



Frequently Asked Questions

TIMSS 2015



What is TIMSS?

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure trends in mathematics and science achievement at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels as well as collect information about school and teacher practices related to instruction. Since 1995, TIMSS has been administered every 4 years. TIMSS 2015, the sixth study in the series, will involve students from more than 50 countries, including the United States.

Why was my school selected for participation?

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the overall U.S. sample is representative of the overall U.S. school population. The random selection process is important for ensuring that a country's sample accurately reflects its schools and, therefore, can fairly be compared with samples of schools from other countries.

Will all our fourth- or eighth-grade students be asked to participate?

It depends on the number of fourth- or eighth-grade classrooms in the school. In schools with only one or two such classrooms, all students will be asked to participate. In schools with more than two such classrooms, only students in two randomly selected classrooms will be asked to participate. In addition, some students with special needs or limited English proficiency may be excused from the assessment.

Who conducts the TIMSS assessment?

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

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

How are the teacher and school questionnaires administered?

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered online from a secure website. Teacher questionnaires take about 35 minutes to complete and ask teachers questions about their experience, available resources, and instructional practices. School questionnaires take about 30 minutes to complete and ask about school practices and resources.

Do teachers need to help administer the assessment?

No. Westat field staff will visit the school on the day of the assessment, bringing with them all the materials required, and they will handle the entire administration of the assessment.

When will the assessment be conducted?

The assessment will be conducted between March 30 and May 29, 2015. Each school will be notified of its scheduled assessment date in summer 2014. A TIMSS representative will work with schools to identify an alternate date should there be a conflict on that date.

Where will the assessment be conducted?

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

How long does the assessment take?

The assessment session is approximately 2½ hours and includes the administration of the assessment, a questionnaire that students complete, and a break between the two. The questionnaire takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

What will happen with the collected data?

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

Are schools required by federal law to participate?

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

Where can I find more information about TIMSS?

Visit the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss> or the TIMSS international website at <http://timss.bc.edu>.

For additional information about TIMSS 2015, contact the toll-free TIMSS information hotline at **855-445-5604** or email TIMSS@westat.com.