

APPENDIX B – PARENTAL PERMISSION LETTERS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

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Sample Notification Letter, PIRLS Grade 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education, to participate in an important international study of student learning. This study is called PIRLS for short; the full name is the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. PIRLS looks at student reading achievement in schools around the world and, every five years since 2001, documents worldwide trends in reading literacy.

The enclosed summary sheet provides some background to PIRLS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

{Insert number} of our 4th-grade classes will take part in PIRLS. {This/One of these} is your child's class. {This class/These classes}, along with some {500} other classes of 4th graders nationwide, will contribute to this picture of the reading achievement of U.S. 4th graders, and how they compare with 4th graders worldwide.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. 4th graders can do, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your child to take part; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Previous experience suggests that students actually enjoy taking part, and participating students will receive a small gift, which we think they will like.

All of the information collected is kept completely confidential, as required by law. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). Under that 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)). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

Thank you for taking the time to think about this. We wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Enclosures:

Facts About PIRLS for Parents

Sample Implicit Consent Letter, PIRLS Grade 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

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If you have any objection to your child joining in the PIRLS activities please let us know by completing the attached form ('Being Part of PIRLS') and returning it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to think about this. We wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Enclosures:

Facts About PIRLS for Parents

PIRLS Implicit Consent Form

Being Part of PIRLS

We would like very much to have your child take part in the PIRLS project along with his/her classmates. Student participation in PIRLS is critical to the success of the study and, ultimately, to the nation's interests in improving reading education. Your child will be included in PIRLS unless you indicate otherwise.

If you do not want your child to participate in PIRLS, please check the "No" box below, sign the form, and send it back to the school. The school will make arrangements for your child to undertake some other activities during the time that the other students are involved with PIRLS.

No, I do not want my child to take part in the study.

Child's Name: _____
 First Middle Last

Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Date

Thank you for taking the time to think about this very important project.

Sample Explicit Consent Letter, PIRLS Grade 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

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Sincerely,

Enclosures:

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PIRLS Explicit Consent Form

Being Part of PIRLS

We need your consent.

We would like very much to have your child take part in the PIRLS project along with his/her classmates. Student participation in PIRLS is critical to the success of the study and, ultimately, to the nation's interests in improving reading education. Please check the "Yes" box below if you give your consent, or check the "No" box if you do not consent. After making your selection, please sign the form and send it back to the school.

Yes, my child may take part in PIRLS.

No, I do not want my child to take part in the study.

Child's Name: _____
 First Middle Last

Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Date

Thank you for taking the time to think about this very important project.

Field test's 'Facts About PIRLS for Parents' – Grade 4

Facts About PIRLS for Parents

In March and April of this year, your child's school will join schools across the U.S. and around the world taking part in a field test for PIRLS, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. The schools in the United States were selected randomly to represent our nation's schools, and within each school, 4th-grade students were selected randomly to represent the nation's 4th graders. Your child is among the 4th graders selected from this school to take part in PIRLS.

What is PIRLS?

PIRLS is an international assessment that measures student achievement in reading. Periodically (2001, 2006, and next in 2011) PIRLS documents worldwide trends in the knowledge of 4th graders. The National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education sponsors U.S. participation in PIRLS. Along with more than 50 other nations, we will take part in the 2011 cycle just as we did in 2001 and 2006.

What is a field test for?

Field tests are a critical part of the development of test questions for international assessments. It is important to make sure that any questions used in an international assessment accurately and fairly measure students' knowledge and skills in all participating countries. The results of the U.S. Field Test this spring will help assessment developers to eliminate wording or topics that would put U.S. students at a disadvantage relative to students in other countries in 2011.

What is involved?

From March through April 2010, PIRLS staff will visit the school and administer an assessment that contains reading items. The assessment runs for 70 minutes with breaks between sections. Students will also receive a background questionnaire, which takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from the contribution your child's school makes to the national picture of the reading achievement of our 4th graders, and how they compare with 4th graders worldwide. Schools benefit too since we provide each school with a report about how it did in the assessment. Last, and certainly not least, students receive a small gift that we believe they will like.

Who administers PIRLS?

The entire assessment is administered by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Where can I find out more about PIRLS?

There is a lot of information available through the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>. Or, if you would like to contact a PIRLS staff member directly, please feel free to call the PIRLS hotline at 1 (888) XXX-XXXX or email us at PIRLS2011@westat.com.

Main study's 'Facts About PIRLS for Parents' – Grade 4

Facts About PIRLS for Parents

In April and May of this year, your child's school will join schools across the U.S. and around the world taking part in PIRLS, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. The schools in the United States were selected randomly to represent our nation's schools, and within each school, 4th-grade students were selected randomly to represent the nation's 4th graders. Your child is among the 4th graders selected from this school to take part in PIRLS.

What is PIRLS?

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Sample Notification Letter, TIMSS Grade 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education, to participate in an important international study of student learning. This study is called TIMSS for short; the full name is the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. TIMSS looks at student mathematics and science achievement in schools around the world and documents worldwide trends in student knowledge of mathematics and science since 1995.

The enclosed summary sheet provides some background to TIMSS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

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Thank you for taking the time to think about this. We wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Enclosures:
Facts About TIMSS for Parents

Sample Notification Letter, TIMSS Grade 8

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

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Sample Implicit Consent Letter, TIMSS Grade 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

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If you have any objection to your child joining in the TIMSS activities please let us know by completing the attached form ('Being Part of TIMSS') and returning it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to think about this. We wish you all the best.

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Enclosures:

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Sample Implicit Consent Letter, TIMSS Grade 8

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

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No, I do not want my child to take part in the study.

Child's Name: _____
 First Middle Last

Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Date

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Sample Explicit Consent Letter, TIMSS Grade 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

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Sample Explicit Consent Letter, TIMSS Grade 8

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Field test's 'Facts About TIMSS for Parents' – Grade 4

Facts About TIMSS for Parents

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What is involved?

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What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from the contribution your child's school makes to the national picture of what our 4th graders know about mathematics and science, and how they compare with 4th graders worldwide. Schools benefit too since we provide each school with a report

about how it did in the assessment. Last, and certainly not least, students receive a small gift that we believe they will like.

Who administers TIMSS?

The entire assessment is administered by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Where can I find out more about TIMSS?

There is a lot of information available through the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/> or <http://timss.bc.edu/>. Or, if you would like to contact a TIMSS staff member directly, please feel free to call the TIMSS hotline at 1 (888) XXX-XXXX or email us at TIMSS2011@westat.com.

Main study's 'Facts About TIMSS for Parents' – Grade 4

Facts About TIMSS for Parents

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Field test's 'Facts About TIMSS for Parents' – Grade 8

Facts About TIMSS for Parents

In March and April of this year, your child's school will join schools across the U.S. and around the world taking part in a field test for TIMSS, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. The schools in the United States were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools, and within each school, 8th-grade students were selected randomly to represent the nation's 8th graders. Your child is among the 8th graders selected from this school to take part in TIMSS.

What is TIMSS?

TIMSS is an international assessment that measures student learning in mathematics and science. Every four years since 1995, TIMSS documents worldwide trends in the knowledge of 8th graders. The National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education sponsors U.S. participation in TIMSS. Along with more than 60 other nations, we will take part in the 2011 cycle just as we did in 1995, 1999, 2003, and 2007.

What is a field test for?

Field tests are a critical part of the development of test questions for international assessments. It is important to make sure that any questions used in an international assessment accurately and fairly measure students' knowledge and skills in all participating countries. The results of the U.S. Field Test this spring will help assessment developers to eliminate wording or topics that would put U.S. students at a disadvantage relative to students in other countries in 2011.

What is involved?

From March through April 2010, TIMSS staff will visit the school and administer an assessment that contains mathematics and science items. The assessment runs for 70 minutes with breaks between sections. Students will also receive a background questionnaire, which takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from the contribution your child's school makes to the national picture of what our 4th graders know about mathematics and science, and how they compare with 4th graders worldwide. Schools benefit too since we provide each school with a report

about how it did in the assessment. Last, and certainly not least, students receive a small gift that we believe they will like.

Who administers TIMSS?

The entire assessment is administered by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Where can I find out more about TIMSS?

There is a lot of information available through the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/> or <http://timss.bc.edu/>. Or, if you would like to contact a TIMSS staff member directly, please feel free to call the TIMSS hotline at 1 (888) XXX-XXXX or email us at TIMSS2011@westat.com.

Main study's 'Facts About TIMSS for Parents' – Grade 8

Facts About TIMSS for Parents

In April and May of this year, your child's school will join schools across the U.S. and around the world taking part in TIMSS, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. The schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools, and within each school, 8th-grade students were selected randomly to represent the nation's 8th graders. Your child is among the 8th graders selected from this school to take part in TIMSS.

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What is involved?

From April through May 2011, TIMSS staff will visit the school and administer an assessment that contains mathematics and science items. The assessment runs for 90 minutes with breaks between sections. Students will also receive a background questionnaire, which takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

What are the benefits?

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