



June 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians of Rising Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Grade Students:

In mid-October, students in grades nine, ten, and eleven in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and across the United States, will take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). While only students in grade eleven are eligible to compete for National Merit Scholarships, we know that taking the test in earlier grades provides excellent practice for taking the PSAT in grade eleven and for taking the SAT.

The PSAT measures critical reading, writing skills, and math problem-solving skills. It assesses a student's ability to reason with facts and concepts rather than the ability to recall and recite them. The test includes two 25-minute critical reading sections, two 25-minute math sections, and one 30-minute writing section. Test administration requires two hours and ten minutes. Students receive three scores: critical reading, math, and writing. The cost of the test is \$17.00 and students register for the PSAT at their schools. **FCPS has arranged to administer the PSAT to tenth graders without cost.**

All students who complete the test will receive the new Score Report Plus, which will provide feedback created for individual students based on their unique patterns of response to the test questions. This will be helpful, especially to tenth graders in preparing to take the PSAT again in eleventh grade.

Students with disabilities who have identified testing accommodations in a 504 plan or an IEP (individualized education program) may request accommodations for the PSAT. Detailed information is available at www.collegeboard.com. **All forms must be completed and received by College Board by mid-August 2009.** The forms for making this request may be obtained from your student's counselor or the special education department chair.

Students may prepare for the PSAT by taking rigorous academic courses, reading widely, thoroughly reading the *PSAT Student Bulletin* available at their schools, getting a good night's sleep prior to the test, and eating breakfast the morning of the test.

I encourage you to discuss PSAT testing with your child and contact your child's school for registration information. Best wishes to you and your student.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Dale', is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Jack D. Dale
Superintendent of Schools