

# **Program for International Student Assessment 2021 (PISA 2021) Main Study Recruitment and Field Test**

## **Appendix B Parental Contact Materials**

**OMB# 1850-0755 v.23**

**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)  
U.S. Department of Education  
Institute of Education Sciences  
Washington, DC**

**August 2019**

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Sample Notification Letter – PISA 2021 Field Test	2
Sample Implicit Consent Letter for Parents – PISA 2021 Field Test	3
PISA Implicit Consent Form – PISA 2021 Field Test	4
Sample Explicit Consent Letter for Parents – PISA 2021 Field Test	5
PISA Explicit Consent Form for Parents – PISA 2021 Field Test	6
FAQ for Parents About PISA 2021 Field Test	7



Sample Notification Letter - PISA 2021 Field Test

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD
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Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of student learning being conducted in our school this spring. This study is called the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA. PISA provides important information for internationally benchmarking performance in reading, mathematics, and science of students in the United States nearing the end of compulsory education against their peers in countries around the world.

Each time the study is conducted, new test questions need to be developed and tested to ensure that those questions accurately measure the knowledge and skills of students. In spring 2020, new questions will be tested in approximately 50 schools in the United States. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not working effectively and ensure that PISA is valid and fair to all U.S. students.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education to participate in PISA. A select few of our students born in 2004, along with your teenager, will take part in this study. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background on PISA, 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. students can do, it is critically important that each student selected takes part in the study. The PISA assessment is taken on a computer. Also, students will be asked to complete a questionnaire about themselves. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your teenager to take part; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Previous experience suggests that students enjoy taking part, and all participating students will receive \$25 and a certificate from the U.S. Department of Education for 4 hours of volunteer service.

The information provided by students will not be shared with the school. NCES is authorized to conduct PISA by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information provided by your teenager 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 and 6 U.S.C. §151). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this data collection under OMB# 1850-0755.

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

Sincerely,

Enclosures:  
Facts for Parents about PISA

*The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is authorized to conduct the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543), and to collect students' education records from educational agencies or institutions for the purpose of evaluating federally supported education programs under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 34 CFR §§ 99.31(a)(3)(iii) and 99.35). The data are being collected for NCES by Westat, a U.S.-based research organization. All of the information [you / your child] provide 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 and 6 U.S.C. §151). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this data collection under OMB# 1850-0755.*

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. This study is called the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA. PISA provides important information for internationally benchmarking performance in reading, mathematics, and science of 15-year-old students in the United States against other countries around the world.

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Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, to participate in PISA. A select few of our students born in 2004, along with your teenager, will take part in this study. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background about PISA, 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 an objection to your teenager joining in the PISA 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.

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Parent/Guardian Consent Form

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**Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Field Test  
Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your teenager has been asked to participate in an international study of student learning called the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Each student who participates will receive \$25 and a volunteer service certificate of 4 hours from the U.S. Department of Education. This assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from Westat, who are operating under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education. In spring 2020, new questions will be tested in approximately 50 schools in the United States. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not working effectively and ensure that PISA is valid and fair to all U.S. students.

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

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

**I do not grant permission** for my teenager, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the Program for International Student Assessment field test.

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

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

PLEASE PRINT:

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

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

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

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To have an accurate picture of what U.S. students can do, it is critically important that each student selected takes part in the study. The PISA assessment is taken on a computer. Also, students will be asked to complete a questionnaire about themselves. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your teenager to take part; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Previous experience suggests that students enjoy taking part, and all participating students will receive \$25 and a certificate from the U.S. Department of Education for 4 hours of volunteer service.

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Before we can allow your teenager to participate in the PISA field test, we must have your written consent. Please complete the attached form and return it to the school.

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

Sincerely,

Enclosures:  
Facts for Parents About PISA  
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

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Yes, I grant permission for my teenager to participate in PISA field test.

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

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

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

PLEASE PRINT:

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

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

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

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## **Facts for Parents About the PISA 2021 Field Test**

Between March and April of this year, your teenager's school will be one of about 50 nationwide taking part in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2021 Field Test. Schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools and, within each school, up to 60 students were selected randomly to take part. Your teenager was among those students selected to take part in the study.

### **What is PISA?**

PISA is the world's largest international assessment that measures student learning in reading, mathematics, and science. More than 80 countries and education systems representing nearly 90 percent of the world's economy participate in PISA, which is coordinated through the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The assessment occurs every 3 years (2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2021) and provides information about how students in the U.S. compare in achievement with students in other countries. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, conducts PISA in the United States as authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543).

### **Why is PISA important?**

The OECD administers PISA in order to help participating school systems and countries understand their strengths and areas for improvement, with the ultimate goal of increasing both the quality and equity of education worldwide. As such, PISA fosters engagement among international education systems, allowing teachers, education professionals, and policy experts to compare shared experiences in the global learning community. Participation in PISA has even led to substantive education policy changes for several countries around the world. Both Germany and Brazil, for example, have raised their standards and made their education systems more inclusive to students from every background as a direct outcome of their PISA results.

PISA provides a unique opportunity for the United States to understand its educational standing in comparison to other nations. Through participating in PISA, schools and students contribute to the improvement of education. PISA can help us identify U.S. students' strengths and weaknesses in these subjects and help us learn about successful policies and practices in other countries.

### **What is the purpose of the PISA Field Test?**

Each time the study is conducted, 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 working effectively for students in the United States. The field test also ensures that data collection procedures are done efficiently and correctly.

### **How did my teenager and their school get selected for PISA?**

The schools that participate in PISA in the United States are randomly selected from a list of all schools in the country that enroll students in grade 7 or higher and born in 2004. This is done to ensure that U.S. participants accurately represent the entire

population of eligible students in the United States and not just particular types of schools or groups of students.

The only criteria for students to be eligible to be selected for PISA are being born in the specific birth date range and being enrolled in grade 7 or higher. From a list of all eligible students provided by your school, up to 60 students are randomly selected to participate. Every eligible student enrolled in a PISA-selected school has an equal chance of being selected. Students in other countries are selected in exactly the same way to make sure each country is fairly represented and no country is advantaged or disadvantaged because of the types of schools or groups of students selected.

## **Why should I encourage my teenager to participate?**

Each school and student who participates plays an important role in representing other schools and students that are similar to them. It's vital that students in every kind of education system and environment—including public and private schools—contribute to PISA to ensure the U.S. sample is an accurate reflection of educational progress across the country. Only about 3,000 students will have the unique opportunity to participate in the PISA field test in the United States. How often will your teenager have the opportunity to represent our country and impact the design of an international study? Participating is an opportunity to have an impact on the bigger picture of education in the United States and around the globe.

## **What is involved?**

PISA staff will visit the school and administer the assessment. The assessment will take approximately 3 hours; it includes time for instructions, the assessment, breaks, and a questionnaire that students complete about themselves.

## **What are the benefits?**

The nation as a whole benefits from PISA by having a greater understanding of how the knowledge and skills of U.S. students compare with their peers in other countries. The country benefits from the field test by ensuring that the questions used are fair and appropriate for U.S. students. Schools that participate in PISA will receive \$250, and each student who participates will receive \$25 plus a certificate from the U.S. Department of Education for 4 hours of volunteer service.

## **What is done with the information you collect from my teenager?**

PISA is not designed to produce individual scores and your teenager's individual performance is not shared with teachers, the school, or the district in any way. Student responses are combined with other student responses and are only used for statistical purposes. The data collected for the PISA field test will be used to evaluate the functioning, validity and fairness of the items for the main study, to be conducted in 2021. All of the information provided by your teenager 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 and 6 U.S.C. §151). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this data collection under OMB# 1850-0755.

## **Where can I find out more about PISA?**

More information about PISA is available at the PISA website at <http://www.nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa>. If you have specific questions you can call PISA staff at 1-888-638-2597 or email us at PISAHelp@westat.com.

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