



Facts for Parents

TIMSS 2015



Between March and May 2015, your child's school will be one of several hundred schools nationwide taking part in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools and, within each school, fourth- or eighth-grade students were selected randomly to represent the nation's fourth- or eighth-graders. Your child was among those students selected to take part in TIMSS.

What is TIMSS?

TIMSS is an international assessment that measures student learning in mathematics and science. Every 4 years since 1995, TIMSS documents worldwide trends in the mathematics and science achievement of fourth- and eighth-graders. The National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education sponsors U.S. participation in TIMSS. Along with more than 50 other countries, the United States will take part in the 2015 TIMSS cycle, as we did in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011.

What is the purpose of TIMSS 2015?

TIMSS measures trends in mathematics and science achievement at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels as well as collects information about school and teacher practices related to instruction. It provides a unique opportunity to compare U.S. students' math and science knowledge and skills at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels with that of their peers in countries around the world. TIMSS complements what we learn from national assessments by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of student performance relative to students around the world. The results inform national discussions about education as well as international competitiveness.

What is involved?

TIMSS staff will visit the school and administer the study, which will take approximately 2½ hours.

The assessment itself is 90 minutes, with breaks between sections. Students will also be asked some questions about themselves and their educational experience.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from TIMSS by having a greater understanding of how the knowledge and skills of U.S. fourth- and eighth-graders compare with fourth- and eighth-graders from other countries. Schools that participate in TIMSS will receive \$200, and each student who participates will receive a small gift that we believe they will like.

Who administers TIMSS 2015?

The entire assessment is administered by trained staff from Westat, a research organization under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

All of the information collected is safeguarded, as required by law. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA, 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9543. Under that law, the data provided by schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

Where can I find out more about TIMSS?

More information about TIMSS is available at the TIMSS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/timss> or <http://timss.bc.edu>. If you would like to contact a TIMSS staff member directly, please feel free to call the TIMSS hotline at 855-445-5604 or email us at TIMSS@westat.com.