



# SEATTLE ACADEMY

## OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

To: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents  
From: Melanie Reed and Jason Gough, College Advisors  
Date: September, 2011  
RE: Reminder about PSAT Testing

Greetings from Seattle Academy! As noted on College Advising calendars sent home earlier this summer, on Saturday, October 15, all of Seattle Academy's sophomores and juniors will take the PSAT at school. **We assume each of our 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders will test and we automatically register each student for the exam, the charge for which is applied to each student's account.** Of the two national PSAT testing dates, Seattle Academy *must choose* the Saturday administration due to the timing of mid-term exams and, this year, our accreditation site visit. Because of mid-terms, there is not an alternative date for Seattle Academy students.\*

Students should arrive outside the Gym at the usual time (8:15 AM) and expect to be involved in testing and test-related activities for about three and a half hours. Typically, we release students at noon and usually no later than 12:30 PM. **Each student should bring his/her usual Seattle Academy-required calculator and two sharpened pencils to use in the exam.** Teachers and administrators will proctor the exam administration according to College Board guidelines.

The PSAT is important to sophomores and juniors in different ways. For sophomores, it is an opportunity to practice standardized test-taking under official College Board testing conditions. (The PSAT is made up of a standard SAT exam of verbal and mathematics skills and a third section testing writing skills. The students do not write an essay for the PSAT.) In late December, the school will receive students' scores as well as a test booklet and individualized analysis of each student's performance on the test. If the test results arrive from College Board before the winter vacation (in some years they have, in others they haven't), we will make every effort to send home those results before break begins along with the results of the PLAN (pre-ACT) test from last spring. This provides families more comprehensive testing feedback all at once. In addition to interpretive materials sent home with each test, students are welcome to work with their regular advisors and future college advisors to interpret results and plan for future testing and test preparation.

For juniors, the test serves another purpose: it is the route through which they may enter the National Merit Scholarship Program, an annual process by which especially high testers may qualify for some college undergraduate scholarships. If a junior scores well enough on this PSAT, s/he qualifies as a National Merit Semifinalist or Commended Student, two awards for college-bound students. (The strong student who has an off-day in the PSAT and does not qualify need not worry; the test works in positive ways but not negative ones for college admissions.) In late December, juniors receive test booklets and individualized analyses of their work; we mail them home before winter break if they arrive from College Board early enough for pre-break distribution. Juniors may wish to use their tenth and eleventh grade analyses to help them prepare for their official SAT testing later that year. At wintertime college meetings with juniors, we'll help each student to develop an individualized testing plan.

Please be sure that your child has a good night's sleep and a nourishing breakfast before the October 15 test. If a student brings snacks or water with her/him to the test, we will ask that the student place the food and beverage on the other side of the room from testing to avoid spilling on her/his test (exceptions are made for students with known medical conditions). Per College Board regulations, students will not be allowed to leave the premises to get snacks or coffee during the test. Students with diagnostic evaluations that recommend accommodations on standardized tests may be eligible for PSAT test accommodations. If your student has a diagnostic evaluation recommending test accommodations, please contact Mike Haykin, Director of Learning Support.

\* Very occasionally, if a student has a significant conflict with the Saturday date, s/he has done the following: called directly independent schools in Seattle to see if any of them offer the test on Wednesday instead of Saturday (schools choose one date or the other) and to see if a school with a Wednesday administration has space for an additional tester. Only after checking with Seattle Academy teachers to determine whether the student can miss Wednesday the 12th (grades being more advantageous than a practice standardized test, the scores of which colleges don't see) is the student allowed to test at an alternative location. This is up to the student/family to arrange. If this is the case for your student, please notify Melanie Reed at [mreed@seattleacademy.org](mailto:mreed@seattleacademy.org) after you or your student has made arrangements with another school *and with Seattle Academy teachers* so Melanie knows your student will not test at Seattle Academy on October 15.