









# The Eagan Foundation

## Essay Scoring Meeting Agenda

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- **Welcome, Thank You, and Introductions**
- **Overview of Scholarship Program**
  - a. Approximately 120 scholarships totaling for about \$140,000
  - b. Applicant and submitted essay statistics
    - i. Approximately 250 applicants this year
    - ii. Each essay gets read and scored by 2 separate readers
    - iii. Bottom line: ~ 20 essays per reader
- **Logistics**
  - a. Folder Access – will be granted on March 15

 Essays to Score	2/17/2020 8:53 PM	File folder	
 1 Reader-Scorer Instructions 2020	2/17/2020 8:52 PM	Microsoft Word D...	661 KB
 2 Evaluation Form Required Essay	2/17/2020 8:45 PM	Microsoft Word D...	17 KB
 3 Scholarship Essay Sample low	2/17/2020 8:45 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	41 KB
 4 Scholarship Essay Sample Middle	2/17/2020 8:47 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	79 KB
 5 Scholarship Essay sample high	2/17/2020 8:45 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	42 KB
 6 Essay Scoring Summary Template INSTRUCTIONS	2/17/2020 8:53 PM	Microsoft Excel W...	269 KB
 8 Evaluation Form Flint Hills	2/2/2018 11:27 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	187 KB

- b. Return completed Essay Scoring Summary via email [jamie.hopkins@eaganfoundation.org](mailto:jamie.hopkins@eaganfoundation.org) or just saved in folder by Monday, March 25 at 7PM
  - c. Destroy ALL other documentation received, hard-copy or electronic (e.g., essays, evaluation forms, etc.)
- **Help us ensure a blind scoring process:** The essays are “scrubbed” for clearly identifying data before you receive them. But...
    - if you see that some identifying data (name, position as captain on a specific team, parent’s name) has been left in OR
    - if upon reading an essay you are confident that you know the student by content or experience described...then **stop reading the essay** and alert Jamie Hopkins [jamie.hopkins@eaganfoundation.org](mailto:jamie.hopkins@eaganfoundation.org) of the ID number so she can reassign it. Then delete the essay.
  - **What is our suggested approach to scoring essays?**
    - a. **Familiarize yourself with the Evaluation Form. Newer readers may find page the next section: “Evaluation Questions – Deeper Glance” helpful.**

\*\*Please note, applicants are given four questions to choose from. Not all students indicate in the essay which question they selected, so for your reference, the questions were:

1. Discuss something you have done that made a difference in your community.
2. Discuss a special attribute or accomplishment that sets you apart.
3. Pick an experience from your own life and explain how it has influenced you.
4. What ideas do you have to improve racial equity or address social justice issues within the Eagan community or within your school?

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## *Essay Scoring Meeting Agenda*

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### **b. Don't grade the first essay you read**

We suggest you read ALL assigned essays before using the Evaluation Form. After reading the essays, you might first group them as:

- i. Superior or above average
- ii. Expected or average
- iii. Weak or below average

Note: You may find essays that were written for school assignments or for a college entrance application instead of in response to one of our essays. Although very well written, these may not answer the questions or include information we are requiring for our scholarships. If students do not answer one of the essay options we presented, you should strongly consider lower scores when rating: "How relevant or clearly related to one of the three essay question options is the topic the applicant chose to discuss?" or "How well did the applicant answer the question?"

### **c. After you have read all the essays, begin scoring using the Evaluation Form**

- i. Utilize ID code to support our "blind" process
- ii. Balance responsiveness to our questions with grammar – neither of these alone makes a superior essay
- iii. Scorers generally have a range of averages from 20 – 32. The average "average" is around 26. Scores in the 35-40 range should be reserved for the truly exceptional. You may have no essays in this range – that's OK.
- iv. Don't worry about whether or not you are near the average – just be sure that you are consistent in the way that you score.
- v. Each essay is read and scored by two separate scorers.
  1. We assign essays so that any two scorers (Scorer John and Scorer Jane) score no more than 5 of the same essays.
  2. If we notice a big discrepancy in the scores, we may peek to see if either of the scorers have averages that are significantly lower or higher than the average.
  3. We may make slight adjustments to the scorers for scorers that seem significantly on either side of the average.
- d. Once scoring is complete, consider reviewing each essay again
- e. Using the Evaluation Form (handout)
- f. Using the Essay Scoring Summary (handout)

### ● Contact for questions

- a. Jamie Hopkins – 651-243-1198 – [admin@eaganfoundation.org](mailto:admin@eaganfoundation.org)
- b. Angie Cunningham - 651-470-9437 – [angiec@eaganfoundation.org](mailto:angiec@eaganfoundation.org)

## Evaluation Questions – Deeper Glance

**Applicant essay question:** Students were instructed to choose one of the questions and answer it.

- Discuss something you have done that made a difference in your community.
- Discuss a special attribute or accomplishment that sets you apart.
- Pick an experience from your own life and explain how it has influenced you.
- What ideas do you have to improve racial equity or address social justice issues within the Eagan community or within your school?

**Rating Item 1: How relevant or clearly related to one of the three essay question options is the topic the applicant chose to discuss?**

**Score this question based on:**

- a. Did the applicant answer a topic/question presented as one of the options (a, b, or c above) or did they answer a different question, perhaps recycling a different essay addressing a different topic.
- b. Did the applicant pick a suitable example?

For example – topic a: “Discuss something you have done that made a difference in your community”

**Successful Topic A Example/Response:** (shortened version as sample) *I was saddened to hear that Russian speaking immigrants in Eagan were afraid to access the local food shelf due to language difficulties. I speak Russian and I wanted to make a difference! I volunteered at the food shelf every Saturday for two years and trained some native Russian speakers to volunteer there as well. The food shelf has seen a big increase in their Russian-speaking clients and is able to serve them more effectively.*

**Successful because:** clearly topic #1, community focused and two year contribution could make a significant difference

**Unsuccessful Topic A Example/Response:** (shortened version as sample) *I was depressed about my physical fitness level. I wanted to make a difference! I exercised every day for one month, took extra time to prepare nutritional meals, and thanks to determination and hard work, I was able to lose five pounds.*

**Unsuccessful because:** personal development rather than community focused; short time - limited difference; although identified as topic a, not really on topic

**Rating Item 2: How well did the applicant answer the questions?**

**Score this question based on:** In addition to having answered an assigned topic with a suitable example (Rating Item 1), did the student have a substantive answer to the question? Did they respond fully and stick to the topic? If the student answered with less than a half a page - it will be hard for them to score higher than 5-7.

**NOTE: If the student did not respond to one of the actual prompts, it would be difficult for them to score highly on 1 and 2. However, that same essay could still score very highly in the following items.**

**Rating Item 3: Rate the applicant's writing for interest and creativity.**

**Score this question based on:** Did the essay hold your interest? Was the writing creative? (You may want to give 5 pts for interest and 5 pts for creativity)

**Rating Item 4: Rate the applicant's writing for mechanics/grammar**

**Score this question based on:** Were there typos or spelling mistakes? Were the sentences well-structured with proper punctuation? (5 pts)

**Rating Item 5: Rate the applicant's organization/flow of paper**

**Score this question based on:** Was there a clear beginning, middle, and end? Was the essay easy to read and well thought out?



The first time I failed my driver's test, I didn't know how to feel. I thought I did an alright job, yet at the same time I expected the outcome. Both of my sisters had failed their drivers tests before so I assumed if it happens to one, it happens to all. I was so confused about how I failed. In my head I was running through scenarios about how I could have failed. All I could think about was my parallel parking. I questioned the examiner, "Why did I fail?"

The examiner reasoned, "When parallel parking you moved the cone too many feet and took an illegal turn." Walking up to my Dad, tears of frustration fell in that I could not reverse the curse. I even made my Dad take me since my Mom went with my other two sisters, thinking he would bring me luck.

In order to pass my second time, I knew I would have to practice my parking. Every day I would go to Eagan High School and practice the ninety degree back-in and the parallel park. I was determined to execute each park perfectly multiple times before taking the test. One week later I was ready to take my driver's test again.

The second time I failed my driver's test, I was mortified. I pulled out of the driving station and the instructor immediately told me to do my ninety degree back-in. I got my car in perfect position to make the turn. I cranked the wheel and let my foot off the brake. Looking behind I noticed I had knocked over the left cone. Immediately after that I knew I failed. Once I pulled over to hear my fate, the instructor told me I had failed and it was because of that cone. A darn cone sealed my fate of not getting my driver's license yet again. Now I had to tell my sisters that I failed again.

Getting back in the car with my Mom I started to bawl. I asked her why this had to happen to me. No answer. I pondered if it was God trying to say something to me. Maybe he was trying to let me know that I wasn't ready to drive alone or that I needed more practice. I reached a breaking point that I didn't want to drive anymore or practice. My Mom encouraged me to keep going to the school and practice. I told myself to keep my head and heart strong when doing my parking. After waiting the required two weeks to retake my test I was stressed

out about failing again. So much fear was building up inside of me and I was not sure how to deal with it. I got to the point where my Mom had to go get me some Melatonin to help me get some sleep at night and not think about my test. I kept trying to stay positive about my situation.

The third time I took my driver's test, God was certainly with me. I was already stressed about the test, let alone having an examiner test the examiner that was evaluating me. I was dreading the ninety degree back-in, which was the last thing I had to do. Everything else I had nailed. I got my car in place, and then I took a deep breath before letting the car turn. I saw the wheel about to hit a cone. In order to fit in I reversed and drove forward six times, but hey, I made it in. When the examiner told me I passed, I was elated as I walked into the station to get my driver's license. My smile bigger than I had ever seen it. It's was good to know that practice and hard work eventually pay off.

Even though it took three times for me to pass my driver's test, I learned a lot about perseverance, positivity, and my overall character. Good things (results) come to those that wait and especially for me, the third time really is the charm!

My assignment was to write an essay about an older person who had a great influence on my life. I decided to write about my paternal grandfather. The reason this was hard is that he was a very private person, as am I. I knew he had participated in [REDACTED] but really knew no details. I found out many interesting facts about him that neither I nor my father had ever known. I learned about his very poor upbringing during the depression, with an [REDACTED] I also learned that he volunteered for the [REDACTED] when he was only 16, so he had to get his parents signature (which he forged) to join. I am glad I took the initiative to ask him the questions I did. I think that we broke through a lot of barriers that existed because of our personalities, and I feel we became closer. That is very important to me as he died on [REDACTED] I think this experience forced me to come out of my shell somewhat, and to appreciate what older people have to share, and to teach us.

Tails: one small, seemingly meaningless, word that meant everything to me. In that moment, it had more power over me than any word ever should. It had the power to shatter my confidence, to sink my throbbing heart. It had the power to challenge my years of dedication. It was the one word that I did not want to hear.

But I did.

Since joining the debate team as a freshman in high school, I have sacrificed an unparalleled amount of time for success in this activity. My goal has always been to enjoy the ultimate achievement: competing at the National Tournament. However, as is always the case, it was integral that I overcome a multitude of challenges in order for this to happen. Most importantly, I knew that I needed to improve the fluency of my speech and expand my knowledge base.

In second grade, I was placed in speech therapy after developing a stutter. Throughout my years in this program, I have continued to develop fluency through the mastering of different speaking techniques. Although I pride myself in the near elimination of my speech impediment, however, my stutter occasionally reappears during debate rounds due to a combination of speaking quickly and being forced to think and speak on my feet. In order to become the strongest debater I could possibly be, it was important that I keep my speaking fluent.

To make this happen, I spent much time with my therapist as well as my parents practicing and utilizing the speaking strategies that I believed would be most helpful in the debate environment. While this certainly improved my speaking ability as a debater, I have noticed a tremendous development in my confidence as a communicator outside of debate as well. I am now anxious to participate in class and social discussions. I am proud of my opinion and am no longer afraid to share it. I truly believe that my process in becoming a stronger debater has played a key role in discovering this confidence.

As a freshman, I was well aware of the fact that my knowledge base was not broad enough in order to support my goal of qualifying for the national tournament. I just wasn't as worldly and politically adept as a debater of that caliber needed to be. I knew that, to reach my goal, I was going to be spending almost every evening in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] gaining information about the world's most pressing social, political, and cultural concerns.

My greatly expanded knowledge base helped me not only to become a better debater, but it helped me to become a better citizen. While researching, I was naturally formulating my own opinions about many current issues and becoming more passionate about my thoughts and ideas. This passion inspired me to become more civically engaged as well. I started following election campaigns, participating in political discussions with my friends and family, and confidently voting at school elections. Through pursuing my goal as a debater, I learned a tremendous amount about my personal belief system.

Despite three years of a relentless work ethic, I did not qualify [REDACTED] [REDACTED] due to a literal flip of a coin. Although I had advanced to the final round at the district tournament, my ranking was identical to that of my opponent and thus the decision was made by a coin flip.

While this was undoubtedly a moment in my life full of sadness and confusion, I understood how important it was to move on. I poured every drop of my frustration into achieving the same goal as a senior and I am proud to proclaim that, just last month, I qualified to compete [REDACTED]