

# Steps in the 2011 National Merit® Scholarship Competition

**1,500,000 Entrants.** In October 2009, U.S. high school students who take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) and meet other program requirements will enter the 2011 competition for National Merit Scholarship Program recognition and scholarships. Nearly all program participants (entrants) will be juniors planning to enter college in 2011.

## PARTICIPANTS WHO QUALIFY FOR NATIONAL MERIT PROGRAM RECOGNITION

**50,000 High Scorers.** NMSC uses PSAT/NMSQT Selection Index scores (the sum of critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills scores) to determine participants who qualify for program recognition. In April 2010, high-scoring participants from every state will be offered the College Plans Reporting Service. These students will be invited to name two colleges or universities to which they would like to be referred by NMSC.

**34,000 Commended Students.** In late September 2010, more than two-thirds of the 50,000 high scorers will receive Letters of Commendation in recognition of their outstanding academic promise, but they will not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships. However, some of these students may be candidates for Special Scholarships provided by corporate and business sponsors.

**16,000 Semifinalists.** In early September 2010, nearly a third of the 50,000 high scorers will be notified that they have qualified as Semifinalists. Semifinalists are the highest-scoring entrants in each state. NMSC will notify them through their schools and provide scholarship application materials explaining requirements to advance in the competition for National Merit Scholarships to be offered in 2011.

**15,000 Finalists.** In February 2011, Semifinalists who meet academic and other requirements will be notified that they have advanced to Finalist standing. All National Merit Scholarship winners (Merit Scholar® awardees) will be chosen from this group of Finalists, based on their abilities, skills, and accomplishments.

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

**1,500 Special Scholarship recipients.** Beginning in March 2011, NMSC will notify winners of Special Scholarships provided by corporate sponsors. Recipients, chosen from candidates sent scholarship application materials in December 2010, will be outstanding students (although not Finalists) who meet their sponsors' eligibility criteria. Sponsors will handle public announcement of their Special Scholarship winners.

**8,200 Merit Scholarship® winners.** Beginning in March 2011, NMSC will notify winners of the three types of National Merit Scholarships:

- National Merit® \$2500 Scholarships
- Corporate-sponsored scholarships
- College-sponsored scholarships

In April, May, and July, NMSC will release names of Merit Scholar designees to news media for public announcement.