MERIT SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION PACKET

Thanks for your interest in participating in our Merit Scholarship Competition! The competition is open to rising 6th and 9th graders (current 5th and 8th graders). The Merit Scholarship was created at our High School in the early 1990s in order to help attract and retain the top academic talent for which St. Francis is known. We created the 6th grade Merit Scholarship Competition in 2013 after the Goshen Campus and the High School merged. We are pleased to offer this opportunity to recognize students who demonstrate academic aptitude, leadership, and commitment to the school community through extracurricular involvement. The 6th grade awards are three-year $1,000 scholarships; the 9th grade awards are four-year scholarships and may be up to $5,000.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT

The competition day will consist of short verbal and math standardized tests, a hands-on science problem-solving challenge, and a creative-writing activity. Students will hand-write their essays (unless they currently utilize a laptop as part of a documented classroom accommodation plan -- see below). The competition will be held on Sunday, January 12th from 1:00 - 4:30 p.m. at the St. Francis Downtown Campus (233 W. Broadway). Scholarship recipients will be notified on or before February 7th, before the results are announced to the rest of the St. Francis School community.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Register for the Competition by emailing MeritScholarships@StFrancisSchool.org.

In addition to the competition day elements (standardized test, essay, and science experiment), the Merit Scholarship Application includes the following:

Current St. Francis School Students:

1. Merit Scholarship Questionnaire (attached): This can be sent in ahead of time to MeritScholarships@StFrancisSchool.org, delivered to the Admissions Office, or brought to the competition day.
2. Teacher Recommendation: ONE Teacher Recommendation is required for 5th grade students and TWO Teacher Recommendations are required for 8th grade students. Please provide the Office of Admissions the name of the teacher(s) who will complete your recommendation(s). The Office of Admissions will send them the electronic form to complete on your behalf.

Applicants to 6th/9th Grade:

1. Merit Scholarship Questionnaire (attached): This can be sent in ahead of time to MeritScholarships@StFrancisSchool.org, delivered to the Admissions Office, or brought to the competition day.
2. Submit all of the additional regular items required for the Admissions Application (stfrancisschool.org/admissions) prior to the competition day.

An accommodation plan from St. Francis School or the current school and a current (within three years) psycho-educational exam report must be submitted at least one week prior to the competition if a student is requesting accommodations on the Merit Competition, as detailed below.
DETERMINING MERIT SCHOLARS

Scholarship recipients will be determined based on the results of the competition day, as well as the additional components of the Merit Scholarship Application. Merit Scholarship Finalists are chosen based on performance on the competition day, as well as their recommendation(s)/grade reports. Then the Merit Scholarship Committee reviews each Finalist’s entire Merit Application and determines the scholarship winners based on analysis of all aspects of the Application. Participant names and identities are kept confidential (so that the judging is “blind”) throughout the entire scoring and evaluation process.

Winners are chosen based on the strength of the following factors:

- Creative-Writing Essay (as graded by Language Arts/English teachers)
- Science Experiment (as graded by Science teachers)
- Math standardized test (SCAT)
- Verbal standardized test (SCAT)
- Any other standardized test results
- Core subject Teacher Recommendation(s)
- Grade Report/Report Card/GPA
- Merit Questionnaire -- evidence of extracurricular involvement and leadership

WHAT IS THE SCAT?

St. Francis uses the SCAT (School and College Ability Test) as the standardized test component of the Merit Scholarship. The SCAT is an assessment developed by the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. SCAT is an above-grade-level test used to help identify advanced students. Because this is an above-grade-level test, your student is not expected to know all the answers, and may not finish all the questions -- this is normal. SCAT has two sections -- verbal and quantitative -- and each section contains 50 questions. A student's raw score corresponds to the number of correct responses; raw scores are then converted to a percentile rank that indicates how the student performed on the SCAT compared to students in the same grade level nationally.

ACCOMMODATIONS DURING THE MERIT COMPETITION

Students who currently have a documented classroom accommodation plan that is based on a psycho-educational examination completed within the last three years, and are receiving accommodations at their current school, may request certain accommodations for the Merit Competition. Requests for accommodations must be made when registering for the competition, and no later than one week prior to the Competition. The following accommodations are possible:

1. Use of a school-provided laptop to complete the creative writing essay; and/or
2. Extended time on the standardized tests and/or essay; and/or
3. Separate seating for the standardized tests and/or essay; and/or
4. Use of a basic calculator on the SCAT

Accommodations will be provided if requested at least a week prior to the competition; the accommodations plan from the current school, documenting that the accommodations are being used, and the psycho-educational evaluation (from within the last three years) indicating the accommodations’ necessity must also be submitted at least a week prior to the competition.

THE DAY OF THE COMPETITION

Students cannot prepare for the Merit Competition, and our goal is for the event to be as enjoyable and stress-free as possible. This event is the first time our current SFS students and our prospective students will be gathered together. This is an exciting opportunity to meet future classmates and serves as an opportunity for new friendships to begin to form. Students are guided through each section of the event with clear instructions, as well as given time to ask questions. We also provide snacks, water, and multiple breaks for students to recharge. Facilitators at the Merit Competition include our Admissions Office personnel, Head of
Goshen/Downtown Campus, Head of School, and High School science faculty, who lead the science portion of the competition.

WHAT DO THE SFS MERIT SCHOLARS LOOK LIKE?

A St. Francis School Merit Scholar is a dedicated student who has demonstrated academic success in the classroom. Merit Scholars demonstrate leadership skills, are driven to contribute to their school community, and are active participants in school activities. In summary, Merit Scholars are well-rounded students who demonstrate achievement in many areas both inside and outside of the classroom.

Merit Scholarship winners generally earn mostly As; score in the 90+%ile on standardized tests; score in the top 5 on the creative writing essay and the top 5 on the science experiment; have teacher recommendations that are particularly strong, highlighting their academic engagement and leadership in the classroom; and submit strong Merit Questionnaires that provide evidence of character, leadership, and commitment to the school community.