



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

[DATE]

[SUPERINTENDENT NAME]

[DISTRICT NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [SUPERINTENDENT]:

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 one or more schools in your district 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. The following school or schools in your district have been selected to take part in the PISA field test: [LIST ORIGINAL SCHOOLS HERE]. We may also contact as alternatives: [LIST REPLACEMENT SCHOOLS HERE]

We ask you to permit the participation of schools in your district in the PISA field test. In appreciation for their time and efforts, the schools that participate will each receive an honorarium. In addition, school-level coordinators and participating students will also receive stipends.

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.

Information about districts, schools and students sampled for the PISA field test is protected by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (PL 107-279). 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 the PISA field test. Reports of the findings from the field test will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will call you to discuss any questions that you may have and to discuss the procedures for obtaining your permission. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the PISA field test or your district's participation, please feel free to call 1-888-270-6227 or send an email to PISA2009@westat.com. More information about PISA is also available at the NCES website at: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/>.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mark Schneider
Commissioner