

# **PSAT Background Information For MCCPTA PSAT Resolution**

## **What is the PSAT?**

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) is a test that provides students with the familiarity of the format of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The exam covers the areas of verbal and math skills, and is usually given in October every year to grades 9-11 during the school day.

## **Do 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders have to take the PSAT?**

Currently, all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders are required to take the PSAT and the fee is covered by the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) system.

## **How is the PSAT data used for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders?**

The data is used in several different ways:

- Helps prepare students to take the SAT
- Helps schools identify and encourage students to take more rigorous honors-level and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- Identifies students who may need additional supports and interventions to ensure academic success
- Helps prepare them for post-secondary education opportunities.

## **What other data can be looked at for advanced placement and/or need for additional supports for 9<sup>th</sup> graders?**

Other information that can be used include: 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher recommendations; Measure of Academic Progress in Reading (MAP-R) and Maryland State Assessments (MSAs) scores.

There is also the possibility of MCPS using old PSAT exams or practice exams for 9<sup>th</sup> graders to take that would incur no cost. These old exams could also be tailored for students who may not have the math requirements yet to take that section of the PSAT.

## **What about 11<sup>th</sup> grade students?**

All 11<sup>th</sup> grade students are encouraged to take the PSAT but they must pay a fee. Juniors take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT) which is designed to help students prepare for the SAT and can qualify them for the National Merit Scholarship program and other scholarship programs. The test measures: math problem-solving skills; critical reading skills and writing skills.

## **How is the PSAT/NMSQT data used for 11<sup>th</sup> graders?**

- Helps to predict performance on SAT and gives them additional practice for the test.
- Qualifies them for the National Merit Scholarship program
- Also helps to qualify them for additional scholarship opportunities including: National Achievement Scholarship program; National Hispanic Scholar Awards program; and various corporation scholarships.
- It puts them in the College Board Student Search Service where students will then receive information and financial opportunities from colleges.