Aid Report), sign the application (along with your parent if you are not 18) and submit it to your Guidance Counselor by a date selected at your school. Live signatures are required to give permission to share application information with those other than PEF staff. This "application package" will be delivered to the Polk Education Foundation for further processing. The "application package" will be kept on file at the Polk Education Foundation until all scholarship awards have been made. **If a hard copy application package is not submitted, your online application is never reviewed.**

17. **What is the date is my application package due to my high school counselor?**
Please check with your counselor, as they set that due date and it will vary from school to school.

18. **Can I send or deliver my application pack to your office myself?**
No, please follow directions and submit to your school's scholarship contact.

19. **How will I be notified if I am a scholarship recipient?**
Winners are announced at high school senior award ceremonies. After that time, award letters are mailed to recipients with directions for fund distribution.