

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONTESTANT

• **ENTRIES.** As many as THREE students from grades 5 and 6 separately and grades 7 and 8 combined, OR ages 10, 11, 12 and 13 respectively by Sept. 1 of the current school year, if in an ungraded school, may be entered in the VOCABULARY District Contest from each school. Two students from grades 5 and 6 and two students from combined grades 7 and 8 advance to State.

• **ADVANCING TO STATE.** 4 students must compete in each contest in order for the top two students from each group to advance to State (See page 8 for complete rules.)

• **NATURE OF THE CONTEST.** The Vocabulary Contest is similar to a SAT preparation course. Test items are very similar in construction and content to those that might be found on a SAT verbal test. The vocabulary list for the current year consists of 300 words, and is found on the following pages of the *Academic Handbook*. Although each test item will be composed using at least one of these words, a well-read student who has a broad, cumulative vocabulary will perform best in this contest, for many of the words used within the tests are not used in everyday middle school language. The contest contains 30 items—approximately 13 sentence completion, 13 analogies, and 9 questions over a reading passage that is from 400 to 700 words in length. Test time is 30 minutes.

• **WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CONTEST.** The contest director will announce the time and place that contestants and one adult should report for verification of the scoring of tests. Tests and answer sheets will be distributed to contestants face up, **Contestants will be instructed to write their grade levels, contestant ID numbers, and school numbers on the test coversheet and their grade levels and contestant ID on the answer sheets in the spaces provided.** Contestants must not open the test until the start signal is given. The contest director will tell contestants their ID numbers, usually during roll call.

(Alternates taking the place of absent registered contestants should be sure to let the contest director know as they enter the room to save time in roll call.) No alarm watches or other devices that emit sound are allowed in the contest room.

TIME ALOTTED. Contestants will have 30 minutes beginning at the start signal. A 5-minute left time warning may be given, but contestants should be responsible for their own time management. Contestants will remain quietly in their seats until the time has expired.

MARKING ANSWERS. Contestants will use a dark ink pen or pencil to write answers in the blanks provided on the test. Any marking in the answer space will constitute an attempt. Contestants may place an X in the box provided where an erasure, mark-out or undesired answer has occurred in order to not have points deducted for these errors.

• **SCORING.** Add 5 points for each correct answer. Subtract 2 points for each wrong answer. Subtract 2 points for each marked out or erased answer that does not result in a correct answer. No points are deducted for skipped or unanswered test items, or erased, marked-out, or answered items when an X is placed in the box beside the answer blank.

• **VERIFICATION PERIOD.** No pens, pencils, papers, cell phones, or any other items should be in contestants' area while tests and answer sheets with keys are reviewed. Contestants and ONE coach OR parent OR adult have 15 minutes to check the computation of scores and ask questions about items counted incorrect. If the contest is held before **April 2**, tests must be turned back in to the contest director. Contestants will be disqualified from the contest should the paper be taken from the room prior to this date. After verification has been completed, awards will be issued. (At State, medals will be awarded through 6th place.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COACHES / CONTEST DIRECTORS

• **PREPARATION FOR CONTEST.** Read and follow all instructions provided in the “Information Pertaining to All Contests” section of the *PSIA Academic Handbook*. Observe and practice with students all rules and procedures delineated in the “Instructions to the Contestant” and in the “Checklist for Contest Directors” and the “Checklist for Graders.” Preparation for the Vocabulary Contest should include researching definitions in the *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition*. Provide students with multiple opportunities to take practice tests from SAT preparation books, such as Barron’s and Gruber’s. Test taking strategies for SAT

type tests are also beneficial. Practice tests from previous year’s contests are available on the PSIA Study Materials Order Forms.

• **PERSONNEL NEEDED FOR CONTEST.** *Contest Director and Assistant Director* from two different schools, each knowledgeable of contest construction and administration.

Graders. Director and assistant director may also serve as graders. To expedite the grading process, provide at least two graders for every 15 papers.