

State PISA Field Test 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 is participating in an important international study in 2012 to help benchmark student performance in our country to that of other countries around the world: the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Some schools in your state have been randomly selected to participate in the international field test for PISA this spring. I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of schools in your state in the PISA field test.

PISA is administered every three years in more than 60 countries and provides important information for comparing the performance of 15-year-old U.S. students in reading, mathematics, and science with 15-year-old students in other countries. For the first time in the United States, computer-based versions of PISA will be tested out to see if they can efficiently and effectively collect the same information as pencil and paper assessments. In addition, PISA 2012 will provide an opportunity for the United States to gather information on students' financial literacy compared with other countries. New assessment questions have been developed for the 2012 assessment. The new questions 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 students in other countries.

PISA and the field test process for schools are described in more detail in materials enclosed with this letter. The study is sponsored in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education and is conducted by Westat in Rockville, Maryland. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0755. 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 field test 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 David Kastberg at 1-888-638-2597 or send an email to PISAHHELP@westat.com. You may also get more information about these studies by contacting Dana Kelly at NCES at (202) 219-7101 or visiting the PISA website at: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/>.

Thank you for your time and support. PISA 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

cc: [State assessment coordinator name]

Enclosures

District PISA Field Test Letter



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

[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 an important international study in 2012, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), to help benchmark student performance in the United States compared to that in other countries around the world. We are contacting you because one or more schools in your district have been randomly selected to represent the United States in the international field test for PISA this spring.

PISA is administered every three years in more than 60 countries and provides important information for comparing the performance of 15-year-old U.S. students in reading, mathematics, and science with 15-year-old students in other countries. In addition, PISA 2012 will provide an opportunity for the United States to gather information on students' financial literacy compared with other countries. The United States will also administer computer-based assessments in mathematics, reading and problem solving.

The field test to be conducted this spring is crucial to ensuring a fair international comparison of student performance. Field testing the new assessment is necessary to eliminate wording or topics that would put U.S. students at a disadvantage in answering relative to students in other countries. In some schools, all students will take a paper-based assessment with a subsample of students taking the computer-based assessments. In other schools, students will only take the computer-based assessment.

We ask your agency to support the participation of schools in your district in the PISA field test. Schools that participate in the 2011 field test will not be sampled again for the 2012 main assessment. In addition, to compensate their time and efforts, participating schools will receive \$200 (or equivalent in equipment or supplies) and each student who takes the field test will receive \$25. Students selected for the subsample taking both the paper-and-pencil and computer-based assessments will receive an additional \$15. In addition, each school's PISA school coordinator will receive \$100 for their time and effort to coordinate PISA in the school.

Materials enclosed with this letter describe PISA and the field test process for schools in more detail. The assessment is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and is conducted by Westat, a research organization based in Rockville, Maryland. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0755. 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 the field test: [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 only to the governing district for each school, and we require 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. 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 1-888-638-2597 or send an email to PISAHHELP@westat.com. You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dana Kelly at NCES at 202-219-7101 or visiting the PISA website at: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/>.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart Kerachsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stuart" being more prominent than the last name "Kerachsky".

Stuart Kerachsky
Deputy Commissioner

School PISA Field Test Letter

[Date]

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

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am pleased to inform you that your school has the opportunity to be a part of the upcoming Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012. In PISA 2012, the United States will participate along with more than 60 other countries in a study that produces important international benchmarks in reading, mathematics, science, general problem-solving, and financial literacy of 15-year-old students. Your school is one of 127 across the United States that has been randomly selected to take part in the PISA field test this coming spring.

The PISA 2012 field test will examine assessment questions to ensure that they accurately measure our students' knowledge and skills. The field test is vital to ensuring a fair assessment whose samples of students are comparable across countries. Testing the questions identifies wording or topics that would disadvantage U.S. students during the assessment.

I encourage your school's participation in the PISA field test. U.S. participation in PISA yields valuable information about our students' abilities at the national and international level. As compensation for time and effort, your school will receive \$200 and students who take the field test will receive \$25. Some students will also be selected to take an additional assessment to try out questions administered on a computer. These students will receive an additional \$15. Your school's PISA school coordinator (a staff person you designate to liaise with PISA staff) will receive \$100 for his or her time and effort coordinating PISA in the school.

Materials enclosed with this letter further describe PISA and the field test process for schools. The assessment is sponsored in the United States by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and is conducted by Westat in Rockville, Maryland. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0755. We will only disclose the names of schools to the governing district for each school, and we require that each district maintain the confidentiality of the sampled schools in the PISA field test. For more information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. I hope you will participate in this voluntary study because it is important that the United States has a nationally representative sample of schools.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will call you to answer any questions you have about the field test and discuss your participation in PISA. If you have any questions about the PISA field test or your school's participation before then, please feel free to call 1-888-638-2597, or send an email to PISAHHELP@westat.com. You may also contact Dana Kelly at NCES at (202) 219-7101 or visit the PISA website at: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/> for more information about PISA.

Your participation in the field test for PISA 2012 is vital; I hope you and your school will take advantage of this opportunity. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky

Deputy Commissioner
Enclosures

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 school, 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)).



How do I get more information?

Visit the PISA website:

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa>

For additional questions about PISA 2012, contact the PISA Information Hotline at 1-888-368-2597 or email to PISAHELP@westat.com.

NCES is authorized to conduct PISA 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. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this data collection under OMB # 1850-0755.

What countries are participating in PISA 2012

Europe

Albania
Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland

Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Serbia
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

North and South America

Argentina
Brazil
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Mexico
Peru
Trinidad and Tobago
United States
Uruguay

Asia-Pacific and Africa

Australia
Hong Kong-China
Indonesia
Israel
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Republic of Korea
Macao-China
Malaysia
Mauritius
New Zealand
Qatar
Shanghai-China
Singapore
Chinese Taipei
Thailand
Tunisia
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
Vietnam



Please feel free to contact the PISA U.S. Home Office with any questions via e-mail at PISAHELP@westat.com or by calling 1-800-368-2597



31118.1210.88320501



PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

PISA 2012

What is PISA?

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international assessment of 15-year-old students. In 2012, students from more than 60 countries including the United States will participate. PISA measures how well students apply their knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics, and science to problems in real-life contexts. Additionally, PISA 2012 will include computer-based assessments in mathematics, reading, and general problem solving, and an assessment of students' financial literacy.

PISA is sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and managed in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

Why is PISA important?

PISA provides a unique opportunity to compare 15-year-old U.S. students' reading, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills with those of peers in countries around the world. PISA complements what we learn from national assessments by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of student performance internationally. The results inform national discussions about education as well as international competitiveness.

PISA also compares U.S. student performance over time and across different segments of the U.S. student population. PISA examines relationships between student performance and schooling across countries to suggest national strengths and weaknesses.



What is the purpose of the PISA Field Test in 2011?

PISA conducts a field test (a small-scale, trial run of the assessment) in every participating country to see if any of the test questions are biased because of national, social, or cultural differences. Statistical analyses of student answers are also conducted to check for evidence of differences in student performance across countries that could indicate a linguistic or conceptual translation problem. Test questions that are found to be problematic are dropped from the assessment or treated differently in the analysis.

In the spring of 2011, the United States will participate in the PISA field test to assess the viability of new test questions and procedures to be used in PISA 2012. The field test will ensure a fair assessment for U.S. students and also provide valuable information about ways to reduce the time and effort required of schools and students to participate in PISA.

What will students be asked to do in the field test?

The field test consists of two sessions. The first session is approximately three hours and includes time for instructions, the administration of a paper-and-pencil assessment, and a brief questionnaire that students complete about themselves. The second session is administered on a computer and only some of the students will also participate in this approximately one-hour session. Participation is voluntary but important for identifying wording and concepts that could disadvantage U.S. students in the main study. Students' efforts in the field test ensure that the achievement of our nation's 15-year-olds is accurately and fairly reported.

What type of assessment is PISA?

The PISA assessments are developed through an international consensus-building process involving input from U.S. and international experts in reading, mathematics, science, and financial literacy 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 PISA reading, mathematics, and science assessment questions are available at

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/educators.asp>.





Program for International Student Assessment

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FIELD TEST

“PISA’s benefit is that it focuses more on the application of information than the memorization of information. Internationally, education focuses on deeper learning. Similarly, PISA reflects that international method and focuses on deeper learning rather than wider.”

High School Principal, PISA 2009 Participant

PISA is an international assessment of 15-year-olds that measures how well students apply their knowledge to solve problems related to reading, mathematics, and science in real-life contexts. In PISA 2012, some students will also be assessed in financial literacy, that is, the knowledge and skills that enable individuals to make informed choices about personal finances.

What is the field test for?

Field tests are a critical part of the development of test questions for international assessments like PISA. Field tests (small-scale, trial runs of an assessment) allow assessment developers to try out new questions to determine their performance when administered to students around the world. The results of the U.S. field test will help assessment developers to eliminate wording or topics that would put U.S. students at a disadvantage relative to students in other countries. The field test is also designed to provide valuable information about ways to reduce the time and effort required of schools and students participating in the assessment.

Why was my school selected for participation?

Your school was randomly selected so that the overall U.S. field test sample would be representative of the overall U.S. school population. Field-testing on a diverse sample of students from a variety of schools, locations, and backgrounds ensures that the assessment wording and concepts are not regionally, culturally, or socially biased.

Why should my school and students participate?

PISA informs national discussions about education as well as international competitiveness. By participating, students ensure fairness in the questions that will be used in the main study in 2012. Field-testing the assessment questions will identify wording and concepts that could disadvantage U.S. students in the main study. Students’ efforts in the field test ensure that the achievement of our nation’s 15-year-olds is accurately and fairly reported.

Is it possible that my school will be selected for the main study as well as the field test?

No, schools selected for the 2011 field test will not be selected for the 2012 main study.

Will all of our 15-year-old students be asked to participate?

Probably not. In each school, all 15-year-olds will have an equal chance of selection, and selected students will be part of a nationally representative sample. Student selection is not based on any student characteristic, other than being 15 years old. Only in very small schools will the school sample include all 15-year-olds. In addition, some students with disabilities or limited English proficiency may be excused from the assessment.

PISA 2012



PISA 2012

Who conducts the field test 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) and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB # 1850-0755.

Do teachers need to help administer the field test 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. PISA staff will also bring all of the necessary computer equipment for the computer-based assessments.

When will the field test be conducted?

The field test will be conducted between April 4–May 13, 2011. Westat will work with schools to identify an assessment date convenient for the school in that time period.

Where will the field test be conducted?

The field test will be conducted in the schools that are selected to participate.

How long does the field test take?

The field test consists of two sessions. The first session is approximately 3 hours; it includes time for instructions, the administration of the paper-and-pencil assessment, and a questionnaire that students complete about themselves. The second session is administered on a computer; only some of the students who took the paper-based assessment will participate in this approximately 1 hour session.

What will happen with the collected data?

The field test data will be used to evaluate whether the assessment accurately and fairly measures students' knowledge and skills in all participating countries. 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 from the field test 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.

Where can I find more information?

Visit the PISA website:

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa>

For additional questions about PISA 2012, contact the PISA Information Hotline at 1-888-368-2597 or email to PISAHELP@westat.com.



PROGRAM FOR
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
ASSESSMENT
(PISA) 2012

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE PISA WEBSITE AT <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PISA>

PISA 2012



ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR
EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences



APPLYING
KNOWLEDGE AND
SKILLS TO SOLVE
REAL-WORLD
CHALLENGES

PISA focuses on young peoples' abilities to use their knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges in the future.

PISA provides a unique opportunity for the United States to understand its educational standing in comparison to other nations. Findings from PISA are a valuable resource for discussing improvements in reading, mathematics, and science achievement for all students in this country.

SUMMARY OF FIELD TEST ACTIVITIES FOR PISA 2012

	Nov–Dec 2010	Jan–Mar 2011 Preassessment Contact	Mar–May 2011 Assessment Visit	Benefits
Principal	Identify a school coordinator.	Complete a School Questionnaire on the characteristics of the school and its enrollment, resources, policies, and learning environment.		- Represent other similar U.S. schools. - Receive U.S. national report with final results. - Receive \$200 check for the school's participation.
School Coordinator	- Select an assessment date convenient for your school. - Arrange for the use of a classroom or an alternative quiet space for the assessment. - Determine parent notification procedures. - Provide a list of eligible students to PISA staff.	- Notify teachers, selected students and students' parents of the study and benefits of participating. - Coordinate the principal's completion of the School Questionnaire. - Confirm the date and location of the assessment for PISA staff. - Collect parental consent forms where required and submit to PISA staff.	- Arrange assessment space. - Help ensure all sampled students attend the assessment. - Collect completed School Questionnaire and return it to PISA staff. - Ensure all sampled students are released from class for the assessment. - Meet with PISA staff and review the assessment.	- Receive U.S. national report with PISA 2012 results. - Receive \$100 check for participating.
Students			- Take the assessment and complete a Student Questionnaire, in a 150 minute session. - Some of these students will also take a one hour computer-based assessment. Computers for this assessment will be provided by PISA staff.	- Receive a Certificate of Volunteer Service for 4 hours of community service. - Represent other U.S. students like themselves and contribute to the profile of what American students know and can do. - Receive compensation for participating. Students will receive \$25 for completing the paper-based assessment and an additional \$15, if selected, for participating in the computer-based assessment.
PISA Staff	- Provide school with materials explaining PISA and its importance. - Work with the school coordinator to set an assessment date. - Maintain school and student confidentiality.	- Call the school coordinator to discuss assessment day, space, and student participation. - Select a random sample of eligible students to participate. - Provide a School Questionnaire to the school coordinator.	- Conduct assessment from start to finish. - Furnish all the assessment materials, pencils, test booklets, and computers. - Conduct a follow-up interview with the school coordinator at the end of the assessment. - Pack up the materials to ensure that the assessments are complete and secure.	
Find Out More	http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PISA			CBAPP-C



Welcome to the U.S. PISA Team!

Congratulations, you have been selected to be part of a special group of only 5,000 U.S. students representing the United States in the

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012.

This fall, selected students from the United States will match their knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics, science, problem solving, and financial literacy, against students from 64 other countries.

Come to the PISA Orientation and see what it's all about!

When?

Where?

What time?

PISA Date:

PISA Time:

PISA Location:



PISA
USA





CERTIFICATE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

This is to verify that

(Name of Student)

has completed 4 hours of volunteer service by participating in the
Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012,

an international study involving more than 60 countries. PISA measures the performance of 15-year-olds in applying their knowledge and skills to real-world problems. Each participating student represents many other students in the United States. Students' participation is critical to the success of PISA in the United States.

Jack Buckley

Commissioner

National Center for Education Statistics

