

Dear Parents and Guardians of Grade 10 & Grade 11 Students,

This letter is intended to provide the information necessary for taking the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT). At GEMS American Academy it is **strongly encouraged** for all grade 10 and 11 students to take the PSAT. The test will be administered on *Wednesday, October 28, 2015.

The purpose of taking the PSAT in grade 10 is to become familiar with the PSAT format, content and timing of the test. For grade 11 students, the PSAT/NMSQT is designed to give practice for the upcoming SAT and also serves as the qualifying test to enter the National Merit Scholarship Program (for US citizens and permanent residents) as well as other special opportunities such as the National Hispanic Recognition Program.

All students who take the PSAT will receive an official score report. They will receive scores in critical reading, mathematics and writing skills and will see how their scores compare to those of other students throughout the world. Students will be able to see which answers they got right or wrong. They will also receive information about how they performed on specific academic skills. Students will also receive free access to “*My College QuickStart*,” an online college and career planning tool that contains an online PSAT Score Report; a customized My SAT Study Plan; a personality test; and personalized lists of colleges, majors and careers.

As mentioned above, the PSAT is practice for the SAT. The SAT is the United States’ most widely used admissions test among colleges and universities. It is also recognized by other national university systems as a valued standardized test. It tests students' knowledge of subjects that are necessary for college success: reading, writing, and mathematics. The SAT assesses the critical thinking skills students need for academic success in college—skills that students learn in high school.

The typical testing schedule consists of practice tests (PSAT) in grades 10 and 11 and an official attempt of the SAT in the spring of grade 11. This year, due to the newly designed SAT starting in the spring, grade 11 students have also been asked to consider taking the current SAT in either December or January so that they can have at least one of the “old” test scores in their file for admission. Universities will accept scores from both test types.

College Admission Testing Schedule

Grade	Recommendation	Testing Dates
10 th	Strongly Encouraged: PSAT/NMSQT	February 25 or March 3 October 28* as available
11 th	Strongly Encouraged: PSAT/NMSQT	October 28, 2015
11 th	SAT Required or Optional ---dependent on the university system to which a student is applying.	December 5 or January 23 May 7 June 4

Each registered student will be given the “**Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT.**” We hope that both you and your student will read through this guide to become more familiar with the test.

Best regards,

Sharice Welch
Secondary Guidance Counselor, College

PSAT/NMSQT®

PRELIMINARY SAT/NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST

Wednesday, OCTOBER 28, 2015

100 AED

****interested students must register & turn in fees to Ms. Welch by Monday, Oct.5**



WHAT IS IT?

- A standardized assessment that focuses on the things that evidence shows matter most in college and career success.
- A qualifying test for a scholarship competition conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The scholarship competition is for grade 11 students who are US citizens or permanent residents.

BY TAKING THE PSAT, STUDENTS CAN:

- Assess critical reading, mathematical, and writing skills
- Practice for the SAT
- Estimate SAT scores
- Participate in the Student Search Service by having their name sent to colleges looking for students like them.

WHO TAKES IT?

- We offer the PSAT to our grade 10 and 11 students as a practice SAT. For grade 10 students, this is early practice. We will also use the college and career-planning tool that comes along with taking the test.

WHEN? HOW MUCH?

- Wednesday, October 28, 2015
- 100 AED includes exam fee and administrative costs
- Testing will begin at 7:45am. Students must be in their testing room by 7:40am. Testing will be completed by approximately 11:20am.

WHERE?

- Classrooms (specific rooms will be announced)

WHAT TO BRING?

- Two (2) HB or No. 2 pencils
- Calculator (a four function, scientific, or graphing). Each question can be answered without one, so it is not needed, but is allowed.

TESTING TIPS:

- Refer to the PRACTICE booklet distributed in school for a full-length practice test and further explanation of the content and format.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the test.
- If you have any questions, please speak with Ms. Welch.

In December and sometimes January due to the winter break, students will receive their score reports as well as their test booklets. The score reports will provide personalized score information and item analysis. This provides feedback to students and the opportunity to evaluate their critical reading, mathematical, and writing skills.