

## APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

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## State TIMSS Advanced 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 2015: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS is the longest ongoing international assessment. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured trends in academic achievement at grades 4 and 8 in countries around the world, including the United States. In 2015, TIMSS will also assess advanced mathematics and physics at grade 12. Known as "TIMSS Advanced," this 12<sup>th</sup> grade assessment will provide educational policy makers with valuable information about how many high school students are excelling at highly specialized "STEM" (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) content in a global context. Results from these assessments are used by researchers and policymakers to chart national progress against international standards and other countries around the world, informing national discussions about international competitiveness.

Some schools in your state have been randomly selected to participate in the international field test for TIMSS Advanced this spring. I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of those schools in the field test. The purpose of the field test is both to determine whether new questions are valid and fair for U.S. students and to help ensure that TIMSS field operations will be effective for the main study in 2015.

TIMSS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, TIMSS is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of 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 #1850-0695. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this study is voluntary, your support of school participation in your state is invaluable so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country.

Within the next few weeks, a representative of Westat will contact sampled school districts and schools to discuss participating in the field test. In the meantime, if you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Chris Averett at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com). You may also get more information about these studies by contacting Dr. Stephen Provasnik at NCES at (202) 502-7480 or [stephen.provasnik@ed.gov](mailto:stephen.provasnik@ed.gov), or by visiting the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/timss>.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Jack Buckley

NCES Commissioner

cc: [State assessment director]

Enclosures

*NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543. By law, the data provided by your schools, staff, and students may only be used for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S. Code, § 9573).*

## School District TIMSS Advanced Field Test Letter

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

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States is participating in an important international study in 2015: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS is the longest ongoing international assessment. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured trends in academic achievement at grades 4 and 8 in countries around the world, including the United States. In 2015, TIMSS will also assess advanced mathematics and physics at grade 12. Known as "TIMSS Advanced," this 12<sup>th</sup> grade assessment will provide educational policy makers with valuable information about how many high school students are excelling at highly specialized "STEM" (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) content in a global context. Results from these assessments are used by researchers and policymakers to chart national progress against international standards and other countries around the world, informing national discussions about international competitiveness.

Some schools in your district have been randomly selected to participate in the TIMSS Advanced field test this spring. I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of those selected schools. The purpose of the TIMSS Advanced field test is both to determine whether new questions are valid and fair for U.S. students and to help ensure that TIMSS field operations will be effective for the main study in 2015. Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's TIMSS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with TIMSS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. Each student who participates will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

TIMSS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, TIMSS is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of 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 #1850-0695. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this study is voluntary, your support of school participation in your district is invaluable 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...].

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call 1-(XXX)-XXX-XXXX or send an email to TIMSS@westat.com. You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Stephen Provasnik at NCES at (202) 502-7480 or stephen.provasnik@ed.gov, or by visiting the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/timss>.

Thank you for your time and support.

Jack Buckley  
NCES Commissioner  
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## School TIMSS Advanced Field Test Letter

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

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States is participating in an important international study in 2015: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS is the longest ongoing international assessment. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured trends in academic achievement at grades 4 and 8 in countries around the world, including the United States. In 2015, TIMSS will also assess advanced mathematics and physics at grade 12. Known as "TIMSS Advanced," this 12<sup>th</sup> grade assessment will provide educational policy makers with valuable information about how many high school students are excelling at highly specialized "STEM" (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) content in a global context. Results from these assessments are used by researchers and policymakers to chart national progress against international standards and other countries around the world, informing national discussions about international competitiveness.

In preparation for the 2015 assessment, the United States is participating in a field test in the spring of 2014. The purpose of the field test is both to try out new questions and to help ensure that operational procedures will be effective in the 2015 assessment. **Your school has been randomly selected to participate in the TIMSS Advanced field test this spring.** Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's TIMSS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with TIMSS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. Participating students will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

TIMSS Advanced is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. TIMSS Advanced 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 #1850-0695. For 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 contact you to discuss your participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call 1-(XXX)-XXX-XXXX or send an email to TIMSS@westat.com. You may also get more information about this study by contacting Stephen Provasnik at NCES at (202) 502-7480 or Stephen.provasnik@ed.gov, or by visiting the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/timss> .

Your participation in the field test for TIMSS 2015 Advanced is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study of preparedness for STEM careers.

Jack Buckley  
Commissioner  
Enclosures

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## **TIMSS 2015 Advanced Study Brochure Content: 8 ½ X 11in Tri-fold**

### ***Title page:***

TIMSS Advanced USA Logo

Map of world

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced 2015

### ***Inside panels:***

#### **What is TIMSS Advanced?**

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study Advanced (TIMSS Advanced) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure advanced mathematics and science achievement at the twelfth grade, as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. TIMSS Advanced was previously assessed in 1995 and 2008, with the United State participating previously in 1995. In 2015, TIMSS Advanced will involve students from more than XX countries, including the United States.

TIMSS Advanced 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 Advanced important?**

TIMSS Advanced provides a unique opportunity to compare the achievement of U.S. twelfth-grade students who have taken advanced mathematics or physics courses with that of their peers in countries around the world on advanced mathematics and physics content. TIMSS Advanced will provide educational policy makers with valuable information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized STEM content in a global context. The results inform national discussions about education, preparedness for postsecondary education, as well as international competitiveness.

TIMSS Advanced 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 of all students.

#### **What type of assessment is TIMSS Advanced?**

The TIMSS advanced mathematics and physics 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 items are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/educators.asp>.

### ***Back panels:***

#### **Other information collected by TIMSS**

TIMSS is more than an assessment of student knowledge in advanced mathematics and physics. 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 Advanced provides each country with a rich source of information on the factors influencing mathematics and science achievement.



## Participating countries in TIMSS 2015 Advanced

Bulgaria  
England  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Iran  
Italy  
Norway  
Portugal  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Slovenia  
Sweden  
United States

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NCES is authorized to conduct TIMSS under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543. Information collected will help the U.S. Department of Education's ongoing efforts to benchmark student achievement in the United States. Participation is voluntary. By law, data collected may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S. Code, § 9573). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0695. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

TIMSS Advanced USA logo

IES / NCES logo

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For questions about TIMSS 2015, contact the TIMSS Information Hotline at 1-888-XXX-XXXX or email [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com).

# **TIMSS 2015 Advanced Field Test FAQ**

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

TIMSS Advanced 2015 Field Test (Spring 2014)

<<Insert quote from previous TIMSS participating school>>

### **What is TIMSS and TIMSS Advanced?**

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 4 years. TIMSS 2015, the sixth study in the series, will involve students from more than XX countries, including the United States.

TIMSS Advanced measures trends in advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized STEM content in comparisons with countries around the world.

### **What is the field test for?**

Field tests are a critical part of the development of test questions for assessments like TIMSS. 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 determine specific wording or content that may put U.S. students at a disadvantage relative to students in other countries. It will also allow the U.S. to fine tune operational procedures for the 2015 assessment.

### **Why was my school selected for participation?**

Your school was randomly selected so that the overall U.S. field test sample will 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?**

TIMSS Advanced informs national discussions about education policy as well as international competitiveness. By participating, students ensure fairness in the questions that will be used in the main study in 2015. Field-testing the assessment questions will identify specific wording and content that could disadvantage U.S. students in the main study. Students' efforts in the field test help ensure that the achievement of our nation's most prepared students in mathematics and physics 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 2014 field test will not be selected for the 2015 main study.

### **Will all our twelfth grade students be asked to participate?**

No. Only twelfth-grade students who have taken or are taking calculus or advanced physics courses are eligible to participate. A sample of no more than 25 eligible students will be selected for each subject: advanced mathematics and physics.

### **Who conducts the TIMSS assessment?**

The entire assessment process will be conducted by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract with the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is authorized to conduct

this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543, and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB # 1850-0695.

**How are teacher and school questionnaires administered?**

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered online from a secure website. Teacher questionnaires take about 30 minutes to complete, and ask teachers questions about their experience, available resources, and instructional practices. School questionnaires take about 20 minutes to complete, and ask about school practices and resources.

**Do teachers need to help administer the assessment?**

No, Westat field staff will visit the school on the day of the assessment, bringing with them all the materials required. These field staff will administer the assessments to students.

**When will the field test be conducted?**

The field test will be conducted between March XX and April XX 2014. 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 assessment will be conducted in the schools that are selected to participate.

**How long does the field test take?**

The field test will take approximately 2 ½ hours to complete. This includes time for directions, the assessment, and a brief questionnaire that students complete about themselves.

**What will happen with the collected data?**

The field test data will be used to evaluate whether the assessment fairly and accurately measures student's 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 except as required by law [Education Science Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9573]. 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 of other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

**Are schools required by federal law to participate?**

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

**Where can I find more information about TIMSS?**

Visit the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>.

For additional information about TIMSS 2015, contact the TIMSS U.S. home office at 1-(XXX)-XXX-XXXX or email TIMSS@westat.com.

# TIMSS 2015 Advanced Field Test Student FAQ

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Information for Students*

#### **What is TIMSS and TIMSS Advanced?**

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 4 years. TIMSS 2015, the sixth study in the series, will involve students from more than XX countries, including the United States.

TIMSS Advanced measures trends in advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized STEM content in comparisons with countries around the world.

*Think of TIMSS Advanced as an Olympics of the mind.*

#### **Why should I participate in the TIMSS Advanced Field Test?**

You represent other students like you all across the country—students who have excelled in school and taken the most challenging mathematics or science courses offered in high school. Given the link between scientific expertise and economic productivity, TIMSS Advanced informs discussions about U.S. education and international competitiveness. Your participation in the field test ensures fairness in the questions that will be used in the main study in 2015.

*You are one of only 1,400 students selected to participate in the TIMSS Advanced field test in the United States.*

*Participating in TIMSS Advanced is a national service. How often do you get to represent your country and show how well advanced students in science and mathematics in the U.S. compare with similar students in other countries?*

#### **What subjects are assessed in TIMSS Advanced?**

You will take either an advanced mathematics assessment or a physics assessment. The advanced mathematics assessment will include questions about algebra, geometry, and calculus. The physics assessment will measure advanced physics content typically taught in second year physics or AP physics courses. You will only be selected to take an assessment if you have taken or are taking relevant courses in advanced mathematics or physics.

#### **How long does TIMSS Advanced take?**

The TIMSS Advanced assessment takes approximately 2 ½ hours to complete. This includes time for directions, the assessment, and a brief questionnaire about yourself and your educational experiences.

#### **How does TIMSS Advanced select a representative sample of students?**

The schools that participate in TIMSS Advanced in the United States are randomly selected from a list of all schools in the country that have twelfth grade students. Schools that do not offer the relevant advanced mathematics or physics course are eliminated. This is to ensure that the U.S. participants accurately represent schools in the whole United States that offer the relevant advanced mathematics or physics courses. In each TIMSS Advanced school, each twelfth grade student who has taken advanced mathematics or physics courses has an equal chance of being selected. Participants in other countries are selected the same way to make sure each country is fairly represented and no country has an advantage.

## Summary of School Activities: TIMSS Advanced 2015 Field Test

Summary of School Activities: TIMSS Advanced 2015 Field Test				
	November-December 2013	January-March 2014 Prior to assessment day	March-April 2014 Assessment day	Benefits
<b>Principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate a school coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete a brief School Questionnaire on the characteristics of the school, its enrollment, resources, policies, and learning environment (available online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Share the importance of participation in the study with school staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support assessment day activities</li> <li>Encourage students to participate and do their best on the assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent other similar U.S. schools</li> <li>Receive a \$200 check for the school</li> </ul>
<b>School coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select an assessment date convenient for your school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange assessment day location</li> <li>Confirm date and location with TIMSS assessment staff</li> <li>Provide course catalogue, if not available online</li> <li>Provide current class lists and transcripts for grade 12 students through online MyTIMSS portal</li> <li>Notify teachers, selected students, and students' parents of the study and benefit of participating</li> <li>Work with assessment staff to identify students with special needs</li> <li>Coordinate the principal's completion of the School Questionnaire (online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Coordinate the teacher's completion of the Teacher Questionnaire (online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Collect parental consent forms where required and submit to TIMSS staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm space for assessment is problem-free</li> <li>Collect complete School and Teacher Questionnaires (if not completed online) and give to assessment staff</li> <li>Ensure all sampled students attend the assessment session</li> <li>Meet with assessment staff and provide feedback about the assessment process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive a \$100 personal check</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers of eligible courses</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Teacher Questionnaire and return to school coordinator prior to assessment day (if not completed online)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent the United States in preparations for the international study</li> </ul>
<b>Selected Students</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the assessment session, complete the assessment and Student Questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive a small thank-you gift</li> <li>Represent the United States in preparations for the international study</li> </ul>
<b>Westat assessment staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the school to set an assessment date</li> <li>Help school coordinator with assessment details and logistics</li> <li>Protect school and student confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call the school coordinator to discuss assessment day location and student participation</li> <li>Select student sample and notify school of selected students</li> <li>Provide School and Teacher Questionnaires to the school coordinator for distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct assessment from start to finish</li> <li>Furnish all the assessment materials, pencils, and test booklets</li> <li>Conduct a brief debriefing interview with the school coordinator at the end of the assessment</li> <li>Maintain security of all materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure quality and uniformity of data collected across the United States</li> </ul>

For additional information, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>.

# Main Study Materials

## State TIMSS/TIMSS Advanced Main Study Letter

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last]  
[Title/Department]  
[State]  
[Address 1]  
[Address 2]  
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

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Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Jack Buckley  
NCES Commissioner  
cc: [State assessment director]

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## School District TIMSS/TIMSS Advanced Main Study Letter

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

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

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Thank you for your time and support.

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NCES Commissioner  
Enclosures

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*purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S. Code, § 9573).*

## School TIMSS Main Study Letter

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

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States is participating in an important international study in 2015: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS is the longest ongoing international assessment. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured trends in academic achievement at grades 4 and 8 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from these assessments are used by researchers and policymakers to chart national progress against international standards and other countries around the world, informing national discussions about international competitiveness.

Your school has been randomly selected to participate in TIMSS in spring 2015. Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's TIMSS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with TIMSS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. Participating students will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

TIMSS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, TIMSS is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of 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 #1850-0695. For 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 contact you to discuss your participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call 1-(XXX)-XXX-XXXX or send an email to [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com). You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Stephen Provasnik at NCES at (202) 502-7480 or [stephen.provasnik@ed.gov](mailto:stephen.provasnik@ed.gov), or by visiting the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/timss>.

Your participation in the TIMSS 2015 is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Jack Buckley  
NCES Commissioner  
Enclosures

*NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543. By law, the data provided by your school, staff, and students may only be used for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S. Code, § 9573).*

## School TIMSS Advanced Main Study Letter

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

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States is participating in an important international study in 2015: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS is the longest ongoing international assessment. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured trends in academic achievement at grades 4 and 8 in countries around the world, including the United States. In 2015, TIMSS will also assess advanced mathematics and physics at grade 12. Known as "TIMSS Advanced," this 12<sup>th</sup> grade assessment will provide educational policy makers with valuable information about how many high school students are excelling at highly specialized "STEM" (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) content in a global context. Results from these assessments are used by researchers and policymakers to chart national progress against international standards and other countries around the world, informing national discussions about international competitiveness.

Your school has been randomly selected to participate in TIMSS Advanced in spring 2015. Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's TIMSS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with TIMSS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. Participating students will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

TIMSS Advanced is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. TIMSS Advanced 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 #1850-0695. For 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 contact you to discuss your participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call 1-(XXX)-XXX-XXXX or send an email to TIMSS@westat.com. You may also get more information about this study by contacting Stephen Provasnik at NCES at (202) 502-7480 or Stephen.provasnik@ed.gov, or by visiting the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/timss>.

Your participation in the TIMSS 2015 Advanced is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study of preparedness for STEM careers.

Jack Buckley  
Commissioner  
Enclosures

*NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543. By law, the data provided by your school, staff, and students may only be used for statistical purposes*

*and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S. Code, § 9573).*

## **TIMSS 2015 Study Brochure Content: 8 ½ X 11in Tri-fold**

### ***Title page:***

TIMSS USA Logo

Map of world

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2015

### ***Inside panels:***

#### **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 4 years. TIMSS 2015, the sixth study in the series, will involve students from more than 61 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 of all students.

#### **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 items are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/educators.asp>.

#### **Key findings from TIMSS 2011**

##### *Mathematics*

- At grade 4, the U.S. average mathematics score (541) was higher than the TIMSS average of 500. The U.S. was among the top 15 education systems (8 education systems had higher averages and 6 were not measurably different) and scored higher, on average, than 42 education systems. The U.S. mathematics average at grade 4 rose 12 points between 2007 and 2011. The U.S. was one of 12 education systems that increased its average score during this time period.
- At grade 8, the U.S. mathematics score (509) was higher than the TIMSS scale average of 500. The U.S. was among the top 24 education systems in mathematics (11 education systems had higher averages and 12 were not measurably different) and scored higher, on average, than 32 education systems. The U.S. mathematics average score at grade 8 was not measurably different than in 2007.

##### *Science*

- At grade 4, the U.S. average science score (544) was higher than the TIMSS scale average of 500. The U.S. was among the top 10 education systems (6 education systems had higher averages and 3 were not measurably different) and scored higher, on average, than 47 education systems. The U.S. science average score at grade 4 was not measurably different than in 2007.
- At grade 8, the U.S. average science score (525) was higher than the TIMSS scale average of 500. The U.S. was among the top 23 education systems (12 education systems had higher averages and 10 were not measurably different) and scored higher, on average, than 33 education systems. The U.S. science average score at grade 8 was not measurably different than in 2007.

### **Back panels:**

#### **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.

#### **Participating education systems in TIMSS 2015**

##### Countries

##### **North and South America**

Canada  
Chile  
United States

##### **Europe**

Austria  
Belgium (Flemish)  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
England  
Finland  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Hungary  
Ireland  
Italy  
Lithuania  
Macedonia  
Malta  
The Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Serbia  
Slovak Republic  
Slovenia  
Spain

##### **Asia and Middle East**

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

##### **Africa**

Botswana  
Morocco  
South Africa  
Tunisia

##### **Australia and Oceania**

Australia  
New Zealand

Sweden  
Turkey

**Benchmarking participants**

Abu Dhabi, UAE  
Alberta, Canada

Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Dubai, UAE

Ontario, Canada  
Quebec, Canada

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NCES is authorized to conduct TIMSS under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543. Information collected will help the U.S. Department of Education's ongoing efforts to benchmark student achievement in the United States. Participation is voluntary. By law, data collected may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S. Code, § 9573). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0695. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

TIMSS USA logo

IES / NCES logo

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For questions about TIMSS 2015, contact the TIMSS Information Hotline at 1-888-XXX-XXXX or email [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com).

# TIMSS 2015 Main Study FAQ

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

## Frequently Asked Questions

TIMSS 2015 Main Study (Spring 2015)

<<Insert quote from previous TIMSS participating school>>

### **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 4 years. TIMSS 2015, the sixth study in the series, will involve students from more than XX countries, including the United States.

### **Why was my school selected for participation?**

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the overall U.S. 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 fourth- or eighth-grade students be asked to participate?**

It depends on the number of fourth- or eighth-grade classrooms in the school. In schools with only one or two such classrooms, all students will be asked to participate. In schools with more than two such 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 conducted by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract with the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543, and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB # 1850-0695.

### **How are the teacher and school questionnaires administered?**

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered online from a secure website. Teacher questionnaires take about 30 minutes to complete, and ask teachers questions about their experience, available resources, and instructional practices. School questionnaires take about 20 minutes to complete, and ask about school practices and resources.

### **Do teachers need to help administer the assessment?**

No. Westat field 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?**

The assessment will be conducted between April XX and May XX 2015. Westat will work with schools to identify an assessment date convenient for the school in that time period.

### **Where will the assessment be conducted?**



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

**How long does the assessment take?**

The assessment session is approximately 2 ½ hours and includes the administration of the assessment, a brief questionnaire that students complete about themselves, and two breaks. The questionnaire takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**What will happen with the collected data?**

The data from the assessment will be used to evaluate how the knowledge and skills of U.S. students compare to those of their peers in other 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 except as required by law [Education Science Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9573]. Reports of the findings from the assessment will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those of other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

**Are schools required by federal law to participate?**

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

**Where can I find more information about TIMSS?**

Visit the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>.

For additional information about TIMSS 2015, contact the TIMSS U.S. home office at 1-(XXX)-XXX-XXXX or email [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com).

# **TIMSS 2015 Advanced Main Study FAQ**

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

TIMSS Advanced 2015 Main Study (Spring 2015)

<<Insert quote from previous TIMSS participating school>>

### **What is TIMSS and TIMSS Advanced?**

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 4 years. TIMSS 2015, the sixth study in the series, will involve students from more than XX countries, including the United States.

TIMSS Advanced measures trends in advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized STEM content in comparisons with countries around the world.

### **Why was my school selected for participation?**

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the overall U.S. 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 twelfth grade students be asked to participate?**

No. Only twelfth grade students who have taken or are taking calculus or advanced physics courses are eligible to participate. A sample of no more than 25 eligible students will be selected for each subject: advanced mathematics and physics.

### **Who conducts the TIMSS assessment?**

The entire assessment process will be conducted by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract with the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, § 9543, and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB # 1850-0695.

### **How are teacher and school questionnaires administered?**

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered online from a secure website. Teacher questionnaires take about 30 minutes to complete, and ask teachers questions about their experience, available resources, and instructional practices. School questionnaires take about 20 minutes to complete, and ask about school practices and resources.

### **Do teachers need to help administer the assessment?**

No. Westat field 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?**

The assessment will be conducted between April XX and May XX 2015. Westat will work with schools to identify an assessment date convenient for the school in that time period.

**Where will the assessment be conducted?**

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

**How long does the assessment take?**

The assessment session is approximately 2 ½ hours and includes the administration of the assessment, a brief questionnaire that students complete about themselves, and two breaks. The questionnaire takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**What will happen with the collected data?**

The data from the assessment will be used to evaluate how the knowledge and skills of U.S. students compare to those of their peers in other 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 except as required by law [Education Science Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9573]. Reports of the findings from the assessment will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those of other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

**Are schools required by federal law to participate?**

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

**Where can I find more information about TIMSS?**

Visit the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>.

For additional information about TIMSS 2015, contact the TIMSS U.S. home office at 1-(XXX)-XXX-XXXX or email [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com).

# TIMSS 2015 Advanced Main Study Student FAQ

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Information for Students*

#### **What is TIMSS and TIMSS Advanced?**

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 4 years. TIMSS 2015, the sixth study in the series, will involve students from more than XX countries, including the United States.

TIMSS Advanced measures trends in advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized STEM content in comparisons with countries around the world.

*Think of TIMSS Advanced as an Olympics of the mind.*

#### **Why should I participate in the TIMSS Advanced Assessment?**

You represent other students like you all across the country—students who have excelled in school and taken the most challenging mathematics or science courses offered in high school. Given the link between scientific expertise and economic productivity, TIMSS Advanced informs discussions about U.S. education and international competitiveness.

*Participating in TIMSS Advanced is a national service. How often do you get to represent your country and show how well advanced students in science and mathematics in the U.S. compare with similar students in other countries?*

#### **What subjects are assessed in TIMSS Advanced?**

You will take either an advanced mathematics assessment or a physics assessment. The advanced mathematics assessment will include questions about algebra, geometry, and calculus. The physics assessment will measure advanced physics content typically taught in second year physics or AP physics courses. You will only be selected to take an assessment if you have taken or are taking relevant courses in advanced mathematics or physics.

#### **How long does TIMSS Advanced take?**

The TIMSS Advanced assessment takes approximately 2 ½ hours to complete. This includes time for directions, the assessment, and a brief questionnaire about yourself and your educational experiences.

#### **How does TIMSS Advanced select a representative sample of students?**

The schools that participate in TIMSS Advanced in the United States are randomly selected from a list of all schools in the country that have twelfth-grade students. Schools that do not offer the relevant advanced mathematics or physics course are eliminated. This is to ensure that the U.S. participants accurately represent schools in the whole United States that offer the relevant advanced mathematics or physics courses. In each TIMSS Advanced school, each twelfth-grade student who has taken advanced mathematics or physics courses has an equal chance of being selected. Participants in other countries are selected the same way to make sure each country is fairly represented and no country has an advantage.

## Summary of School Activities: TIMSS 2015 Main Study

Summary of School Activities: TIMSS 2015 Main Study				
	November-December 2014	January-March 2015 Prior to assessment day	April-May 2015 Assessment day	Benefits
<b>Principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate a school coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete a brief School Questionnaire on the characteristics of the school, its enrollment, resources, policies, and learning environment (available online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Share the importance of participation in the study with school staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support assessment day activities</li> <li>Encourage students to participate and do their best on the assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent other similar U.S. schools</li> <li>Receive a \$200 check for the school</li> </ul>
<b>School coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select an assessment date convenient for your school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange assessment day location</li> <li>Confirm date and location with TIMSS assessment staff</li> <li>Provide class lists and student lists through online MyTIMSS portal</li> <li>Notify teachers, selected students, and students' parents of the study and benefit of participating</li> <li>Work with assessment staff to identify students with special needs</li> <li>Coordinate the principal's completion of the School Questionnaire (online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Coordinate the teacher's completion of the Teacher Questionnaire (online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Collect parental consent forms where required and submit to TIMSS staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm space for assessment is problem-free</li> <li>Collect complete School and Teacher Questionnaires (if not completed online) and give to assessment staff</li> <li>Ensure all sampled students attend the assessment session</li> <li>Meet with assessment staff and provide feedback about the assessment process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive a \$100 personal check</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers of sampled classes</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Teacher Questionnaire and return to school coordinator prior to assessment day (if not completed online)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent the United States in preparations for the international study</li> </ul>
<b>Selected Students</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the assessment session, complete the assessment and Student Questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive a small thank-you gift</li> <li>Represent the United States in preparations for the international study</li> </ul>
<b>Westat assessment staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the school to set an assessment date</li> <li>Help school coordinator with assessment details and logistics</li> <li>Protect school and student confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call the school coordinator to discuss assessment day location and student participation</li> <li>Select classroom sample and notify school of selected classes</li> <li>Provide School and Teacher Questionnaires to the school coordinator for distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct assessment from start to finish</li> <li>Furnish all the assessment materials, pencils, and test booklets</li> <li>Conduct a brief debriefing interview with the school coordinator at the end of the assessment</li> <li>Maintain security of all materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure quality and uniformity of data collected across the United States</li> </ul>

For additional information, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>.

## Summary of School Activities: TIMSS Advanced 2015 Main Study

Summary of School Activities: TIMSS Advanced 2015 Main Study				
	November-December 2013	January-March 2014 Prior to assessment day	April-May 2014 Assessment day	Benefits
<b>Principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate a school coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete a brief School Questionnaire on the characteristics of the school, its enrollment, resources, policies, and learning environment (available online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Share the importance of participation in the study with school staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support assessment day activities</li> <li>Encourage students to participate and do their best on the assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent other similar U.S. schools</li> <li>Receive a \$200 check for the school</li> </ul>
<b>School coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select an assessment date convenient for your school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange assessment day location</li> <li>Confirm date and location with TIMSS assessment staff</li> <li>Provide course catalogue, if not available online</li> <li>Provide current class lists and transcripts for grade 12 students through online MyTIMSS portal</li> <li>Notify teachers, selected students, and students' parents of the study and benefit of participating</li> <li>Work with assessment staff to identify students with special needs</li> <li>Coordinate the principal's completion of the School Questionnaire (online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Coordinate the teacher's completion of the Teacher Questionnaire (online or hardcopy)</li> <li>Collect parental consent forms where required and submit to TIMSS staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm space for assessment is problem-free</li> <li>Collect complete School and Teacher Questionnaires (if not completed online) and give to assessment staff</li> <li>Ensure all sampled students attend the assessment session</li> <li>Meet with assessment staff and provide feedback about the assessment process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive a \$100 personal check</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers of eligible courses</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Teacher Questionnaire and return to school coordinator prior to assessment day (if not completed online)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent the United States in preparations for the international study</li> </ul>
<b>Selected Students</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the assessment session, complete the assessment and Student Questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive a small thank-you gift</li> <li>Represent the United States in preparations for the international study</li> </ul>
<b>Westat assessment staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the school to set an assessment date</li> <li>Help school coordinator with assessment details and logistics</li> <li>Protect school and student confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call the school coordinator to discuss assessment day location and student participation</li> <li>Select student sample and notify school of selected students</li> <li>Provide School and Teacher Questionnaires to the school coordinator for distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct assessment from start to finish</li> <li>Furnish all the assessment materials, pencils, and test booklets</li> <li>Conduct a brief debriefing interview with the school coordinator at the end of the assessment</li> <li>Maintain security of all materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure quality and uniformity of data collected across the United States</li> </ul>

For additional information, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/timss>.

## Appendix B: TIMSS Advanced 2015 Consent Letters and Supporting Materials

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# TIMSS Advanced Field Test Sample Notification Letter

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of student learning being conducted in our school this spring. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in mathematics and science in the United States against countries around the world. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured worldwide trends in student knowledge of mathematics and science at grades 4 and 8. The next TIMSS assessment will be in the spring of 2015 and will include TIMSS Advanced at grade 12.

TIMSS Advanced measures advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized science and mathematics content in comparison with countries around the world. In the United States, TIMSS Advanced students have taken or are taking calculus, or an advanced physics course.

Each time the study is done, new questions need to be developed and tested to ensure that those questions accurately measure the knowledge and skills of students. In spring 2014, new TIMSS Advanced questions will be tested in approximately 35 high schools in the United States. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not reliable and fair across participating countries.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education, to participate in the TIMSS Advanced field test. A select few of our high-achieving students will participate, along with your teenager. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background information about TIMSS Advanced, 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 learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS Advanced Field Test

# TIMSS Advanced Field Test Sample Implicit Consent Letter

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of student learning being conducted in our school this spring. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in mathematics and science in the United States against countries around the world. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured worldwide trends in student knowledge of mathematics and science at grades 4 and 8. The next TIMSS assessment will be in the spring of 2015 and will include TIMSS Advanced grade 12.

TIMSS Advanced measures advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized science and mathematics content in comparison with countries around the world. In the United States, TIMSS Advanced students have taken or are taking calculus, or an advanced physics course.

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If you have any objection to your teenager joining in the TIMSS activities, please let us know by completing the attached consent form and returning it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS Advanced Field Test  
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

**Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced  
Field Test  
Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your teenager has been asked to participate in a field test of an international study of student learning called the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced. Each student who participates will receive a small gift. This assessment will be conducted by a team of researchers from Westat, who are operating under contract on behalf of the U. S. Department of Education. In spring 2014, new advanced mathematics and physics questions will be tested in approximately 40 schools in the United States in preparation for the 2015 international study. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not reliable or fair.

**If you grant permission for your teenager to participate in the TIMSS field test, you do not need to return this form.**

**If you do not consent to your teenager's participation in the TIMSS field test, please return this form to your teenager's school as soon as possible.**

**I do not grant permission** for my teenager, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study Field Test.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD
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Before we can allow your teenager to join in the TIMSS activities, we must have your written consent. Please let us know by completing the attached form and returning it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study and to consider your teenager's participation in it.

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS Advanced Field Test

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

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Field Test**

**Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

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Yes, I grant permission for my teenager to participate in the TIMSS Advanced field test.

No, I do not grant permission for my teenager to participate in the TIMSS Advanced field test.

---

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Facts for Parents**

### **About the TIMSS Advanced Field Test**

Between April and May of this year, your teenager's school will be one of about 35 nationwide taking part in the TIMSS Advanced 2015 Field Test. The schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools that offer courses in advanced mathematics, such as calculus, and advanced physics. Within each school, 12<sup>th</sup> grade students were selected randomly to take represent the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have taken or are taking calculus and/or advanced physics. Your teenager was among those students selected to take part in the TIMSS field test.

### **What is TIMSS?**

TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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, the U.S. will take part in the 2015 TIMSS cycle as we did in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011. TIMSS 2015 will include the TIMSS Advanced component.

### **What is the purpose of the TIMSS Advanced Field Test?**

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

### **What is involved?**

TIMSS staff will visit the school and administer the field test. The field test will take approximately 2 ½ hours. The assessment itself is 90 minutes with breaks between sections. Students will also be asked some questions about themselves and their educational experience.

### **What are the benefits?**

The nation as a whole benefits from TIMSS by having a greater understanding of how the knowledge and skills of U.S. best prepared 12<sup>th</sup> graders compare with 12<sup>th</sup> graders from other countries who have taken specialized mathematics and science courses. The country benefits from the field test by ensuring that the questions used in the main study are fair and appropriate for U.S. students. Schools that participate in TIMSS will

receive \$200, and each student who participates will receive a small gift that we believe they will like.

## **Who administers TIMSS Advanced?**

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.

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## **Where can I find out more about TIMSS and TIMSS Advanced?**

More information about TIMSS is available at the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss> or <http://timss.bc.edu>. Or if you like to contact a TIMSS staff member directly, please feel free to call the TIMSS hotline at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email us at [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com).



## TIMSS 2015 Main Study Sample Notification Letter: Grade 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of student learning being conducted in our school this spring. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in mathematics and science at grades 4 and 8 in the United States against countries around the world. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured worldwide trends in student knowledge of mathematics and science. The next TIMSS assessment will be in the spring of 2015.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, to participate in the TIMSS main study. {Insert number} of our 4th grade classes will take part. {This/One of these} is your child's class. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background information about 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.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. 4th graders can do in mathematics and science, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. In addition to answering mathematics and science questions, students will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about themselves. 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.

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Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

[School official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS 2015 Main Study

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Enclosures:

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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 consent form and returning it to the school.

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Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS 2015 Main Study

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

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[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS 2015 Main Study

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

## **Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)**

### **Main Study**

#### **Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your child has been asked to participate in an international study of student learning called the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Each student who participates will receive a small gift. This assessment will be conducted by a team of researchers from Westat, who are operating under contract on behalf of the U. S. Department of Education. In spring 2015, new 4<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade questions will be tested in schools in the United States.

**If you grant permission for your child to participate in the 2015 TIMSS, you do not need to return this form.**

**If you do not consent to your child's participation in the 2015 TIMSS, please return this form to your child's school as soon as possible.**

**I do not grant permission** for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study Main Study.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD
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Sincerely,

[School Official]

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Facts for Parents about the TIMSS 2015 Main Study  
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Parent/Guardian Consent Form

## Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

### Main Study

### Parent/Guardian Consent Form

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Yes, I grant permission for my child to participate in the 2015 TIMSS.

No, I do not grant permission for my child to participate in the 2015 TIMSS.

---

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_



SCHOOL LETTERHEAD
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All of the information collected is safeguarded, as required by law. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA, 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9543. 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 except as required by law (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

If you have any objection to your teenager joining in the TIMSS activities, please let us know by completing the attached consent form and returning it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS Advanced Main Study

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

**Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced  
Main Study  
Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your teenager has been asked to participate in an international study of student learning called the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced. Each student who participates will receive a small gift. This assessment will be conducted by a team of researchers from Westat, who are operating under contract on behalf of the U. S. Department of Education. In spring 2015, TIMSS Advanced will measure advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized science and mathematics content in comparison with countries around the world. In the United States, TIMSS Advanced students have taken or are taking calculus, or an advanced physics course.

**If you grant permission for your teenager to participate in the 2015 TIMSS, you do not need to return this form.**

**If you do not consent to your teenager's participation in the 2015 TIMSS, please return this form to your teenager's school as soon as possible.**

**I do not grant permission** for my teenager, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study Main Study.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD
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Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of student learning being conducted in our school this spring. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in mathematics and science in the United States against countries around the world. Since 1995, TIMSS has measured worldwide trends in student knowledge of mathematics and science at grades 4 and 8. The next TIMSS assessment will be in the spring of 2015, and will include a TIMSS Advanced component at grade 12.

TIMSS Advanced measures advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized science and mathematics content in comparison with countries around the world. In the United States, TIMSS Advanced students have taken or are taking calculus, or an advanced physics course.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education, to participate in the TIMSS Advanced main study. A select few of our high achieving students will participate, along with your teenager. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background information about TIMSS Advanced, 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.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have taken calculus or advanced physics can do, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. In addition to answering mathematics and physics questions, students will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about themselves. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your teenager 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 safeguarded, as required by law. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA, 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9543. 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 except as required by law (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

Before we can allow your teenager to join in the TIMSS activities, we must have your written consent. Please let us know by completing the attached form and returning it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study and to consider your teenager's participation in it.

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the TIMSS Advanced Main Study

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

**Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced**

**Main Study**

**Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your teenager has been asked to participate in the Main Study of an international study of student learning called the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced. Each student who participates will receive a small gift. This assessment will be conducted by a team of researchers from Westat, who are operating under contract on behalf of the U. S. Department of Education. In spring 2015, TIMSS Advanced will measure advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized science and mathematics content in comparison with countries around the world. In the United States, TIMSS Advanced students have taken or are taking calculus, or an advanced physics course.

Yes, I grant permission for my teenager to participate in the TIMSS Advanced Main Study.

No, I do not grant permission for my teenager to participate in the TIMSS Advanced Main Study.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Facts for Parents**

### **About the TIMSS Advanced Main Study**

Between April and May of this year, your teenager's school will be one of several hundred schools nationwide taking part in the TIMSS Advanced 2015 Main Study. The schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools that offer courses in advanced mathematics, such as calculus, and advanced physics. Within each school, 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students were selected randomly to take represent the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have taken or are taking calculus and/or advanced physics. Your teenagers was among those students selected to take part in the TIMSS main study

#### **What is TIMSS?**

TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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, the U.S. will take part in the 2015 TIMSS cycle as we did in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011. TIMSS 2015 will include the TIMSS Advanced component.

#### **What is the purpose of the TIMSS Advanced Main Study?**

TIMSS Advanced measures advanced mathematics and physics achievement for students in their final year of secondary school. It will provide information about how many students are excelling at highly specialized science and mathematics content in comparison with countries around the world. In the United States, TIMSS Advanced students have taken or are taking calculus, or an advanced physics course.

#### **What is involved?**

TIMSS staff will visit the school and administer the main study. The main study will take approximately 2 ½ hours. The assessment itself is 90 minutes with breaks between sections. Students will also be asked some questions about themselves and their educational experience.

#### **What are the benefits?**

The nation as a whole benefits from TIMSS by having a greater understanding of how the knowledge and skills of the best prepared U.S. 12<sup>th</sup> graders compare with 12<sup>th</sup> graders from other countries who have taken specialized mathematics and science



courses. Schools that participate in TIMSS will receive \$200, and each student who participates will receive a small gift that we believe they will like.

## **Who administers TIMSS Advanced?**

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.

All of the information collected is safeguarded, as required by law. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA, 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9543. 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 except as required by law (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

## **Where can I find out more about TIMSS and TIMSS Advanced?**

More information about TIMSS is available at the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss> or <http://timss.bc.edu>. Or if you like to contact a TIMSS staff member directly, please feel free to call the TIMSS hotline at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email us at [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com).