

Facts for Parents About the PISA Field Test

In March and April of this year, your child's school will be one of about 35 nationwide taking part in the PISA 2009 Field Test. The schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools, and within each school, about 40 students were selected randomly to take part. Your child was among the students selected to take part in the study.

What is PISA?

PISA (the Program for International Student Assessment) is an international assessment that measures student learning in reading, mathematics, and science. The assessment occurs every three years (2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009), and provides information about how students in the U.S. compare in achievement with students in other countries. More than 60 countries will be participating in PISA 2009. The National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education sponsors U.S. participation in PISA.

What is the purpose of the PISA Field Test?

Each time the study is done, new assessment items need to be developed and tested to assure that those items accurately measure the knowledge and skills of students. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete items that are not working effectively for students in the United States.

What is involved?

PISA staff will visit the school and administer a two-hour reading assessment to the selected students. There is one break during the assessment. Students will also be asked to complete a background questionnaire that takes about 30 minutes to complete.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from PISA by having a greater understanding of how the knowledge and skills of U.S. students compare with those of students from other countries. The country benefits from the field test by assuring that the questions that are used are fair and appropriate for U.S. students. Schools that participate in PISA will receive a \$200 cash award, and each student who participates will receive a \$20 cash stipend.

Where can I find out more about PISA?

More information about PISA is available at the PISA website at <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pisa>. If you have specific questions you can call PISA staff at 1-888-270-6227 or e-mail us at PISA@westat.com.