

## **What is the PSAT?**

The PSAT, or Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is a standardized test offered by the College Board and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The test consists of three sections: Math, Critical Reading and Writing Skills. It takes two hours and ten minutes to complete. Each of the three sections is scored on a scale of 20 – 80 points, with a maximum of 240 points total. The test is primarily multiple-choice, but there are some open response math questions. Students receive both a numerical score, and a percentile ranking, which shows their results in comparison to state and national averages. The score of the PSAT is used in two ways: first, it gives an indication of potential SAT scores; and second, it is the qualifying test for National Merit Scholarships. Students who score above the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile on the test are considered for the National Merit Scholarships.

## **When do the Rudolf Steiner High School students take it?**

At the Rudolf Steiner High School tenth and eleventh graders take the PSAT during school hours in October of each year. There is no cost to students for the test. The tenth graders take it for practice and familiarity, while the eleventh graders are eligible to qualify for consideration as National Merit Scholars.

## **Who schedules it?**

The High School schedules the PSAT exam each year and receives the student results. Parents do not need to do anything to ensure that their student takes the PSAT.

## **How are the results used within the school?**

At the High School we use the results of the tenth grade PSAT to check that students perform on the standardized tests roughly as we would expect them to, based on their classroom activities. This allows us to identify any students who might need additional support or help as they approach the SAT and ACT tests in the late junior and early senior years. For students with identified learning challenges or disabilities, it is possible to ask for additional time or support for the SAT/ACT and we use the PSAT results to help us know when to seek these for particular students.

The eleventh grade results are used to help students, and families, anticipate their own SAT/ACT scores as they move toward the college application process. In addition, most years we have at least one National Merit semifinalist in the school, and over the past few years some students have received National Merit Scholarships.

## **Questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns about the PSAT exam please speak with Heather Lomason, [hlomason@steinerschool.org](mailto:hlomason@steinerschool.org) or Siân Owen-Cruise, [sowen-cruise@steinerschool.org](mailto:sowen-cruise@steinerschool.org).