

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS

Overview

Multiple recruitment packages will be used to notify schools selected to participate in the TIMSS and PIRLS 2011, their districts, and their state education agencies. If the main study replicates the field test sampling plan, then larger elementary schools with multiple fourth-grade classes will be asked to participate in both TIMSS and PIRLS, while smaller schools will be asked to participate in one but not both assessments. For that reason, there are three versions of the same recruitment letter for the grade four recruitment efforts, and three versions of supporting materials. If two independent samples are used for the main study, then the joint version of materials will not be used. The grade eight recruitment effort is more straightforward, as it involves TIMSS only.

Below is a complete list of the recruitment materials, and their intended uses. Copies of the text of all these materials are on the pages that follow. Each one is identified by the name in a box in the upper left corner, and referenced by its appendix page number. (**NOTE: the last document is formatted to print out on a legal-size sheet of paper.**)

The recruitment package for *state chief school officers* and *state test coordinators* will consist of

1. a letter to notify them that some schools in their state have been selected to participate in the TIMSS & PIRLS 2011 (see “State PIRLS & TIMSS letter”, p. 3);
2. a brochure describing TIMSS, its history, its primary goals, the purpose of the study, the structure of the assessment, and a list of participating countries (see “TIMSS draft brochure”, pp. 27-29);
3. a brochure describing PIRLS covering the same topics as the TIMSS brochure (see “PIRLS draft brochure”, pp.30-32);
4. a FAQ sheet answering questions about the studies and why some schools are assigned to TIMSS, some to PIRLS, and some to both assessments (T&P 2011 FAQ_T&P_g4”, pp. 20-21).

The recruitment package for *district superintendents* and *district test coordinators* will vary depending on whether schools in the district have been selected to participate in just TIMSS, just PIRLS, or both.

If the district includes schools selected to participate in just one assessment, it will receive

1. a letter to notify them that some schools in their district have been selected to participate in either TIMSS or PIRLS, and the letter will list which schools have been selected (either “School District TIMSS letter“, p. 6-7, or “School District PIRLS letter“, p. 8-9);
2. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s letter to districts (“Duncan Letter – T&P-DISTRICT”, p14);
3. the brochure describing the assessment to be administered (either “TIMSS draft brochure “, pp. 27-29, or “PIRLS draft brochure”, pp.30-32);
4. a FAQ sheet answering questions about that assessments (“T&P 2011 FAQ_T&P_g4”, pp. 20-21, if asked to participate in just PIRLS or TIMSS grade 4, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_g8”, pp.22-23, if asked to participate in just TIMSS grade 8, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_T4&8”, pp. 18-19, if asked to participate in TIMSS grade 4 and 8);
5. a sheet describing what school coordinators need to do to participate (“T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T4&8”, p. 24 or “T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T&P4, p. 25, or “T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T_g8, p. 26); and
6. a one-page table or “timeline” summarizing what activities the school, school coordinator, teachers, and students need to do and when these activities occurs, as well as the benefits of participation (“Timeline of Activities”, p. 33).

If the district includes schools selected to participate in both assessments, it will receive

1. a letter to notify them that some schools in their district have been selected to participate in both the TIMSS and PIRLS 2011, and the letter will list which schools have been selected (“School district PIRLS and TIMSS letter“, p. 4);
2. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s letter to districts (“Duncan Letter – T&P-DISTRICT”, p14);
3. the TIMSS brochure (“TIMSS draft brochure “, pp. 27-29);
4. the PIRLS brochure (“PIRLS draft brochure”, pp.30-32);
5. a FAQ sheet answering questions about the assessments (“T&P 2011 FAQ_T&P_g4”, pp. 20-21, if asked to participate in just PIRLS or TIMSS grade 4, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_T_g8”, pp.22-23, if asked to participate in just TIMSS grade 8, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_T4&8”, pp. 18-19, if asked to participate in TIMSS grade 4 and 8); and
6. the timeline (“Timeline of Activities”, p. 33).

The recruitment package for *schools* that have been randomly selected to participate in the studies will vary depending on whether schools in the district have been selected to participate in just TIMSS, PIRLS, or both.

If the school was selected to participate in just one assessment, it will receive

1. a letter to notify it that it has been selected to participate in either TIMSS or PIRLS 2011 (“School TIMSS Letter”, p. 12, or “School PIRLS letter”, p. 13);
2. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s letter to schools, appropriate version (“Duncan Letter – TIMSS – SCHOOL”, p. 15, or “Duncan Letter – PIRLS – SCHOOL”, p.16);
3. the brochure describing the assessment to be administered (either “TIMSS draft brochure “, pp. 27-29, or “PIRLS draft brochure”, pp.30-32);
4. a FAQ sheet answering questions about the assessments (“T&P 2011 FAQ_T&P_g4”, pp. 20-21, if asked to participate in just PIRLS or TIMSS grade 4, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_T_g8”, pp.22-23, if asked to participate in just TIMSS grade 8, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_T4&8”, pp. 18-19, if asked to participate in TIMSS grade 4 and 8);
5. a sheet describing what school coordinators need to do to participate (“T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T4&8”, p. 24 or “T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T&P4, p. 25, or “T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T_g8, p. 26); and
6. a one-page table or “timeline” summarizing what activities the school, school coordinator, teachers, and students need to do and when these activities occurs, as well as the benefits of participation (“Timeline of Activities”, p. 33).

If the school was selected to participate in both assessments, it will receive

1. a letter to notify it that it has been selected to participate in both TIMSS and PIRLS 2011(“School PIRLS & TIMSS Letter “, p. 10-11);
2. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s letter to schools (p. 17);
3. the TIMSS brochure (“TIMSS draft brochure “, pp. 27-29);
4. the PIRLS brochure (“PIRLS draft brochure”, pp.330-32);
5. a FAQ sheet answering questions about the assessments (“T&P 2011 FAQ_T&P_g4”, pp. 20-21, if asked to participate in just PIRLS or TIMSS grade 4, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_T_g8”, pp.22-23, if asked to participate in just TIMSS grade 8, or “T&P 2011 FAQ_T4&8”, pp. 18-19, if asked to participate in TIMSS grade 4 and 8);
6. a sheet describing what school coordinators need to do to participate (“T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T4&8”, p. 24 or “T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T&P4, p. 25, or “T&P 2011 Summary of Activities_T_g8, p. 26); and
7. the timeline (“Timeline of Activities”, p. 33).

State PIRLS & TIMSS letter

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last]

[Title/Department]

[State]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States will be participating in two important international studies in 2011 to help benchmark student performance in the United States compared to that in other countries around the world. Some schools in your state have been randomly selected to participate in these studies in the spring of 2011. I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of schools in your state in these two studies: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011 and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011.

TIMSS is administered every four years in more than 60 countries and provides important information for internationally benchmarking U.S. performance in mathematics and science at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels against top countries around the world. PIRLS is administered every five years in more than 50 countries and provides similarly important international benchmarking information in fourth-grade reading.

TIMSS and PIRLS 2011 are described in more detail in materials enclosed with this letter. The studies are sponsored in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education and are conducted by Westat of Rockville, MD. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx. While participation in this study is entirely voluntary, we ask your agency to support participation on the part of schools in your state so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country.

NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). Reports of the findings from the assessments will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Within the next few weeks, 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 do not hesitate to call [insert name of contact] at 1-888-XXX-XXXX or send an email to TIMSS/PIRLS@westat.com. You may also get more information about these studies by contacting Dr. Patrick Gonzales at NCES at (415) 920-9229 or visiting the TIMSS and PIRLS websites at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/> and <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>.

Thank you for your time and support. TIMSS and PIRLS are important elements in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky

Deputy Commissioner

cc: [State assessment coordinator name]

Enclosures

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]

[School District]

[Address 1]

[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States will be participating in two important international studies in 2011 to help benchmark student performance in the United States compared to that in other countries around the world: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011 and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011. We are contacting you because one or more schools in your district have been randomly selected to represent the United States in these studies in the spring of 2011.

TIMSS is administered every four years in more than 60 countries and provides important information for internationally benchmarking U.S. performance in mathematics and science at the fourth- and eighth-grade against top countries around the world. PIRLS is administered every five years in more than 50 countries and provides similarly important international benchmarking information in fourth-grade reading.

We ask your agency to support the participation of schools in your district in TIMSS and PIRLS 2011 as these studies are important elements in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. Participating schools will receive \$200 to compensate their time and efforts, their school-level coordinator will receive \$100, and each student that completes the test will receive a small gift.

Materials enclosed with this letter describe TIMSS and PIRLS and the assessment process for schools in more detail. Both assessments are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and are conducted by Westat, a research organization based in the Washington D.C. area. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx. While participation in this study is entirely voluntary, we ask your agency to support participation on the part of schools in your district so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will contact the following school or schools in your district that have been selected for TIMSS and PIRLS 2011: [LIST SAMPLED SCHOOLS HERE...]

NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). We will disclose the names of schools in each district only to the governing district for each school, and we ask that each district maintain the confidentiality of the sampled schools in TIMSS and PIRLS 2011. Reports of the findings from the studies will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call [insert name of contact] at 1-888-XXX-XXXX or send an email to TIMSS/PIRLS@westat.com. You may also get more information about these studies by

contacting Dr. Patrick Gonzales at NCES at (415) 920-9229 or visiting the TIMSS and PIRLS websites at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/> and <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>.

Thank you for your time and support. TIMSS and PIRLS are important elements in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Deputy Commissioner

Enclosures

School district TIMSS letter

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]
 [School District]
 [Address 1]
 [City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011, in which the United States will participate along with more than 60 other countries. TIMSS provides important international benchmarking information in fourth- and eighth-grade mathematics and science. We are notifying you now because one or more schools in your district have been randomly selected to take part in TIMSS to be conducted in spring 2011.

We ask your agency to support the participation of schools in your district in TIMSS 2011 as it is an important element in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. Participating schools will receive \$200 to compensate their time and efforts, their school-level coordinator will receive \$100, and each student that completes the test will receive a small gift.

Materials enclosed with this letter describe TIMSS and the assessment process for schools in more detail. TIMSS is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and is conducted by Westat, a research organization based in the Washington D.C. area. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx. While participation in this study is entirely voluntary, we ask your agency to support participation on the part of schools in your district so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will contact the following school or schools in your district that have been selected for TIMSS 2011: [LIST SAMPLED SCHOOLS HERE...]

NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). We will disclose the names of schools in each district only to the governing district for each school, and we ask that each district maintain the confidentiality of the sampled schools in TIMSS 2011. Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call [insert name of contact] at 1-888-XXX-XXXX or send an email to TIMSS@westat.com. You may also get more information about these studies by contacting Dr. Patrick Gonzales at NCES at (415) 920-9229 or visiting the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>.

Thank you for your time and support. TIMSS is an important element in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Deputy Commissioner

Enclosures

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]
[School District]
[Address 1]
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011, in which the United States will participate along with more than 50 other countries. PIRLS provides important international benchmarking information in fourth-grade reading. We are notifying you now because one or more schools in your district have been randomly selected to take part in PIRLS in the spring of 2011.

We ask your agency to support the participation of schools in your district in PIRLS 2011 as it is an important element in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. Participating schools will receive \$200 to compensate their time and efforts, their school-level coordinator will receive \$100, and each student that completes the test will receive a small gift.

Materials enclosed with this letter describe PIRLS and the data collection process for schools in more detail. PIRLS is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and is conducted by Westat, a research organization based in the Washington D.C. area. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx. While participation in this study is entirely voluntary, we ask your agency to support participation on the part of schools in your district so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will contact the following school or schools in your district that have been selected for PIRLS 2011: [LIST SAMPLED SCHOOLS HERE...]

NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). We will disclose the names of schools in each district only to the governing district for each school, and we ask that each district maintain the confidentiality of the sampled schools in PIRLS 2011. Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call [insert name of contact] at 1-888-XXX-XXXX or send an email to PIRLS@westat.com. You may also get more information about these studies by contacting Dr. Stephen Provasnik at NCES at (202) 502-7480 or visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>.

Thank you for your time and support. PIRLS is an important element in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Deputy Commissioner

Enclosures

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]

[School District]

[Address 1]

[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States will be participating in two important international studies in 2011 to help benchmark student performance in the United States compared to that in other countries around the world: the Trends in International and Mathematics Study (TIMSS) 2011 and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011. We are contacting you because your school has been selected to represent the United States in TIMSS and PIRLS in the spring of 2011.

TIMSS is administered every four years in more than 60 countries and provides important information for internationally benchmarking U.S. performance in mathematics and science at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels against top countries around the world. PIRLS is administered every five years in more than 50 countries and provides similarly important international benchmarking information in fourth-grade reading.

I encourage your school's participation in TIMSS and PIRLS 2011 as these studies are important elements in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. Participating schools will receive \$200 to compensate their time and efforts, their school-level coordinator will receive \$100, and each student that completes the test will receive a small gift.

Materials enclosed with this letter describe TIMSS and PIRLS and the data collection process for schools in more detail. Both assessments are sponsored in the United States by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and are conducted by Westat of Rockville, MD. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx. We hope you will participate in this study so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). We will only disclose the names of schools in each district to the governing district for each school, and we have asked that each district maintain the confidentiality of the sampled schools in TIMSS and PIRLS 2011. Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will call you to discuss your participation. In the meantime, if you have any questions about TIMSS and PIRLS 2011 or your school's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-270-6227 or send an email to TIMSS/PIRLS@westat.com. You may also get more information about these studies by contacting Dr. Patrick Gonzales at NCES at (415) 920-9229 or visiting the TIMSS and PIRLS websites at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/> and <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Deputy Commissioner

Enclosures

School TIMSS letter

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]

[School District]

[Address 1]

[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011, in which the United States will participate along with more than 60 other countries. TIMSS provides important international benchmarking information in fourth- and eighth-grade mathematics and science. We are notifying you now because your school has been randomly selected to take part in TIMSS in the spring of 2011.

I encourage your school's participation in TIMSS 2011 as this study is an important element in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. Participating schools will receive \$200 to compensate their time and efforts, their school-level coordinator will receive \$100, and each student that completes the test will receive a small gift.

Materials enclosed with this letter describe TIMSS and the data collection process for schools in more detail. TIMSS is sponsored in the United States by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and is conducted by Westat of Rockville, MD. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx. We hope you will participate in this study so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). We will only disclose the names of schools in each district to the governing district for each school, and we have asked that each district maintain the confidentiality of the sampled schools in TIMSS 2011. Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will call you to discuss your participation in TIMSS 2011. In the meantime, if you have any questions about TIMSS or your school's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-270-6227 or send an email to TIMSS@westat.com. You may also get more information about these studies by contacting Dr. Patrick Gonzales at NCES at (415) 920-9229 or visiting the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Deputy Commissioner
Enclosures

School PIRLS letter

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]

[School District]

[Address 1]

[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011, in which the United States will participate along with more than 50 other countries. PIRLS provides important international benchmarking information in fourth-grade reading. We are notifying you now because your school has been randomly selected to take part in PIRLS in the spring of 2011.

I encourage your school's participation in PIRLS 2011 as this study is an important element in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. Participating schools will receive \$200 to compensate their time and efforts, their school-level coordinator will receive \$100, and each student that completes the test will receive a small gift.

Materials enclosed with this letter describe PIRLS and the data collection process for schools in more detail. PIRLS is sponsored in the United States by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and is conducted by Westat of Rockville, MD. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx. We hope you will participate in this study so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). We will only disclose the names of schools in each district to the governing district for each school, and we have asked that each district maintain the confidentiality of the sampled schools. Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will call you to discuss your participation in PIRLS 2011. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the PIRLS or your school's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-270-6227 or send an email to PIRLS@westat.com. You may also get more information about the study by contacting Dr. Stephen Provasnik at NCES at (202) 502-7480 or visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Deputy Commissioner
Enclosures

Duncan Letter – T&P-DISTRICT

[DATE]

[SUPERINTENDENT NAME]

[DISTRICT NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [SUPERINTENDENT]:

I am writing you because one or more of the schools in your district has been selected to participate in an important international joint study in the spring of 2011 that gives us high-quality information about the progress of our students compared to their peers worldwide. This study, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, is known as TIMSS-PIRLS 2011.

From my own personal experience, I know that participating in voluntary studies can be challenging given all the other difficult and important work you do with students. However, the participation of each selected school is important to ensure that the U.S. samples truly represent the nation and the results reflect what our students know and can do. If you are considering whether or not your schools can participate, then I urge you to consider carefully the importance of TIMSS and PIRLS for comparing the performance of our students relative to our economic competitors around the world.

As we seek to strengthen education in the United States, TIMSS and PIRLS are important tools for measuring and tracking student performance and helping us understand how to reach our goal of an excellent and world-class education for all students. In 2011, more than 60 countries around the world will participate in TIMSS and more than 50 will participate in PIRLS. Your schools are among the approximately 550 schools randomly selected to represent the United States. Your district can make a valuable contribution to learning more about our education system, particularly where it has been successful and where we face challenges in educating our youth.

In the summer of 2010, principals from participating schools will be invited to the TIMSS-PIRLS 2011 Summer Conference in Washington, DC. The National Center for Education Statistics, the sponsor for TIMSS-PIRLS 2011 in the Department, is paying the expenses for their attendance in order to keep them informed about the assessments and how they are used in the United States and in other countries. I hope that representatives from your schools will be able to attend. I hope to attend the meeting myself. In the meantime, if you have any questions about TIMSS-PIRLS 2011 or your district's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-xxx-xxxx or send an email to TIMSS/PIRLS@westat.com. More information about TIMSS and PIRLS is also available at the NCES website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/index.asp>.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan
U.S. Secretary of Education

Duncan Letter – TIMSS - SCHOOL

[DATE]

[PRINCIPAL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [PRINCIPAL]:

I am writing you because your school has been selected to participate in an important international study in the spring of 2011 that gives us high-quality information about the progress of our students compared to their peers worldwide. This study is called TIMSS (the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study).

From my own personal experience, I know that participating in voluntary studies can be challenging given all the other difficult and important work you do with students. However, the participation of each selected school is important to ensure that the U.S. sample truly represents the nation and the study results reflect what our students know and can do. If you are considering whether or not your school can participate, then I urge you to consider carefully the importance of TIMSS for comparing the performance of our students relative to our economic competitors around the world.

As we seek to strengthen education in the United States, TIMSS is an important tool for measuring and tracking student performance and helping us understand how to reach our goal of an excellent and world-class education for all students. In 2011, more than 60 countries around the world will participate in TIMSS. Your school is among the approximately 550 schools randomly selected to represent the United States. Your school can make a valuable contribution to learning more about our education system, particularly where our system has been successful and where we face challenges in educating our youth.

In the summer of 2010, principals from participating schools will be invited to the TIMSS Summer Conference in Washington, DC. The National Center for Education Statistics, the sponsor for TIMSS, in the Department, is paying the expenses for their attendance in order to keep them informed about the assessments and how they are used in the United States and in other countries. I hope that you will be able to attend. I hope to attend the meeting myself. In the meantime, if you have any questions about TIMSS 2011 or your school's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-xxx-xxxx or send an email to TIMSS@westat.com. More information about TIMSS is also available at the NCES website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/index.asp>.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan
U.S. Secretary of Education

Duncan Letter – PIRLS - SCHOOL

[DATE]

[PRINCIPAL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [PRINCIPAL]:

I am writing you because your school has been selected to participate in an important international study in the spring of 2011 that gives us high-quality information about the progress of our students compared to their peers worldwide. This study is called PIRLS (the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study).

From my own personal experience, I know that participating in voluntary studies can be challenging given all the other difficult and important work you do with students. However, the participation of each selected school is important to ensure that the U.S. sample truly represents the nation and the study results reflect what our students know and can do. If you are considering whether or not your school can participate, then I urge you to consider carefully the importance of PIRLS for comparing the performance of our students relative to our economic competitors around the world.

As we seek to strengthen education in the United States, PIRLS is an important tool for measuring and tracking student performance and helping us understand how to reach our goal of an excellent and world-class education for all students. In 2011, more than 50 countries around the world will participate in PIRLS. Your school is among the approximately 550 schools randomly selected to represent the United States. Your school can make a valuable contribution to learning more about our education system, particularly where our system has been successful and where we face challenges in educating our youth.

In the summer of 2010, principals from participating schools will be invited to the PIRLS Summer Conference in Washington, DC. The National Center for Education Statistics, the sponsor for PIRLS, in the Department, is paying the expenses for their attendance in order to keep them informed about the assessments and how they are used in the United States and in other countries. I hope that you will be able to attend. I hope to attend the meeting myself. In the meantime, if you have any questions about PIRLS 2011 or your school's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-xxx-xxxx or send an email to PIRLS@westat.com. More information about PIRLS is also available at the NCES website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/index.asp>.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan
U.S. Secretary of Education

Duncan Letter – T&P - SCHOOL

[DATE]

[PRINCIPAL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [PRINCIPAL]:

I am writing you because your school has been selected to participate in an important international joint study in the spring of 2011 that gives us high-quality information about the progress of our students compared to their peers worldwide. This study, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, is known as TIMSS-PIRLS 2011.

From my own personal experience, I know that participating in voluntary studies can be challenging given all the other difficult and important work you do with students. However, the participation of each selected school is important to ensure that the U.S. sample truly represents the nation and the study results reflect what our students know and can do. If you are considering whether or not your school can participate, then I urge you to consider carefully the importance of TIMSS-PIRLS 2011 for comparing the performance of our students relative to our economic competitors around the world.

As we seek to strengthen education in the United States, TIMSS-PIRLS 2011 is an important tool for measuring and tracking student performance and helping us understand how to reach our goal of an excellent and world-class education for all students. In 2011, more than 50 countries around the world will participate in TIMSS-PIRLS 2011. Your school is among the approximately 550 schools randomly selected to represent the United States. Your school can make a valuable contribution to learning more about our education system, particularly where our system has been successful and where we face challenges in educating our youth.

In the summer of 2010, principals from participating schools will be invited to the TIMSS-PIRLS 2011 Summer Conference in Washington, DC. The National Center for Education Statistics, the sponsor for TIMSS-PIRLS 2011, in the Department, is paying the expenses for their attendance in order to keep them informed about the assessments and how they are used in the United States and in other countries. I hope that you will be able to attend. I hope to attend the meeting myself. In the meantime, if you have any questions about PIRLS 2011 or your school's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-xxx-xxxx or send an email to TIMSS/PIRLS@westat.com. More information about PIRLS is also available at the NCES website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/index.asp>.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan
U.S. Secretary of Education

Frequently Asked Questions

TIMSS 2011

Why was my school selected for participation?

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the overall U.S. TIMSS sample is representative of the overall U.S. school population. The random selection process is important for ensuring that a country's sample accurately reflects its schools and therefore can fairly be compared with samples of schools from other countries.

Will all students in a selected grade be asked to participate?

It depends on the number of classrooms in the school at the selected grade. In schools with only one or two classrooms per selected grade, all students will be asked to participate. In schools with more than two classrooms per selected grade, only students in two randomly selected classrooms will be asked to participate.

In addition, some students with special needs or limited English proficiency may be excused from the assessment.

Who conducts the TIMSS assessment?

The entire assessment process will be undertaken by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES conducts this study under authorization in the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx.

Do teachers need to help administer the assessment?

No. Westat staff will visit the school on the day of the assessment, bringing with them all the materials required, and they will handle the entire administration of the assessment session.

When will the assessment be conducted?

TIMSS assessments will take place between April 1 and May 15, 2011. Westat will work with schools to identify an assessment date convenient for the school in that time period.

Where will the TIMSS assessment be conducted?

The assessment sessions will be conducted in the schools that are selected to participate.

How long does the assessment take?

The assessment session is approximately 2½ hours and includes the administration of the assessment, a brief questionnaire that students complete about themselves, and two breaks. The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and the two portions of the assessment session each take 36 minutes (grade 4) or 45 minutes (grade 8).

What will happen with the collected data?

The data collected will be used in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. By law, the data provided by schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Are schools required by federal law to participate?

No. School participation is voluntary. However, we hope your school will participate in this study so that students like those in your school are accurately and fairly represented.

What do school staff and students do?

- Schools are asked to designate a *School Coordinator* to assist Westat staff members with in-school arrangements.
- The school principal or lead administrator will receive a School Questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire, which asks about the school environment and structure, takes about 20 minutes to complete.
- Teachers of the sampled classes will receive Teacher Questionnaires to complete. These questionnaires focus on the nature of implemented curricula, instructional practices, and attitudes toward mathematics and science.
- Students will attend the assessment session (2½ hours in length) and will be asked to complete the assessment booklet and questionnaire. Those who do will receive a small gift as a thank-you.

T&P 2011 FAQ T&P_g4

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was my school selected for participation?

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the overall U.S. TIMSS and PIRLS samples are representative of the overall U.S. school population. The random selection process is important for ensuring that a country's sample accurately reflects its schools and therefore can fairly be compared with samples of schools from other countries.

Will all our fourth-graders be asked to participate?

It depends on the number of fourth-grade classrooms in the school. In schools with only one or two fourth-grade classrooms, all students will be asked to participate. In schools with more than two fourth-grade classrooms, only students in two randomly selected classrooms will be asked to participate.

In addition, some students with special needs or limited English proficiency may be excused from the assessment.

Who conducts the assessments?

The entire assessment process will be undertaken by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES conducts this study under authorization in the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx.

Do teachers need to help administer the assessments?

No. Westat staff will visit the school on the day of the assessment, bringing with them all the materials required, and they will handle the entire administration of the assessment.

When will the assessments be conducted?

The assessment will be conducted between April 1 and May 15, 2011. Westat will work with schools to identify an assessment date convenient for the school in that time period.

Where will the assessments be conducted?

The assessment sessions will be conducted in the students' classrooms in the schools that are selected to participate.

How long does the assessments take?

The assessment session is approximately 2½ hours and includes the administration of the assessment, a brief questionnaire that students complete about themselves, and two breaks. The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and the two portions of the assessment session each take 36 minutes.

What will happen with the collected data?

The data collected will be used in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. By law, the data provided by schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Are schools required by federal law to participate?

No. School participation is voluntary. However, we hope your school will participate in these studies so that students like those in your school are accurately and fairly represented.

What do school staff and students do?

- Schools are asked to designate a *School Coordinator* to assist Westat staff members with in-school arrangements.
- The school principal or lead administrator will receive a School Questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire, which asks about the school environment and structure, takes about 20 minutes to complete.
- Teachers of the sampled fourth-grade classes will receive Teacher Questionnaires to complete. These questionnaires focus on the nature of implemented curricula, instructional practices, and attitudes toward mathematics and science.
- Students will attend the assessment session (2½ hours in length) and will be asked to complete the assessment booklet and questionnaire. Those who do will receive a small gift as a thank-you.

Frequently Asked Questions

TIMSS 8 2011

Why was my school selected for participation?

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the overall U.S. TIMSS sample is representative of the overall U.S. school population. The random selection process is important for ensuring that a country's sample accurately reflects its schools and therefore can fairly be compared with samples of schools from other countries.

Will all our eighth-graders be asked to participate?

It depends on the number of eighth-grade classrooms in the school. In schools with only one or two eighth-grade classrooms, all students will be asked to participate. In schools with more than two eighth-grade classrooms, only students in two randomly selected classrooms will be asked to participate.

In addition, some students with special needs or limited English proficiency may be excused from the assessment.

Who conducts the TIMSS assessment?

The entire assessment process will be undertaken by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES conducts this study under authorization in the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # xxx-xxx.

Do teachers need to help administer the TIMSS assessment?

No. Westat staff will visit the school on the day of the assessment, bringing with them all the materials required, and they will handle the entire administration of the assessment.

When will the assessment be conducted?

TIMSS assessments will be conducted between April 1 and May 15, 2011. Westat will work with schools to identify an assessment date convenient for the school in that time period.

Where will the TIMSS sessions be conducted?

The assessment sessions will be conducted in the schools that are selected to participate.

How long does the assessment take?

The assessment session is approximately 2 1/2 hours and includes the administration of the assessment, a brief questionnaire that students complete about themselves, and two breaks. The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and the two portions of the assessment session each take 45 minutes.

What will happen with the collected data?

The data collected will be used in the U.S. effort to benchmark the performance and progress of our education system against international standards. By law, the data provided by schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Public Law 107-279, Section 183 and Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347)). Reports of the findings will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Are schools required by federal law to participate?

No. School participation is voluntary. However, we hope your school will participate in this study so that students like those in your school are accurately and fairly represented.

What do school staff and students do?

- Schools are asked to designate a *School Coordinator* to assist Westat staff members with in-school arrangements.
- The school principal or lead administrator will receive a School Questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire, which asks about the school environment and structure, takes about 20 minutes to complete.
- Teachers of the sampled eighth-grade classes will receive Teacher Questionnaires to complete. These questionnaires focus on the nature of implemented curricula, instructional practices, and attitudes toward mathematics and science.
- Students will attend the assessment session (2½ hours in length) and will be asked to complete the assessment booklet and questionnaire. Those who do will receive a small gift as a thank-you.

T&P 2011 Summary of Activities T4&8

Summary of Activities for School Coordinators

TIMSS 2011

What will be asked of the school coordinator?

Upon the school's agreement to participate, Westat staff will work with the school coordinator to:

- Schedule the assessment. A Westat staff member will contact the school coordinator to schedule a convenient date between April 1 and May 15, 2011. The coordinator will need to arrange the use of each selected class' classroom or an alternative quiet space for the assessment.
- Review parent notification procedures. If your school requires parental permission to conduct the assessment(s), the Westat staff member will review these procedures with the school coordinator.
- Provide a list of classes at the selected grade. The school coordinator will receive instructions for preparing and submitting a list of all classes at the selected grade. Classes from the list will be selected randomly to participate.
- Provide a student listing for each selected class. **All student names will be kept confidential and will never be linked to assessment booklets or results. Individual student responses or scores are NEVER reported or distributed.**

Closer to the assessment date, the school coordinator will be asked to:

- Work with a Westat staff member to identify those students with special needs or limited English proficiency that preclude them from participating in the assessment.
- Notify parents, teachers, and students. Once the classes and students have been selected, a Westat staff member will work with the school coordinator on procedures for notifying parents, teachers, and students of the study and the benefits of participating.
- Receive the School and Teacher Questionnaires. The school coordinator will be mailed the School and Teacher Questionnaires and asked to distribute them to the school principal and teachers of the selected classes. The Coordinator should also retrieve the questionnaires and return them to the Westat staff member on assessment day.
- Confirm the assessment information. At least 2 weeks before the assessment, a Westat staff member will contact the school coordinator to confirm the date and location of the assessment.

On assessment day, the school coordinator will be asked to:

- Ensure that all students in the selected classes attend the assessment session. While it is not necessary for the school coordinator to be present during the session, the school coordinator should be available before the assessment to help locate selected students and ensure participation. **It is very important that student attendance rates be as high as possible** to avoid the need for a makeup session.

A graphic timeline of activities is also available for your convenience.

Please feel free to contact the TIMSS U.S. Home Office with any questions
via e-mail at TIMSS@westat.com
or by calling 1-800-XXX-XXXX

Summary of Activities for School Coordinators

What will be asked of the school coordinator?

Upon the school's agreement to participate, Westat staff will work with the school coordinator to:

- Schedule the assessments. A Westat staff member will contact the school coordinator to schedule a convenient date between April 1 and May 15, 2011. The coordinator will need to arrange the use of each selected class' classroom or an alternative quiet space for the assessments.
- Review parent notification procedures. If your school requires parental permission to conduct the assessment(s), the Westat staff member will review these procedures with the school coordinator.
- Provide a list of fourth-grade classes. The school coordinator will receive instructions for preparing and submitting a list of fourth-grade classes. Classes from the list will be selected randomly to participate.
- Provide a student listing for each selected class. **All student names will be kept confidential and will never be linked to assessment booklets or results. Individual student responses or scores are NEVER reported or distributed.**

Closer to the assessment date, the school coordinator will be asked to:

- Work with a Westat staff member to identify those students with special needs or limited English proficiency that preclude them from participating in the assessments.
- Notify parents, teachers, and students. Once the classes and students have been selected, a Westat staff member will work with the school coordinator on procedures for notifying parents, teachers, and students of the study and the benefits of participating.
- Receive the School and Teacher Questionnaires. The school coordinator will be mailed the School and Teacher Questionnaires and asked to distribute them to the school principal and teachers of the selected classes. The Coordinator should also retrieve the questionnaires and return them to the Westat staff member on assessment day.
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A graphic timeline of activities is also available for your convenience.

Please feel free to contact the TIMSS/PIRLS U.S. Home Office with any questions
via e-mail at TIMSS/PIRLS@westat.com
or by calling 1-800-XXX-XXXX

T&P 2011 Summary of Activities T_g8

Summary of Activities for School Coordinators

TIMSS grade 8 2011

What will be asked of the school coordinator?

Upon the school's agreement to participate, Westat staff will work with the school coordinator to:

- Schedule the assessment. A Westat staff member will contact the school coordinator to schedule a convenient date between April 1 and May 15, 2011. The coordinator will need to arrange the use of each selected class' classroom or an alternative quiet space for the assessment.
- Review parent notification procedures. If your school requires parental permission to conduct the assessment(s), the Westat staff member will review these procedures with the school coordinator.
- Provide a list of eighth-grade mathematics classes. The school coordinator will receive instructions for preparing and submitting a list of eighth-grade mathematics classes. Classes from the list will be selected randomly to participate.
- Provide a student listing for each selected class. **All student names will be kept confidential and will never be linked to assessment booklets or results. Individual student responses or scores are NEVER reported or distributed.**

Closer to the assessment date, the school coordinator will be asked to:

- Work with a Westat staff member to identify those students with special needs or limited English proficiency that preclude them from participating in the assessment.
- Notify parents, teachers, and students. Once the classes and students have been selected, a Westat staff member will work with the school coordinator on procedures for notifying parents, teachers, and students of the study and the benefits of participating.
- Receive the School and Teacher Questionnaires. The school coordinator will be mailed the School and Teacher Questionnaires and asked to distribute them to the school principal and teachers of the selected classes. The Coordinator should also retrieve the questionnaires and return them to the Westat staff member on assessment day.
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On assessment day, the school coordinator will be asked to:

- Ensure that all students in the selected classes attend the assessment session. While it is not necessary for the school coordinator to be present during the session, the school coordinator should be available before the assessment to help locate selected students and ensure participation. **It is very important that student attendance rates be as high as possible** to avoid the need for a makeup session.

A graphic timeline of activities is also available for your convenience.

Please feel free to contact the TIMSS U.S. Home Office with any questions
via e-mail at TIMSS@westat.com
or by calling 1-800-XXX-XXXX

What is TIMSS?

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure trends in mathematics and science achievement at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. Since 1995, TIMSS has been administered every four years. TIMSS 2011, the fifth study in the series, will involve students from more than 60 countries, including the United States.

TIMSS is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and managed in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

Why is TIMSS important?

TIMSS provides a unique opportunity to compare U.S. students' math and science knowledge and skills at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels with that of their peers in countries around the world. TIMSS complements what we learn from national assessments by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of student performance relative to students around the world. The results inform national discussions about education as well as international competitiveness.

TIMSS provides valuable benchmark information on how U.S. students compare to students around the world, allows educators and policymakers to examine other educational systems for practices that could have application to the United States, and contributes to ongoing discussions of ways to improve the quality of education for all students.

Key findings from TIMSS 2007

- In TIMSS 2007, the average U.S. 4th-graders' mathematics score (529) was above the TIMSS scale average of 500, but below that of 4th-graders in 8 of the other 35 participating countries. The average U.S. 8th-graders' mathematics score (508) was also above the TIMSS scale average (500), but below that of 8th-graders in 5 of the other 47 participating countries. At both 4th and 8th grade, U.S. math scores in 2007 were higher than in 1995.
- In science, the 2007 TIMSS average U.S. 4th-graders' science score (539) for 4th-graders was above the TIMSS scale average (500), but below that of 4th-graders in 4 of the other 35 participating countries. The average U.S. 8th-graders' science score (520) was also above the TIMSS scale average (500), but below that of 8th-graders in 9 of the other 47 participating countries. At both 4th and 8th grade, U.S. science scores in 2007 were not measurably different than in 1995.

What type of assessment is TIMSS?

The TIMSS mathematics and science assessment is developed through an international consensus-building process involving input from U.S. and international experts in mathematics, science and measurement. In a final step, the assessment is endorsed as suitable by all participating countries. The assessment contains a mix of questions: some require students to select appropriate responses, while others require that students solve problems and provide written answers. Examples of released TIMSS mathematics and science assessment items are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/educators.asp>.

NCES is authorized to conduct TIMSS under Section 153, of Public Law 107-279. Information collected will help the U.S. Department of Education's ongoing efforts to benchmark student achievement in the United States. Participation is voluntary. Data collected may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347) and Section 183, Public Law 107-279). Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Other information collected by TIMSS

TIMSS is more than an assessment of student knowledge in mathematics and science. TIMSS also considers the context in which learning occurs. Students, teachers and schools are asked about a variety of aspects of the environments in which content is taught, learned, practiced, and applied. In this way, TIMSS provides each country with a rich source of information on the factors influencing mathematics and science achievement.

[Closing info for back cover incl. logos]

For questions about TIMSS 2011,
contact the TIMSS Information Hotline at
1-888-xxx-xxxx or email to
TIMSS@westat.com



IES/NCES logo here



Participating Countries in TIMSS 2011

North and South

America

Algeria
Chile
Colombia
Honduras
United States

Europe

Austria
Bosnia and
Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
England
Finland
Germany
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Malta
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Romania
Russian Federation
Scotland
Serbia
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Turkey

Ukraine

Asia

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Chinese Taipei
Cyprus
Georgia
Hong Kong SAR
Indonesia
Iran, Islamic
Republic of
Israel
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Korea, Rep. of
Kuwait
Lebanon
Malaysia
Mongolia
Oman
Palestinian Nat'l
Authority
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Syrian Arab
Republic
Thailand
United Arab
Emirates
Yemen

Africa

Botswana
Egypt
Ghana
Libya
Morocco
Tunisia

Australia and

Oceania

Australia
New Zealand

Benchmarking Participants

Alberta, Canada
Basque Country, Spain
British Columbia, Canada
Ontario, Canada
Quebec, Canada

PIRLS draft brochure

What is PIRLS?

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure both trends in fourth-grade students' reading literacy achievement as well as school and teacher practices related to reading instruction. PIRLS 2011 is the third such study in the PIRLS series of internationally comparative reading studies carried out in countries around the world every five years. In PIRLS 2011, students from more than 50 countries, including the United States, will participate.

PIRLS is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and managed in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

Why is PIRLS important?

PIRLS provides a unique opportunity to compare the reading knowledge and skills of U.S. fourth-graders with their peers in countries around the world. PIRLS complements what we learn from national assessments by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of students in reading relative to students around the world. The results inform national discussions about U.S. education performance and practice within the wider context of international competitiveness.

Moreover, by participating in PIRLS 2011, the United States will obtain data about changes in children's reading achievement over the past 10 years, including valuable information about changes in reading instruction, how those changes relate to students' performance in reading, and about home, school, and classroom influences on reading achievement.

Key Findings from PIRLS 2006

- In PIRLS 2006, the average U.S. 4th-graders' reading literacy score (540) was above the PIRLS scale average of 500, but below that of 4th-graders in 7 of the other 39 participating countries and 3 of the 5 participating Canadian provinces.
- Among the 28 countries that participated in both the 2001 and 2006 PIRLS assessments, the average reading literacy score increased in 8 countries and decreased in 6 countries. In the rest of the countries, including the United States, there was no measurable change in the average reading literacy score.

What type of reading assessment is PIRLS?

PIRLS is designed to reflect the reading curriculum used in participating countries. PIRLS asks students to read two texts, either two literary texts (narrative fiction, generally drawn from children's books), two informational texts (typically excerpts from biographies, step-by-step instructions, or scientific or non-fictional materials), or one of each type. It then asks students about a dozen questions—both multiple-choice and open-ended "constructed response" questions—about the texts. These questions may range from identifying the place, time, and actions of the main characters or events to interpreting how characters might feel, why events occurred, or what the passage means overall (e.g., does the story teach a lesson?). Examples of released PIRLS test items can be viewed at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008017_2.pdf.

PIRLS is also meant to study home and school factors associated with children's reading literacy by the fourth grade. To that end, PIRLS will also administer questionnaires to students, their teachers, and the principals of their schools. The questions are designed to measure key aspects of students' home and school environments. In this way, PIRLS provides each country with a rich source of information on the factors influencing reading literacy.

NCES is authorized to conduct PIRLS under Section 153, of Public Law 107-279. Information collected will help the U.S. Department of Education's ongoing efforts to benchmark student achievement in the United States. Participation is voluntary. Data collected may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose (Title V, subtitle A of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347) and Section 183, Public Law 107-279). Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

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PIRLS assesses reading for literary experience and for acquiring and using information. PIRLS asks students to engage in a full repertoire of reading skills and strategies, including

- Focusing on and retrieving explicitly stated information
- Making straightforward inferences
- Interpreting and integrating ideas and information
- Examining or evaluating content, language, and textual elements.

For questions about PIRLS 2011,
contact the PIRLS Information Hotline at
1-888-xxx-xxxx or email to
PIRLS@westat.com

PIRLS logo

IES/NCES logo



Participating countries in PIRLS 2011**North and South
America**

Canada
Colombia
Honduras
United States

Europe

Austria
Bulgaria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
England
Finland
France
Germany
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Romania
Russian Federation
Scotland
Serbia
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Ukraine

Asia

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Chinese Taipei
Georgia
Hong Kong SAR
Indonesia
Iran, Islamic Republic of
Israel
Kazakhstan
Kuwait
Mongolia
Oman
Qatar
Singapore
United Arab Emirates

Africa

Botswana
Egypt
Nigeria
Morocco
South Africa

Australia and Oceania

Australia
New Zealand

Timeline of School Activities

	After agreement to participate	Prior to assessment day	Assessment day	Benefits
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a school coordinator. The school coordinator works with Westat assessment staff to plan for the assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completes a brief School Questionnaire (about the characteristics of the school, its enrollment, resources, policies, and learning environment). Arranges assessment day space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirms space for assessment is problem-free. If necessary, helps to ensure all sampled students attend the assessment session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives a \$200 check for the school. Represents the United States in the international study. Receives preliminary and final school reports describing classroom results compared with U.S. and international peers.
School coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with Westat assessment staff to select an assessment date convenient for the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completes Class Listing Form and Student Listing Forms and returns these to Westat (via fax, mail or email). Ensures parents are notified that their children have been selected for the assessment. Works with assessment staff to identify students with special education needs. Meets with students/teachers as necessary to provide information about the study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collects completed School and Teacher Questionnaires and returns it to assessment staff. Ensures all sampled students attend the assessment session. Meets with assessment staff and reviews the assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives a \$100 personal check. Receives U.S. national report with final results.
Teachers of sampled classes	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a Teacher Questionnaire and returns it to the school coordinator prior to assessment day. 	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent the United States in the international study. Receives preliminary and final school reports describing classroom results compared with U.S. and international peers.
Students	--	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students of the selected classes attend the assessment session and complete the assessment and Student Questionnaire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive a small thank-you gift. Represent the United States in the international study.
Westat assessment staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with the school to set an assessment date. Helps school coordinator with assessment details. Protects school and student confidentiality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calls the school coordinator to discuss assessment day space and student participation. Selects classroom sample and notifies school of selected classes. Provides School and Teacher Questionnaires to the school coordinator for distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts assessment from start to finish. Furnishes all the assessment materials, pencils, and test booklets. Conducts a brief follow-up interview with the school coordinator at the end of the assessment. Maintains security of all materials. 	

For additional information go to <http://nces.ed.gov/TIMSS> and <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>