

BPSF Scholarship Process

BPSF hosts a robust annual scholarship program for students of the Brainerd Public Schools. Each year, graduating students are encouraged to apply through BPSF's scholarship software called Academic Works. Students who fill out the BPSF general scholarship application online are in the running for any scholarships they fit the criteria for. Applications are typically open for about 3mo – starting Dec 15th.

What is the scholarship process?

1. Students fill out just one online general application through BPSF's scholarship, software called Academic Works, to be in the running for over 100 different scholarship opportunities. Students must qualify, based on the donor-established criteria, in order to be eligible for a specific award.
2. Once the application period closes, the reviewing period begins. BPSF solicits community members and school faculty to review and score the applications electronically through Academic Works. The review process is "blind" and therefore reviewers do not have access to personal student information – such as name, address, gender, or other personal identifiers. Each application is reviewed no less than three times. An average score is established based on student responses. Applications are scored with a pre-determined rubric. Students receive points for things like GPA, extracurricular activities, athletics, music programs, volunteerism, holding a job, taking intensive classes, and essays. There are 101 possible points. Rubric attached.
3. The Academic Works software helps filter qualifying students with auto-match technology based on student responses. If a student does not meet the criteria of the award, they will not be considered for the scholarship. If no students meet the established criteria, BPSF will reach out to the donor or fund representative to seek alternative criteria parameters. If no alternatives are approved, the scholarship will not be awarded. If there are no living fund representatives, the BPSF Scholarship Committee, together with the Board of Directors, will work together to modify criteria.
4. Awarding and selection begin with the largest scholarship award offered and the top scoring candidate that fits the criteria. This process continues until all BPSF scholarships are awarded. Although BPSF uses a "spread the wealth" process, some students may receive more than one scholarship based on the donor's chosen criteria, eligibility and their application scores.
5. Once the selection is complete, students are notified of their application status and invited to the Scholarship Recognition Night.

What are some reasons a student may not win a BPSF scholarship?

- Scholarship was not submitted. Sadly, each year students neglect to submit their application. Applications left in "draft mode" will not be considered.

- Low score. Students who are not “well-rounded” and active in school or community activities, miss out on a great-deal of available application points.
- Criteria. Donors choose their award criteria. Many of our scholarships have very specific criteria – certain GPA, gender, athletics, volunteerism, etc. Visit BPSF’s Academic Works site to review our scholarship offerings and their criteria. <https://bpsf.academicworks.com/donors>
- More student applicants than awards available. The number of applicants exceeds the available awards; therefore, not all students can receive a scholarship award.

How does a scholarship winner access their money?

Scholarship winners can claim their scholarship after completing their first semester of college. They must submit their transcripts and BPSF then cuts a check directly to their school’s financial aid office. Students have three years to claim their awards. Unclaimed or un-awarded funds will roll over into the BPSF 4A Scholarship Fund to be re-awarded as a BPSF scholarship in future years.

Are there other scholarship available besides through BPSF?

Yes. There are awards offered all over our community, state, and even nationally. Students should visit the Student Success Center at BHS for guidance on how to find and apply for other scholarship opportunities.

****Scoring Rubric – attached below****

Scholarship Rubric

Reviewing/Scoring Guide



Thank you for joining the BPSF Scholarship Application Review Crew! Our system is considered a “blind review process.” Reviewers will not have access to any personally identifying information of the applicants. Each application will be reviewed a minimum of three times by three or more reviewers. To maintain some consistency between reviewers, please use the following guide when scoring the applications.

The following questions have been placed into these three categories and given different weighting for total scoring impact.

- Academics & Rigor/Future Plans & Goals Essay - 37% total score
- Extracurricular Participation/Leadership & Awards - 34% total score
- Other Essay Questions - 30% total score

GPA – Cumulative High-School Grade Point Average

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 8 = 4.0 and above
- 7 = 3.5 to 3.99
- 6 = 3.0 - 3.49
- 5 = 2.5 - 2.99
- 4 = 2.0 - 2.49
- 3 = 1.5 - 1.99
- 2 = 1.0 - 1.49
- 1 = 0.0 - 0.99

Extracurricular Activities - Clubs/Groups/Committees or Rec League Sports (Separate from HS athletic teams/sports)

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 4 points = Participation in at least one extracurricular EACH year (9-12th)
- 3 points = Participation in at least one extracurricular per year for 3 years
- 2 points = Participation in at least one extracurricular per year for 2 years
- 1 point = Participation in at least one extracurricular during high-school
- 0 points = No extracurricular participation identified

Music Program Participation – Choir/Band/Orchestra

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 4 points = Participation in at least one music program EACH year (9-12th)
- 3 points = Participation in at least one music program per year for 3 years
- 2 points = Participation in at least one music program per year for 2 years
- 1 point = Participation in at least one music program during high-school
- 0 points = No music program participation identified

Athletic Program Participation – High School Sponsored Sports

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 4 points = Participation in at least one HS athletic program EACH year (9-12th)
- 3 points = Participation in at least one HS athletic program per year for 3 years
- 2 points = Participation in at least one HS athletic program per year for 2 years
- 1 point = Participation in at least one HS athletic program during high-school
- 0 points = No HS athletic program participation identified

Volunteer Experience

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 4 points = Demonstrated a solid commitment to volunteer efforts and organizations throughout HS (9-12th)
- 3 points = Volunteered on multiple occasions or consistently with an organization for two or more years
- 2 points = Volunteered on a several occasions or consistently with an organization for one year
- 1 point = Volunteered sporadically without commitment to a specific organization
- 0 points = No volunteering evidence demonstrated

Work Experience

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 4 points = Employed EACH summer and/or year (9-12th)
- 3 points = Employed each summer and/or year for 3 years
- 2 points = Employed each summer and/or year for 2 years
- 1 point = Demonstrated work experience during high-school
- 0 points = No work experience demonstrated

Intensive Academic Classes – Student participation in high-level classes such as AP, Intensive, Advanced, College in the Schools, or PSEO classes.

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 4 points = Participation in at least one intensive class EACH year (9-12th)
- 3 points = Participation in at least one intensive class per year for 3 years
- 2 points = Participation in at least one intensive class per year for 2 years
- 1 point = Participation in at least one intensive class during high-school
- 0 points = No intensive academic class participation

Awards, Honors, and Leadership Roles

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 2 points = Multiple awards/honors and/or leadership roles during HS years.
- 1 point = Demonstrated evidence of awards/honors or holding a leadership role during HS years.
- 0 points = None demonstrated

Future Plans and Goals Essay – This is an important question to uncover “the why” behind the student’s desire to attend a post-secondary institution. A well written essay will help the reviewer “get to know the student” and their planned next steps in education and life. Points should be awarded primarily on the student’s ability to articulate their plans and goals clearly – grammar and spelling should play only a minor role in points awarded.

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 5 points = Plans and goals are well defined.

- 4 points = Plans and goals are mostly defined.
- 3 points = Plans and goals are partially addressed.
- 2 points = Plans and goals are minimally addressed.
- 1 point = Plans and goals are poorly addressed.
- 0 points = Plans and goals are not addressed.

Meaningful Experience or Class Essay – The student should recall a meaningful experience or class during their high-school years and share why it was meaningful to them. Points should be awarded primarily on the student’s ability to articulate how this experience impacted them – grammar and spelling should play only a minor role in points awarded.

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 5 points = Meaningful Experience/Class is well defined.
- 4 points = Meaningful Experience/Class is mostly defined.
- 3 points = Meaningful Experience/Class is partially addressed.
- 2 points = Meaningful Experience/Class is minimally addressed.
- 1 point = Meaningful Experience/Class is poorly addressed.
- 0 points = Meaningful Experience/Class is not addressed.

Positive Influence as a Leader Essay – The student should discuss their role(s) as a leader during their high-school years. The students do NOT have to have been in an assigned/voted in leadership role in a school club or program to be considered a leader. Points should be awarded primarily on the student’s ability to articulate how they were a leader in any facet of their life – grammar and spelling should play only a minor role in points awarded.

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

- 5 points = Leadership experience/role(s) are well defined.
- 4 points = Leadership experience/role(s) are mostly defined.
- 3 points = Leadership experience/role(s) are partially addressed.
- 2 points = Leadership experience/role(s) are minimally addressed.
- 1 point = Leadership experience/role(s) are poorly addressed.
- 0 points = Leadership experience/role(s) is not addressed.

Overcoming Adversity Essay – The student should use this opportunity to share any a time when they had to overcome an obstacle, faced adversity and/or have shown perseverance. (Examples: Overcoming educational, life, or family obstacles and/or demonstrating grit/determination) Points should be awarded primarily on the student’s ability to articulate their experience – grammar and spelling should play only a minor role in points awarded.

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

5 points = Must be well defined.

4 points = Mostly defined.

3 points = Partially defined.

2 points = Minimally addressed.

1 point = Poorly addressed.

0 points = Not addressed.

Financing Need - Essay Question – The student should discuss their financial need in order to attend a secondary-education program. Points should be awarded primarily on the student’s ability to articulate their financial need – grammar and spelling should play only a minor role in points awarded.

Please award points to the students with the following breakdown:

5 points = Need is well defined.

4 points = Need is mostly defined.

3 points = Need is partially addressed.

2 points = Need is minimally addressed.

1 point = Need is poorly addressed.

0 points = Need is not addressed.