



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

[DATE]

[NAME]

[STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER]:

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009, in which the United States will participate along with more than 60 other countries. PISA provides international comparisons of student performance in reading, mathematics, and science among 15-year-old students throughout the world. We are notifying you now because several schools in your state have been selected to take part in the field test this spring.

New reading assessment questions have been developed for PISA and they will be tested this spring to ensure that they accurately measure our students' knowledge and skills. Field testing the new questions is necessary to eliminate wording or topics that would put U.S. students at a disadvantage in answering relative to other countries. We ask your agency to support the participation of schools in your state in the PISA field test.

PISA, described in more detail in materials enclosed with this letter, is sponsored in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education and conducted by the Windwalker Corporation of McLean, VA and Westat of Rockville, MD. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0755.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will contact sampled school districts and schools to discuss conducting data collection. In the meantime, if you have questions about the study, please feel free to call Dr. Paul Hopstock of the Windwalker Corporation at (703) 970-3522 or send an email to PISA2009@westat.com. Also, more information about PISA is available at the NCES website at: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/>.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mark Schneider
Commissioner

cc: [STATE ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR]