



School District of South Orange and Maplewood

## **COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL**

17 Parker Avenue • Maplewood, New Jersey 07040  
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Dear Student,

On Wednesday, October 19, 2016 you will have the opportunity to take the Preliminary SAT, also known as the PSAT for FREE. The results of PSAT will be used to guide you, your family, and your guidance counselor in the planning for the rest of your school career. By participating in the exam and completing the appropriate requirements, you will become eligible for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Your scores are also useful in helping to determine your readiness for potential placement in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Please take 10 to 15 minutes each day to review the contents of the attached booklet in order to become familiar with the organization of the test. You should also familiarize yourself with the guidelines. After you have a good handle on how this test will be useful to you, take the full-length practice test. It will be useful in helping you on the actual test. You can also access online resources at [collegeboard.org/psatpractice](http://collegeboard.org/psatpractice) and [collegeboard.org/psatscoring](http://collegeboard.org/psatscoring).

As with all tests, you are asked to take your time, read the questions carefully, and thoughtfully select your response. All testing conditions (no food, no cell phones, no talking, etc.) are in place and violation of them requires us to void the test and it will not be scored by the College Board. In order to prepare, you should make sure you are getting an appropriate amount of sleep, eating good meals, and balancing your school and extracurricular activities. Doing these things provides an overall positive cumulative effect on your health and chances for academic success.

The PSAT will be useful in helping to prepare your 10<sup>th</sup> and/or 11<sup>th</sup> grade child for the SAT exam. Although the PSAT is a practice test for the SAT, it has been identified as a substitute assessment for the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) for students in the classes of 2016, 2017, and 2018 who meet the “cut score” of 40 in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.\* In other words, success on the PSAT can be a fulfillment of your graduation requirements.

Congratulations on taking this important benchmark in your high school career.

Best wishes,

Charles Ezell  
Assistant Principal

\*Memo: December 2014, *Graduation Requirements for the classes of 2016, 2017, and 2018* Bari Anhalt Erlichson, Ph.D. Assistant Commissioner/Chief Performance Officer