



## 2019 Helpful Hints for Completing an Application for Scholarships Administered by the Polk Education Foundation

To apply online, you must be a Polk County public or charter school senior on track to graduate having passed the Algebra I EOC and FSA Reading, or, have the concordant scores noted 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

Submission of a FINALIZED SAR after completion of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is required. FAFSA forms of any type are not accepted, only SARs. A SAR will have the EFC (Estimated Family Contribution on it.) If you have not done a FAFSA, stop and do it now!! Go to <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa> and complete the application. If you are just starting a FAFSA now, there is no guarantee you will have your SAR back in time at this point, but, at least you will have it done!

After meeting those conditions, a student must read each scholarship's criteria to determine if they meet the individual requirements listed for each award.

Go to the PEF website at [www.polkeducationfoundation.org](http://www.polkeducationfoundation.org) and click on the "scholarship" button for full information and link to start an application.

- 1. Read all directions and review the scholarship list posted on the PEF website before starting your application. You will be better prepared if you read directions first!**
2. This application not intended for completion using a phone or other mobile device. For best results, please use a desktop computer/laptop.

3. If you can see the application but can't enter anything in, it is because you hit the PREVIEW button, and that is all you can do, look over the pages. Students have to BEGIN an application to be able to enter anything. Refer back to the directions!
4. You will start your application by entering your student ID number with, or without, the "5300". You will be required at the same time to make create your own password. **Write the password down** in case you need to return later to work on the application. If you try to return and get the message "student ID already in use", it means you are not logging in in the correct place, you must enter as a "returning" applicant.
5. When you enter your student ID, your personal information is pulled from the school district's student record system. **Please double check all.** The address that shows is the one award letters would be sent to, so make sure it is correct. VERY IMPORTANT: You must have all volunteer hours and updated test scores submitted at your school and staff there must have them entered in the student records system **BEFORE** you start your application. Do not wait till the last minute to submit your most current information! The computer program screens using your personal information and if a scholarship requires a minimum amount of volunteer hours and or test score and you have them, *but they are not in the system, you will not be allowed to apply for that award.* Handwriting updated hours and scores on your application OR referencing them in your essay will not work to allow the system to screen for applicable scholarships.
6. Do NOT check every scholarship listed as you may not qualify for all of them, and donors like to see you have taken time with your application. Reading the "Scholarship Criteria" assures you meet the eligibility requirements set by the donor and that you will have the required "extras" like additional essays, reference letters, or college acceptance letters to attach to your application. Incomplete applications or missing documentation will disqualify your submission.
7. SAVE EACH PAGE as you complete the application so that you will not lose information. IMPORTANT- the application closes after 45 minutes of "inactivity". Just typing is not recognized as activity; you must hit the SAVE or CONTINUE buttons to keep the application active. A page will not save unless all questions on that page have an answer.
8. Type and proof your essay(s) in a Word Document and then cut and paste it into the application, otherwise, you CANNOT SPELL CHECK in the application. Judges may score you considerably lower for poor writing, misspelled words, punctuation errors, super short essays etc.
9. Use the essay as if it was an interview, it is your only chance to tell donors any special circumstances, about your accomplishments and plans for the future.
10. Save a copy of your essay so you can use it for other scholarship applications.
11. If a scholarship requires two essays, write to the prompts provided, DO NOT copy and paste the same essay in both application cells, it will not make sense!
12. Do NOT FINALIZE the application if you intend to go back and work on it later. You should save your work and use the password you have chosen to go back and work further. (Write your password down so you will not forget it.)
13. Complete the application online by noon on the deadline indicated. You will not be able to access your application once the website has been shut down, so plan ahead.
14. NO CHANGES CAN BE MADE ON THE APPLICATION AFTER YOU PRESS "FINISH & SUBMIT"! When you have checked and double checked everything, then press the "FINISH & SUBMIT" button

and at that time print out two copies of your application – one that will be submitted to the PEF and one for you to keep.

15. Sign the application and get your parent or guardian's signature as well if you are not 18. Then MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS and submit the other copy to your counselor by their due date, with all the required attachments. Without a signature your application cannot be considered.
16. Attach a copy of your finalized SAR. FAFSA forms are not accepted. Without the required SAR, your application will be disqualified from all consideration.
17. Applicants who only apply online but do not submit a hard copy package with all required attachments are NOT considered.
18. School due dates for your hard copy application package will be set by your school scholarship contact, so be sure to check with them for their assigned due date. Do not send or deliver your application to the PEF yourself, you must go thru your counselor and meet the deadline they set.
19. Please use one staple to attach your application package. Do not include any certificates, forms, awards, etc. that are not requested. They are never used for consideration. Do not use folders or binders to submit your application.
20. Check the email address you used for your application regularly, the PEF will use that address if we have any questions about your application, or, if you are selected for an interview.
21. If selected for an interview, YOU MUST RESPOND TO THE EMAIL TO ACCEPT YOUR APPOINTMENT!!! You will be asked to bring details on the cost of attending your selected college or university when you attend.
22. All scholarship recipients are announced at senior award ceremonies (**so please make sure you attend if you are notified in case a donor is there to make your presentation**). Few donor's make announcements prior to the senior awards ceremonies however if they do and invite you to attend their club or group meeting to be recognized, the expectation is that you will attend.
23. Recipients will be sent a package of information after ALL senior award ceremonies are over. Paperwork must be submitted to the PEF before funds are distributed for a student. Funds can be held for up to five years until a student needs and requests them for school.