

# 2017-2018 TASSP Academic Excellence Award Application

Student No (TASSP office use): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Score: 36

## 5. Essay

### PROCTOR GUIDELINES:

1. Essay writing must be proctored and monitored by a counselor or administrator.
2. Essay should not contain any references to the student's school name, district, city or town.
3. Essay should be handwritten in ink. Legibility will be taken into consideration in determining the final essay score. NO additional aids (dictionaries, computers, pre-written outlines, notes, or drafts, etc.) permitted.
4. High school and middle school principals will be reading and scoring the essays.
5. Essay length is limited to the 2 ½ pages provided.

Write an essay on the following topic:

Leo Buscaglia has said, "Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy." Please relate an experience or obstacle you have faced and how you were, or are, able to maintain joy through that experience!

Essay will count for 35 points of the final total score.

Please write your essay on this form using the 2 ½ pages provided (front only)

My motto in life is "live like there is no tomorrow." Though it is easier said than done, just repeating it in my head helps me stay content and seek joy in any circumstance I am in. It not only keeps me mentally uplifted, but it drives me to put forth my best effort in all my endeavors. This mentality combined with my personality is largely what led to my academic success and beyond.

For example, last year I decided I wanted to run ~~as~~<sup>for</sup> an Area Officer in an organization called Health Occupation Students of America, or HOSA. As a somewhat reserved person, I wanted to stretch my limits and challenged myself as a leader. The qualification process was lengthy, but durable. I had to pass a written test, submit a resume, and ~~submit~~ submit a video talking about myself. My worries didn't kick in until the time for the candidate interview came near. I began doubting myself and began to reconsider whether I was truly capable of such a position. My worries were slowly starting to drag me into a slump, distracting me from going anywhere further. It wasn't until a period of time later that I realized I ~~could~~ wouldn't be able to get anything done by merely sitting and worrying about what was to come, not taking action for improvement. It was after that self-realization in which I took a moment to recollect my future aspirations and came to the conclusion that, I really wanted to

take this opportunity. Reminding myself to "live like there is no tomorrow," the first thing I did to subdue my worries was to practice, over and over again. I practiced doing the interview with the help of my sister, and I prepared my speech in front of a mirror ~~to~~ ~~that~~ make sure my presentation was firm. When the day of the Area Conference and officer elections came, I wasn't overwhelmed with doubts or concerns. Rather, I enjoyed the event itself and meeting new people. It was through practice and determination that I successfully finished my interview and delivered my speech at the conference. As a result, I was elected as one of the Area officers. This experience was truly empowering and fun, but beyond that it gave me more courage to take initiative and ~~reached~~ take risks without the ~~fear~~ <sup>fear</sup> of failure.

Like so, being able to maintain joy in an environment or situation with great pressure is very rewarding. However, there comes a time when you are bombarded with difficulties that you feel like you are stuck in quick sand, not having the luxury of searching for the needle of joy in a haystack of misery. ~~not~~

Around the time my mom was rushed to the hospital for an unknown reaction, my grandma became awfully sick. My aunt, who was living with us, was diagnosed with cancer. My parents were struggling with certain legal issues. These circumstances, along with other things, made finding joy extremely difficult. I missed days of school either going to the hospital, or translating for my parents, or helping my parents write specific documents. I then began to, again, let the monkey in my head run around with fear and worries. I was worried about my family, but also about school. ~~The~~ The struggle between family and school responsibilities became so burdensome at one point that even my motto couldn't help me uplift my spirits. I knew that if this condition prolonged ~~it~~ it would affect my future outlook and endeavors. Taking a moment of meditation as my history teacher ~~was~~ frequently did in class, I reflected on my state of mind and the obstacles I was facing. I then thought of everything I was thankful for. I was thankful for the opportunities I received going to school as a multicultural student. I was thankful for the unique bond I have with my family. I was thankful for my teachers and my friends who

genuinely cared for my success and helped me catch up with school work. Lastly, I was thankful to be bilingual and have my parents' trust to help them with translations and other assistance. With all these in mind, it helped me regain focus and be relieved of ~~and~~ the feeling of anxiety. Though it wasn't as if I got a surge of joy, but I was able to remain content and take each obstacle one at a time.

It is true that merely worrying today won't solve any problems for tomorrow. It only keeps you idle; it's like pacing in fear of a tornado to come and not actually taking any actions to prepare for it. Sometimes, fear and worries are inevitable, since it is a natural defensive mechanism when faced with an obstacle. However, because I know that worrying alone will not change the future days for the better, I choose to take each day's worth of challenges and find a learning experience in them. In doing so, I am able to truly "live like there is no tomorrow."

In other words, "be true and be you" — the best way to mature into a leader who can take on challenges with gratitude and joy.