

## Appendix A

### PIRLS 2016 Field Test & Main Study Consent and Recruitment Materials

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## PIRLS 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in reading in the United States against countries around the world. Since 2001, PIRLS has measured worldwide trends in student reading skills at grade 4. The next PIRLS assessment will be in the spring of 2016.

Each time the PIRLS 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 2015, new PIRLS questions will be tested in approximately 25 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), part of the U.S. Department of Education, to participate in the PIRLS field test. {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 PIRLS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. 4th graders can do in reading, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. In addition to answering reading questions, students will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about themselves. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. Your child's class may be selected to participate in *ePIRLS*. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your child to take part; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Previous experience suggests that students actually enjoy taking part, and participating students will receive a small gift, which we think they will like.

All of the information collected is 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.C. § 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.

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

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures: Facts for Parents about the PIRLS Field Test

## PIRLS 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in reading in the United States against countries around the world. Since 2001, PIRLS has measured worldwide trends in student reading skills at grade 4. The next PIRLS assessment will be in the spring of 2016.

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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 PIRLS field test. {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 PIRLS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

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If you have any objection to your child joining in the PIRLS activities, please let us know by completing the attached 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 PIRLS Field Test

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

**PIRLS Implicit Consent Form**  
**Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)**

**Field Test**

**Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your child has been asked to participate in a field test of an international study of student learning called the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Your child's class may also be selected to participate in ePIRLS. Each student who participates will receive a small gift.

The student assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from RTI International, on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In spring 2015, new questions will be tested in approximately 25 schools in the United States in preparation for the 2016 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 child to participate in the PIRLS field test, you do not need to return this form.**

**If you do not consent to your child's participation in the PIRLS field test, 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study Field Test.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of parent or guardian)

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

PLEASE PRINT:

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

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

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

## PIRLS Field Test Sample Explicit 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in reading in the United States against countries around the world. Since 2001, PIRLS has measured worldwide trends in student reading skills at grade 4. The next PIRLS assessment will be in the spring of 2016.

Each time the PIRLS 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 2015, new PIRLS questions will be tested in approximately 25 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), part of the U.S. Department of Education, to participate in the PIRLS field test. {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 PIRLS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. 4th graders can do in reading, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. In addition to answering reading questions, students will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about themselves. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. Your child's class may also be selected to participate in *ePIRLS*. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your child to take part; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Previous experience suggests that students actually enjoy taking part, and participating students will receive a small gift, which we think they will like.

All of the information collected is 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.C. § 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 child to join in the PIRLS 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 child's participation in it.

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures: Facts for Parents about the PIRLS Field Test  
Parent/Guardian Consent Form



**PIRLS Explicit Consent Form**

**Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)**

**Field Test**

**Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your child has been asked to participate in a field test of an international study of student learning called the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Your child's class may also be selected to participate in ePIRLS. Each student who participates will receive a small gift.

The student assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from RTI International, on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In spring 2015, new questions will be tested in approximately 25 schools in the United States in preparation for the 2016 international study. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not reliable or fair.

Yes, I grant permission for my child to participate in the PIRLS field test.

No, I do not grant permission for my child to participate in the PIRLS field test.

---

(Signature of parent or guardian)

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

PLEASE PRINT:

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

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

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



## **PIRLS Facts for Parents about the Field Test**

Between March and April of this year, your child's school will be one of about 25 nationwide taking part in the PIRLS Field Test. Within each school, 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms were selected randomly to represent the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> graders. All students from selected classrooms are invited to participate, and your child was among those students selected to take part in the PIRLS field test.

### **What is PIRLS?**

PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is an international assessment that measures student learning in reading. Every five years since 2001, PIRLS documents worldwide trends in the reading knowledge of 4<sup>th</sup> graders. The National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education sponsors U.S. participation in PIRLS. Along with more than 40 other nations, the U.S. will take part in the 2016 PIRLS cycle as we did in 2001, 2006, and 2011. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*.

### **What is the purpose of the PIRLS 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?**

PIRLS staff will visit the school and administer the study. The main assessment will take approximately 2 hours and will include a paper and pencil questionnaire that asks students about themselves and their educational experience. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in *ePIRLS* (an online assessment of reading). *ePIRLS* will take approximately 80 minutes and will include breaks between sections.

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

The nation as a whole benefits from PIRLS by having a greater understanding of how the reading knowledge and skills of U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> graders compare with 4<sup>th</sup> graders from other countries. 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 PIRLS will receive \$200, and each student who participates will receive a small gift.

### **Who administers PIRLS?**

The entire assessment is administered by trained staff from RTI International, 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.C. § 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 PIRLS?**

More information about PIRLS is available at the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/index.asp> or the PIRLS International Study Center website at <http://pirls.org/> . Or if you like to contact a PIRLS staff member directly, please feel free to call the PIRLS hotline at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email us at [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org).

## PIRLS 2016 Main Study 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in reading in the United States against countries around the world. Since 2001, PIRLS has measured worldwide trends in student reading skills at grade 4. The next PIRLS assessment will be in the spring of 2016.

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

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. 4th graders can do in reading, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. In addition to answering reading questions, students will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about themselves. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. Your child's class may also be selected to participate in *ePIRLS*. 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 PIRLS 2016 Main Study

## PIRLS 2016 Main Study 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in reading in the United States against countries around the world. Since 2001, PIRLS has measured worldwide trends in student reading skills at grade 4. The next PIRLS assessment will be in the spring of 2016.

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If you have any objection to your child joining in the PIRLS activities, please let us know by completing the attached 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 PIRLS 2016 Main Study

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

**PIRLS 2016 Main Study Implicit Consent Form:  
Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)**

**Main Study**

**Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your child has been asked to participate in an international study of student learning called the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Your child's class may also be selected to participate in ePIRLS. Each student who participates will receive a small gift.

The student assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from RTI International, on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

**If you grant permission for your child to participate in the 2016 PIRLS, you do not need to return this form.**

**If you do not consent to your child's participation in the 2016 PIRLS, 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study Main Study.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of parent or guardian)

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

PLEASE PRINT:

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

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

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



## PIRLS 2016 Main Study Sample Explicit 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 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides important information for benchmarking student performance in reading in the United States against countries around the world. Since 2001, PIRLS has measured worldwide trends in student reading skills at grade 4. The next PIRLS assessment will be in the spring of 2016.

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

Sincerely,

[School Official]

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the PIRLS 2016 Main Study  
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

**PIRLS 2016 Main Study Explicit Consent Form**  
**Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)**

**Main Study**

**Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your child has been asked to participate in an international study of student learning called the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Your child's class may also be selected to participate in ePIRLS. Each student who participates will receive a small gift.

The student assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from RTI International, on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

I grant permission for my child to participate in the 2016 PIRLS.

I do not grant permission for my child to participate in the 2016 PIRLS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent or guardian)

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

PLEASE PRINT:

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

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

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

**PIRLS Facts for Parents about the Main Study**  
**Facts for Parents**  
**About the PIRLS Main Study**

Between February and May of this year, your child's school will be one of about 150 nationwide taking part in the PIRLS 2016 Main Study. The schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools with 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. Within each school, 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms were selected randomly to represent the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> graders. All students from selected classrooms are invited to participate, and your child was among those students selected to take part in the PIRLS main study.

**What is PIRLS?**

PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is an international assessment that measures student learning in reading. Every five years since 2001, PIRLS documents worldwide trends in the reading knowledge of 4<sup>th</sup> graders. The National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education sponsors U.S. participation in PIRLS. Along with more than 40 other nations, the U.S. will take part in the 2016 PIRLS cycle as we did in 2001, 2006, and 2011. For the first time PIRLS will include an innovative assessment of online reading called ePIRLS.

**What is involved?**

PIRLS staff will visit the school and administer the main study. The main assessment will take approximately 2 hours and will include a paper and pencil questionnaire that asks students about themselves and their educational experience. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS (an online assessment of reading). ePIRLS will take approximately 80 minutes and will include breaks between sections.

**What are the benefits?**

The nation as a whole benefits from PIRLS by having a greater understanding of how the reading knowledge and skills of U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> graders compare with 4<sup>th</sup> graders from other countries. Schools that participate in PIRLS will receive \$200, and each student who participates will receive a small gift.

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## State 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 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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 PIRLS in the spring of 2015. 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 PIRLS field operations will be effective for the main study in 2016. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. Some classes selected to participate in PIRLS will also be asked to take part in *ePIRLS*.

PIRLS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0645. 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 RTI International 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. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Sheila Thompson at NCES at (202) 502-7425 or [sheila.thompson@ed.gov](mailto:sheila.thompson@ed.gov), or by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>.

Thank you for your time and support of this important international study.

Sincerely,

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

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.C. § 9543). By law, the data provided by 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.C. § 9573).*

## School District 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 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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.

One or more schools in your district have been randomly selected to participate in the PIRLS field test in the spring of 2015. I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of those selected schools. The purpose of the PIRLS field test is both to determine whether new questions are valid and fair for U.S. students and to help ensure that PIRLS field operations will be effective for the main study in 2016. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. Some classes selected to participate in PIRLS will also be asked to take part in *ePIRLS*.

Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's PIRLS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with PIRLS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. The school coordinator may also receive an additional monetary token of appreciation of \$50 for assistance with *ePIRLS*. A school administrator and selected teachers will each be asked to complete a questionnaire. Teachers will receive \$20 as a thank you for completing the questionnaire. Each student who participates will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

PIRLS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0645. 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 RTI International 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 Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Sheila Thompson at NCES at (202) 502-7425 or [sheila.thompson@ed.gov](mailto:sheila.thompson@ed.gov), or by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>.

Thank you for your time and support of this important international study.



Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

## Enclosures

*NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 9543). By law, the data provided by 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.C. § 9573).*

## School PIRLS 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 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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 2016 assessment, the United States is participating in a field test in the spring of 2015. 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 2016 assessment. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. Some classes selected to participate in PIRLS will also be asked to take part in *ePIRLS*. **Your school has been randomly selected to participate in the PIRLS field test this spring.**

Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's PIRLS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with PIRLS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. An additional \$50 will be given to the coordinator for assisting with *ePIRLS*. A school administrator and selected teachers will each be asked to complete a questionnaire. Teachers will receive \$20 as a thank you for completing the questionnaire. Participating students will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

PIRLS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this study is voluntary, your school's participation is invaluable so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country.

Within the next few days, a representative of RTI International will contact you to discuss your participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Sheila Thompson at NCES at (202) 502-7425 or [sheila.thompson@ed.gov](mailto:sheila.thompson@ed.gov), or by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>.

Your participation in the field test for PIRLS 2016 is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

## Enclosures

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## PIRLS Field Test Letter to School Coordinator

DATE

«sch\_entity\_name»

«sch\_address»

«sch\_citystzip»

Dear «sch\_coord\_name»,

We are looking forward to working with you and your school this school year on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). As the designated school coordinator for PIRLS you play a critical role in assisting us with study preparations. We appreciate your assistance, particularly given the many demands on your time.

The attached document, PIRLS School Coordinator Responsibilities, will provide you with an overview of PIRLS, as well as a list of tasks and timeline needed to prepare for PIRLS data collection. The first step is to provide a list of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes in your school, so that we may select the classes and students who will be invited to participate. This step is critically important, and we would appreciate your help in completing this task within three weeks of receipt of this letter.

PIRLS is conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and data are collected by RTI International (RTI). A PIRLS study representative will contact you shortly to answer questions you may have and to begin discussing data collection logistics. In-school data collection is scheduled to take place during March and April 2015. The student data collection will include a reading assessment and background questionnaire. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. Some classes selected to participate in PIRLS will also be asked to take part in *ePIRLS*.

RTI will provide a trained test administrator (TA) to conduct the student sessions and to assist with the parental permission form process. A school administrator and the teachers of selected classes will also be asked to complete a questionnaire. They will be contacted separately, and their data will be collected through a web-based application or hard-copy survey. The data collected during the field test will permit assessment developers to test new questions to ensure fairness for U.S. students and allow us to fine tune operational procedures for the 2016 assessment.

We sincerely appreciate your help in preparing for the session at your school and in ensuring that PIRLS is a success. Each school's participation is critical to the success of the study, and reports will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff.

If you have any questions, please contact us at RTI at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or by email at [xxxx@rti.org](mailto:xxxx@rti.org).

Thank you for your support of education through participating in PIRLS.

Sincerely,

Patricia Green

Project Director, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

### Enclosures

*NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 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.C. § 9573).*

## PIRLS School Coordinator Responsibilities

As the PIRLS school coordinator (SC), you play an important role in the success of the study. RTI will provide a trained test administrator (TA) to conduct the student sessions and to assist you as much as possible. But we will need to rely on you to complete certain tasks so that data collection will be successful.

### Study Details

The field test phase of PIRLS consists of the following:

- Student Reading Assessment and Questionnaire** – Students in selected classrooms will be administered a reading assessment and background questionnaire. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in a new, innovative assessment of online reading, called *ePIRLS*. The main assessment will take approximately 2 hours, and *ePIRLS* will take about 80 minutes. The TA from RTI will conduct the student sessions at your school and each participating student will receive a thank you gift.
- School Administrator Questionnaire** - The school administrator or designee will complete a questionnaire about school characteristics, enrollment, resources, policies, and the learning environment. The questionnaire may be completed online or via hardcopy and will take about 40 minutes to complete. RTI will send information to you to distribute to the person who is designated to answer the school administrator questionnaire.
- School Teacher Questionnaire** - Teachers of selected classrooms will complete a questionnaire regarding their teaching experience, available resources, and instructional practices. The questionnaire may be completed online or via hardcopy and will take about 40 minutes to complete. RTI will send information to you to distribute to selected teachers.

For additional information, you may visit our website at: <https://xxx.xxx.xxx>

### Your Responsibilities

You have been asked to complete several tasks prior to the student data collection sessions that will take place

in the spring of 2015. These include providing student information, working with RTI on the session logistics, assisting with parental consent form distribution and receipt, and helping to coordinate school staff surveys.

We will use the PIRLS secure website to exchange information, such as class and student lists. Please visit: <https://xxx.xxx.xxx> and log-in with the following information:

Study ID: #####

Password: #####

Table 1 shows the activities you will be asked to perform and a timeline for these activities.

**Table 1. Activities Timeline**

Provide information on 4 <sup>th</sup> grade classes using the Class Listing Form.	Within 3 weeks of receipt of request
Complete Student Listing Form for selected class(es)	Within one week of selection of classes
Coordinate session logistics (dates, times, locations, consent type)	Within 3 weeks of receipt of request
Notify teachers, selected students, and parents of the study and benefit of participating	At least 3 weeks prior to scheduled session
Distribute parental consent forms to all selected students	At least 3 weeks prior to scheduled session
Monitor return of consent forms; distribute reminder letters as needed. Collect returned,	During the 3 weeks from distribution to data collection day

signed forms and submit to TA.	
Run a systems check of the ePIRLS system	At least 2 weeks prior to scheduled session
Notify/remind teachers and students about the data collection sessions	One week prior and one day prior to session
Assist the TA with getting the students to the sessions and setting up the room (if necessary)	On the day of the session
Coordinate completion of the administrator and teachers' questionnaires.	Two weeks prior to the student session

### Providing Student Information

We will select one or two classes per school, depending on the number of classes available at grade 4. Please submit the Class Listing Form (including all classes that account for each student in 4<sup>th</sup> grade). The CLF should be uploaded to the secure PIRLS website. The student sample will consist of all students in the selected classes. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS.

We will then ask you to complete the Student Listing Form for selected class(es) to provide information on the students in those classes (e.g., name, district ID, class, date of birth, gender). SLF should be uploaded to the secure PIRLS website.

### Assisting with Student Session Logistics

In order to minimize disruption at the school on the day of the student data collection, it is crucial that arrangements be made in advance. These arrangements include:

- Determine the dates for student data collection.
- Determine the location and time(s) of the student session(s): will the student sessions take place in

the classrooms or will a separate room be reserved? If there are multiple classes sampled, will the administration be conducted together or separately?

- Determine parental permission type (implied/passive or written/active). Determine best method of distributing consent forms, tracking returned, signed forms, collecting returned forms and submitting to the PIRLS TA.
- Work with the TA to identify students with special needs.
- Notify teachers and students in selected classrooms about PIRLS, the importance of participating, and explain test day activities.
- Contact parents to encourage them to return the signed consent form (if applicable).

### Parental Permission

Parental permission materials will be supplied by RTI a few weeks before the scheduled session. We can either mail them directly to parents or ask that you distribute the parent permission forms to the sampled students.

- Most schools use implied/passive permission (which means students only return a form if their parent denies permission to participate), as this option lessens the burden on school staff and results in higher participation rates. If you are using this permission type, please record parent refusals onto the student tracking form (STF) which will be provided with the permission forms.
- Some schools require written/active consent. If your school requires active consent, parents are asked to return signed permission forms to the school coordinator. Please keep track of the return of these forms on the STF. Please make sure any returned forms have one "box" checked, a parent/guardian signature (not just a printed name) and the name of the student.

Your TA will be in contact with you to track the return of consent forms, as well as exclusion statuses for students. Reminder forms will be sent home as needed. The TA will check the permission forms on the

day of the first session to make sure we do not include anyone whose parents have not granted permission. Please keep the returned parent permission forms in a locked or secure location. Your TA will fax any returned forms from your school at the end of the data collection to a secure fax machine at RTI. Please let him/her know if you need to retain copies.

### **Assist on Day of Student Sessions**

The PIRLS TA will arrive at the school about an hour before the student session. In order to have valid results from the study, we need as many sampled students to participate as possible. We are depending on you to make certain the students and teachers are aware of the date, time, and location for their participation and to generate enthusiasm. This often makes the difference in high student participation. You may want to advertise PIRLS throughout the school and classroom or make a PA announcement about the study the day before and the day of the session to generate interest and encourage participation.

We would also like for you or a teacher to remain in the room during the session administration to help maintain order and assist as needed.

Again, the TA will need to fax any returned permission forms at the end of the session. Please assist him or her in faxing these forms.

### **Token of Appreciation**

As a token of our appreciation for your time and energy with PIRLS, you will receive \$100 after the student session has been completed, and \$50 for assistance with ePIRLS.

**THANK YOU** for your help to make PIRLS a success!! We greatly appreciate your time and assistance!



## Administrator Questionnaire PIRLS Field Test Letter

[Date] Web Address:  
[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Principal/Administrator] Your Study ID:  
[School] Your Password:  
[Address 1]  
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States is participating in an important international study in 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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 2016 assessment, [school name] is participating in a field test in the spring of 2015. 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 2016 assessment.

We are asking you to complete a 40-minute questionnaire to provide insight into the practices and resources at your school. The survey is designed to be completed by you or a staff person you designate who can provide information about the characteristics of the school, its enrollment, resources, policies, and learning environment. The questionnaire may be completed by hardcopy or online using a secure website. To access the questionnaire online, please use the web address and unique study ID and password provided on this letter. If completing the questionnaire by hardcopy, please use the enclosed business reply envelope to return the completed questionnaire to us. You may also give the completed hard copy questionnaire to the PIRLS school coordinator at your school.

In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this questionnaire is voluntary, your participation is invaluable.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to PIRLS@rti.org. You may also get more information about this study by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection in Durham, North Carolina, toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

Your participation in the field test administrator questionnaire for PIRLS 2016 is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

## Enclosures

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## Teacher Questionnaire PIRLS Field Test Letter

[Date]  
[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Teacher]  
[School]  
[Address 1]  
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Web Address:  
Your Study ID:  
Your Password:

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

The United States is participating in an important international study in 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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 2016 assessment, [School Name] is participating in a field test the spring of 2015. 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 2016 assessment.

We are asking you to complete a 40-minute questionnaire to provide insight into your teaching experience and available resources and instructional practices at your school. You may complete the questionnaire by hardcopy or online using a secure website. To access the questionnaire online, please use the web address and unique study ID and password provided on this letter. If completing the questionnaire by hardcopy, please use the enclosed business reply envelope to return the completed questionnaire to us. You may also give the completed hard copy questionnaire to the PIRLS school coordinator at your school.

You will receive a check for \$20 within a few weeks of completing the questionnaire as a token of our appreciation.

In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this questionnaire is voluntary, your participation is invaluable.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection in Durham, North Carolina, toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

Your participation in the field test teacher questionnaire for PIRLS 2016 is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

## Enclosures

*NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 9543). By law, the data provided by you 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.C. § 9573).*

## **PIRLS 2016 Study Brochure Content: 8 ½ X 11in Tri-fold**

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

PIRLS USA Logo  
Map of world  
Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016

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

#### **What is PIRLS?**

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure reading achievement at the fourth grade, as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. PIRLS was previously assessed in 2001, 2006, and 2011, with the United State participating previously in all past assessments. In 2016, PIRLS will involve students from more than 40 countries, including the United States. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*.

PIRLS is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and conducted in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

#### **Why is PIRLS important?**

PIRLS provides a unique opportunity to compare the reading of U.S. fourth-grade students with that of their peers in countries around the world. PIRLS 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.

PIRLS 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 PIRLS?**

PIRLS is developed through an international consensus-building process involving input from U.S. and international experts in reading 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 provide written answers. Examples of released PIRLS items are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/released.asp>.

As a new extension to PIRLS in 2016, *ePIRLS*—an assessment of online reading—makes it possible for schools and countries to understand how successful they are in preparing fourth grade students to read, comprehend, and interpret online information.

#### **Key findings from PIRLS 2011**

At grade 4, the U.S. average reading score (556) was higher than the PIRLS average of 500. The U.S. was among the top 7 education systems (5 education systems had higher averages and 7 were not measurably different) and scored higher, on average, than 40 education systems. The U.S. reading average at grade 4 rose 16 points between 2006 and 2011. The U.S. was one of 12 education systems that increased its average score during this time period.

## **Back panels:**

### **Other information collected by PIRLS**

PIRLS is more than an assessment of student knowledge in reading. PIRLS 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, PIRLS provides each country with a rich source of information on the factors influencing reading achievement.

### **Countries that participated in PIRLS 2011**

Argentina	Colombia	Iceland	Malta	Singapore
Australia	Croatia	Indonesia	Moldova	Slovak Republic
Austria	Cyprus	Iran	Morocco	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Czech Republic	Ireland	The Netherlands	South Africa
Bahrain	Denmark	Israel	New Zealand	Spain
Belgium	Finland	Italy	Norway	Sweden
Belize	France	Kuwait	Poland	Trinidad & Tobago
Botswana	Georgia	Latvia	Portugal	Turkey
Bulgaria	Germany	Lithuania	Qatar	United Arab
Canada	Hong Kong-China	Luxembourg	Russian Federation	Emirates
Chinese Taipei	Hungary	Macedonia	Saudi Arabia	United States

NCES is authorized to conduct PIRLS under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 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.C. § 9573). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0645. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

PIRLS USA logo

IES / NCES logo

For questions about PIRLS 2016, contact the PIRLS Information Hotline at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org).

## **PIRLS Field Test FAQ**

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

PIRLS Field Test (Spring 2015)

<<Insert quote from previous PIRLS participating school>>

#### **What is PIRLS?**

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure trends in reading achievement at the fourth-grade level as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. Since 2001, PIRLS has been administered every 5 years. PIRLS 2016, the fourth study in the series, will involve students from more than 40 countries, including the United States. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*.

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

Field tests are a critical part of the development of test questions for assessments like PIRLS. 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 2016 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?**

PIRLS 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 2016. 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 students 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 field test will not be selected for the 2016 main study.

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

Probably not, unless your school only has one grade 4 classroom. Students with disabilities and English-Language learners may also be excused. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in *ePIRLS*.

#### **Who conducts the PIRLS assessment?**

The entire assessment process will be conducted by trained staff from RTI International, 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.C. § 9543) and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB # 1850-0645.

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

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered either online from a secure website or via a hardcopy form. Teacher questionnaires take about 40 minutes to complete and ask teachers questions about their experience, available resources, and instructional practices. School questionnaires take about 40 minutes to complete and ask about school practices and resources.

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

No, RTI International 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 1 and April 30, 2015. RTI International 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 assessment will take approximately 2 hours, including time for directions. The ePIRLS session will take 80 minutes and will include breaks between sections.

**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.C. § 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.

**What are the benefits?**

The nation as a whole benefits from PIRLS by having a greater understanding of how the reading knowledge and skills of U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> graders compare with 4<sup>th</sup> graders from other countries. 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. To thank participating schools and individuals for their time and effort we offer tokens of appreciation: schools that participate in PIRLS will receive \$200 and the school coordinator (staff person designated to assist with the study) will receive \$100. An additional \$50 will be given to the coordinator for assisting with ePIRLS. Teachers who complete a survey will receive \$20, and each student who participates will receive a small gift.

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

Visit the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/index.asp> .

For additional information about PIRLS 2016, contact the PIRLS U.S. home office at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org).



## Summary of School Activities: PIRLS Field Test (Spring 2015)

Summary of School Activities: PIRLS Field Test				
	November-December 2014	January-March 2015 Prior to assessment day	March-April 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 the day and location for the PIRLS and ePIRLS sessions</li> <li>Confirm dates and location with PIRLS assessment staff</li> <li>Provide class lists, student lists, and contact information for grade 4 students</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 PIRLS staff</li> <li>Run a systems check of the ePIRLS system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm spaces 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 sessions</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 check</li> <li>Receive an additional \$50 for running the ePIRLS system check, and assisting with computer setup. These components may be delegated to a school IT coordinator if necessary.</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>Receive a \$20 check</li> <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>RTI International assessment staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the school to set assessment dates</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(s) 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 assessments 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/PIRLS>.

## State PIRLS Main Study 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 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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 PIRLS in spring 2016. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called ePIRLS. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS. I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of those selected schools.

PIRLS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. 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 RTI International will contact sampled school districts and schools to discuss participating in the assessment. In the meantime, if you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Sheila Thompson at NCES at (202) 502-7425 or [sheila.thompson@ed.gov](mailto:sheila.thompson@ed.gov), or by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>.

Thank you for your time and support of this important international study.

Sincerely,

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

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.C. § 9543). By law, the data provided by 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.C. § 9573).*

## School District PIRLS 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 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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.

One or more schools in your district have been randomly selected to participate in PIRLS in spring 2016. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called ePIRLS. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS. I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of those selected schools.

Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's PIRLS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with PIRLS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. The school coordinator may also receive an additional monetary token of appreciation of \$50 for assistance with ePIRLS. A school administrator and selected teachers will each be asked to complete a questionnaire. Teachers will receive \$20 as a thank you for completing the questionnaire. Each student who participates will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

PIRLS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. 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 RTI International will contact the following school or schools in your district that have been selected for the assessment: [LIST SAMPLED SCHOOLS HERE...].

If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Sheila Thompson at NCES at (202) 502-7425 or [sheila.thompson@ed.gov](mailto:sheila.thompson@ed.gov), or by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>.

Thank you for your time and support of this important international study.

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

#### Enclosures

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## School PIRLS 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 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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 PIRLS in spring 2016. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called ePIRLS. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS. Participating schools will receive \$200, and each school's PIRLS school coordinator (the school staff person designated to work with PIRLS staff) will receive \$100 as a thank you for his or her time and effort. An additional \$50 will be given to the coordinator for assisting with ePIRLS. A school administrator and selected teachers will each be asked to complete a questionnaire. Teachers will receive \$20 as a thank you for completing the questionnaire. Participating students will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

PIRLS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this study is voluntary, your school's participation is invaluable so that the United States has a representative sample of schools across the country.

Within the next few days, a representative of RTI International will contact you to discuss your participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dr. Sheila Thompson at NCES at (202) 502-7425 or [sheila.thompson@ed.gov](mailto:sheila.thompson@ed.gov), or by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>.

Your participation in the PIRLS 2016 is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

## Enclosures

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## **PIRLS 2016 Main Study Letter to School Coordinator**

DATE

«sch\_entity\_name»

«sch\_address»

«sch\_citystzip»

Dear «sch\_coord\_name»,

We are looking forward to working with you and your school this school year on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). As the designated school coordinator for PIRLS you play a critical role in assisting us with study preparations. We appreciate your assistance, particularly given the many demands on your time.

The attached document, PIRLS School Coordinator Responsibilities, will provide you with an overview of PIRLS, as well as a list of tasks and timeline needed to prepare for PIRLS data collection. The first step is to provide a list of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes in your school, so that we may select the classes and students who will be invited to participate. This step is critically important, and we would appreciate your help in completing this task within three weeks of receipt of this letter.

PIRLS is conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and data are collected by RTI International (RTI). A PIRLS study representative will contact you shortly to answer questions you may have and to begin discussing data collection logistics. In-school data collection is scheduled to take place during February through May 2016. The student data collection will include a reading assessment and background questionnaire. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called ePIRLS. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS.

RTI will provide a trained test administrator (TA) to conduct the student sessions and to assist with the parental permission form process. A school administrator and the teachers of selected classes will also be asked to complete a questionnaire. They will be contacted separately, and their data will be collected through a web-based application or hard-copy survey.

We sincerely appreciate your help in preparing for the session at your school and in ensuring that PIRLS is a success. Each school's participation is critical to the success of the study, and reports will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff.

If you have any questions, please contact us at RTI at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or by email at [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org).

Thank you for your support of education through participating in PIRLS.

Sincerely,



Patricia Green  
Project Director, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

## Enclosures

*NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 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.C. § 9573).*

## PIRLS School Coordinator Responsibilities

As the PIRLS school coordinator (SC), you play an important role in the success of the study. RTI will provide a trained test administrator (TA) to conduct the student sessions and to assist you as much as possible. But we will need to rely on you to complete certain tasks so that data collection will be successful.

### Study Details

PIRLS 2016 consists of the following:

- Student Reading Assessment and Questionnaire** – Students in selected classrooms will be administered a reading assessment and background questionnaire. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in a new, an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*. The main assessment will take about 2 hours, and *ePIRLS* will take about 80 minutes. The TA from RTI will conduct the student session at your school and each participating student will receive a thank you gift.
- School Administrator Questionnaire** - The school administrator or designee will complete a questionnaire about school characteristics, enrollment, resources, policies, and the learning environment. The questionnaire may be completed online or via hardcopy and will take about 40 minutes to complete. RTI will send information to you to distribute to the person who is designated to answer the school administrator questionnaire.
- School Teacher Questionnaire** - Teachers of selected classrooms will complete a questionnaire regarding their teaching experience, available resources, and instructional practices. The questionnaire may be completed online or via hardcopy and will take about 40 minutes to complete. RTI will send information to you to distribute to selected teachers.

For additional information, you may visit our website at: <https://xxx.xxx.xxx>

### Your Responsibilities

You have been asked to complete several tasks prior to the student data collection sessions that will take place in the spring of 2016. These include providing student information, working with RTI on the session logistics,

assisting with parental consent form distribution and receipt, and helping to coordinate school staff surveys.

We will use the PIRLS secure website to exchange information, such as class and student lists. Please visit: <https://xxx.xxx.xxx> and log-in with the following information:

Study ID: #####

Password: #####

Table 1 shows the activities you will be asked to perform and a timeline for these activities.

**Table 1. Activities Timeline**

Provide information on 4 <sup>th</sup> grade classes using the Class Listing Form.	Within 3 weeks of receipt of request
Complete Student Listing Form for selected class(es)	Within one week of selection of classes
Coordinate session logistics (date, time, location, consent type)	Within 3 weeks of receipt of request
Notify teachers, selected students, and parents of the study and benefit of participating	At least 3 weeks prior to scheduled session
Distribute parental consent forms to all selected students	At least 3 weeks prior to scheduled session
Monitor return of consent forms; distribute reminder letters as needed. Collect returned, signed forms and submit to TA.	During the 3 weeks from distribution to data collection day
Run a systems check of	At least 2 weeks

the ePIRLS system	prior to scheduled session
Notify/remind teachers and students about the data collection sessions	One week prior and one day prior to session
Assist the TA with getting the students to the sessions and setting up the room (if necessary)	On the day of the session
Coordinate completion of the administrator and teachers' questionnaires.	Two weeks prior to the student session

### Providing Student Information

We will select one or two classes per school, depending on the number of classes available at grade 4. Please submit the Class Listing Form (including all classes that account for each student in 4<sup>th</sup> grade). The CLF should be uploaded to the secure PIRLS website. The student sample will consist of all students in the selected classes. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS.

We will then ask you to complete the Student Listing Form for selected class(es) to provide information on the students in those classes (e.g., name, district ID, class, date of birth, gender). SLF should be uploaded to the secure PIRLS website.

### Assisting with Student Session Logistics

In order to minimize disruption at the school on the day of the student data collection, it is crucial that arrangements be made in advance. These arrangements include:

- Determine the date for student data collection.
- Determine the location and time(s) of the student session(s): will the student sessions take place in the classroom or will a separate room be reserved? If there are multiple classes sampled, will the administration be conducted together or separately?

- Determine parental permission type (implied/passive or written/active). Determine the best method of distributing consent forms, tracking returned, signed forms, collecting returned forms and submitting to the PIRLS TA.
- Work with the TA to identify students with special needs.
- Notify teachers and students in selected classrooms about PIRLS, the importance of participating, and explain test day activities.
- Contact parents to encourage them to return the signed consent form (if applicable).

### Parental Permission

Parental permission materials will be supplied by RTI a few weeks before the scheduled session. We can either mail them directly to parents or ask that you distribute the parent permission forms to the sampled students.

- Most schools use implied/passive permission (which means students only return a form if their parent denies permission to participate), as this option lessens the burden on school staff and results in higher participation rates. If you are using this permission type, please record parent refusals onto the student tracking form (STF) which will be provided with the permission forms.
- Some schools require written/active consent. If your school requires active consent, parents are asked to return signed permission forms to the school coordinator. Please keep track of the return of these forms on the STF. Please make sure any returned forms have one "box" checked, a parent/guardian signature (not just a printed name) and the name of the student.

Your TA will be in contact with you to track the return of consent forms, as well as exclusion statuses for students. Reminder forms will be sent home as needed. The TA will check the permission forms on the day of the first session to make sure we do not include anyone whose parents have not granted permission. Please keep the returned parent permission forms in a

locked or secure location. Your TA will fax any returned forms from your school at the end of the data collection to a secure fax machine at RTI. Please let him/her know if you need to retain copies.

### **Assist on Day of Student Sessions**

The PIRLS TA will arrive at the school about an hour before the student session. In order to have valid results from the study, we need as many sampled students to participate as possible. We are depending on you to make certain the students and teachers are aware of the date, time, and location for their participation and to generate enthusiasm. This often makes the difference in high student participation. You may want to advertise PIRLS throughout the school and classroom or make a PA announcement about the study the day before and the day of the session to generate interest and encourage participation.

We would also like for you or a teacher to remain in the room during the session administration to help maintain order and assist as needed.

Again, the TA will need to fax any returned permission forms at the end of the session. Please assist him or her in faxing these forms.

### **Token of Appreciation**

As a token of our appreciation for your time and energy with PIRLS, you will receive \$100 after the student session has been completed and \$50 for assistance with ePIRLS.

**THANK YOU** for your help to make PIRLS a success!! We greatly appreciate your time and assistance!

## Administrator Questionnaire PIRLS Main Study Letter

[Date] Web Address:  
[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Principal/Administrator] Your Study ID:  
[School] Your Password:  
[Address 1]  
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

[School Name] is participating in an important international study in 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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.

We are asking you to complete a 40-minute questionnaire to provide insight into the practices and resources at your school. The survey is designed to be completed by you or a staff person you designate who can provide information about the characteristics of the school, its enrollment, resources, policies, and learning environment. The questionnaire may be completed by hardcopy or online using a secure website. To access the questionnaire online, please use the web address and unique study ID and password provided on this letter. If completing the questionnaire by hardcopy, please use the enclosed business reply envelope to return the completed questionnaire to us. You may also give the completed hard copy questionnaire to the PIRLS school coordinator at your school.

In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this questionnaire is voluntary, your participation is invaluable.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org). You may also get more information about this study by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection in Durham, North Carolina, toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

Your participation in the administrator questionnaire for PIRLS 2016 is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

## Enclosures

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## Teacher Questionnaire PIRLS Main Study Letter

[Date]  
[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Teacher]  
[School]  
[Address 1]  
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Web Address:  
Your Study ID:  
Your Password:

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

[School Name] is participating in an important international study in 2016: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Since 2001, PIRLS has measured trends in reading achievement at grade 4 in countries around the world, including the United States. Results from PIRLS 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.

We are asking you to complete a 40-minute questionnaire to provide insight into your teaching experience and available resources and instructional practices at your school. You may complete the questionnaire by hardcopy or online using a secure website. To access the questionnaire online, please use the web address and unique study ID and password provided on this letter. If completing the questionnaire by hardcopy, please use the enclosed business reply envelope to return the completed questionnaire to us. You may also give the completed hard copy questionnaire to the PIRLS school coordinator at your school.

You will receive a check for \$20 within a few weeks of completing the questionnaire as a token of our appreciation.

In the United States, PIRLS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the data are being collected by RTI International. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB #1850-0645. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this questionnaire is voluntary, your participation is invaluable.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Patricia Green at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or send an email to PIRLS@rti.org. You may also get more information about this study by visiting the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/PIRLS>. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection in Durham, North Carolina, toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

Your participation in the teacher questionnaire for PIRLS 2016 is very important to its success. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international study.

Sue Betka  
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences

Peggy Carr  
Acting Commissioner, NCES

## Enclosures

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## **PIRLS 2016 Study Brochure Content: 8 ½ X 11in Tri-fold**

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

PIRLS USA Logo  
Map of world  
Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016

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

#### **What is PIRLS?**

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure reading achievement at the fourth grade, as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. PIRLS was previously assessed in 2001, 2006, and 2011, with the United State participating previously in all past assessments. In 2016, PIRLS will involve students from more than 40 countries, including the United States. For the first time PIRLS will also include an innovative assessment of online reading called ePIRLS.

PIRLS is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and conducted in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

#### **Why is PIRLS important?**

PIRLS provides a unique opportunity to compare the reading of U.S. fourth-grade students with that of their peers in countries around the world. PIRLS 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.

PIRLS 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 PIRLS?**

PIRLS is developed through an international consensus-building process involving input from U.S. and international experts in reading 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 provide written answers. Examples of released PIRLS items are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/released.asp>.

As a new extension to PIRLS in 2016, ePIRLS—an assessment of online reading—makes it possible for schools and countries to understand how successful they are in preparing fourth grade students to read, comprehend, and interpret online information.

#### **Key findings from PIRLS 2011**

At grade 4, the U.S. average reading score (556) was higher than the PIRLS average of 500. The U.S. was among the top 7 education systems (5 education systems had higher averages and 7 were not measurably different) and scored higher, on average, than 40 education systems. The U.S. reading average at grade 4 rose 16 points between 2006 and 2011. The U.S. was one of 12 education systems that increased its average score during this time period.

## **Back panels:**

### **Other information collected by PIRLS**

PIRLS is more than an assessment of student knowledge in reading. PIRLS 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, PIRLS provides each country with a rich source of information on the factors influencing reading achievement.

### **Countries that participated in PIRLS 2011**

Argentina	Colombia	Iceland	Malta	Singapore
Australia	Croatia	Indonesia	Moldova	Slovak Republic
Austria	Cyprus	Iran	Morocco	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Czech Republic	Ireland	The Netherlands	South Africa
Bahrain	Denmark	Israel	New Zealand	Spain
Belgium	Finland	Italy	Norway	Sweden
Belize	France	Kuwait	Poland	Trinidad & Tobago
Botswana	Georgia	Latvia	Portugal	Turkey
Bulgaria	Germany	Lithuania	Qatar	United Arab
Canada	Hong Kong-China	Luxembourg	Russian Federation	Emirates
Chinese Taipei	Hungary	Macedonia	Saudi Arabia	United States

NCES is authorized to conduct PIRLS under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 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.C. § 9573). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0645. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

PIRLS USA logo

IES / NCES logo

For questions about PIRLS 2016, contact the PIRLS Information Hotline at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org).

## **PIRLS 2016 Main Study FAQ**

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

PIRLS 2016 Main Study (Spring 2016)

<<Insert quote from previous PIRLS participating school>>

#### **What is PIRLS?**

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure trends in reading achievement at the fourth-grade level as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. Since 2001, PIRLS has been administered every 5 years. PIRLS 2016, the fourth study in the series, will involve students from more than 40 countries, including the United States. For the first time PIRLS will include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*.

#### **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 be compared fairly with samples of schools from other countries.

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

It depends on the number of fourth-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. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in *ePIRLS*. In addition, some students with special needs or limited English proficiency may be excused from the assessment.

#### **Who conducts the PIRLS assessment?**

The entire assessment process will be conducted by trained staff from RTI International, 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.C. § 9543) and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB # 1850-0645.

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

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered either online from a secure website or via a hardcopy form. Teacher questionnaires take about 40 minutes to complete and ask teachers questions about their experience, available resources, and instructional practices. School questionnaires take about 40 minutes to complete and ask about school practices and resources.

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

No, RTI International 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 assessment be conducted?**

The assessment will be conducted between February and May, 2016. RTI International 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 main assessment session is approximately 2 hours, including time for directions. The *ePIRLS* session will take 80 minutes and will include breaks between sections.

#### **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.C. § 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.

**What are the benefits?**

The nation as a whole benefits from PIRLS by having a greater understanding of how the reading knowledge and skills of U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> graders compare with 4<sup>th</sup> graders from other countries. To thank participating schools and individuals for their time and effort we offer tokens of appreciation: schools that participate in PIRLS will receive \$200 and the school coordinator (staff person designated to assist with the study) will receive \$100. An additional \$50 will be given to the coordinator for assisting with ePIRLS. Teachers who complete a survey will receive \$20, and each student who participates will receive a small gift.

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

Visit the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/index.asp>.

For additional information about PIRLS 2016, contact the PIRLS U.S. home office at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email [PIRLS@rti.org](mailto:PIRLS@rti.org).

## Summary of School Activities: PIRLS 2016 Main Study

Summary of School Activities: PIRLS 2016 Main Study				
	November-December 2015	January-March 2016 Prior to assessment day	February-May 2016 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 the day and location for the PIRLS and ePIRLS sessions.</li> <li>Confirm dates and location with PIRLS assessment staff</li> <li>Provide class lists, student lists, and contact information for grade 4 students</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 PIRLS staff</li> <li>Run a systems check of the ePIRLS system</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 check</li> <li>Receive an additional \$50 for running the ePIRLS system check, and assisting with computer setup. These components may be delegated to a school IT coordinator if necessary.</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>Receive a \$20 check</li> <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>RTI International 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(s) 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/surveys/pirls/index.asp>.