Between April and May of this year, your child’s school will be one of about 30 nationwide taking part in the 2017 field test for an important international study in 2018: the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS). The schools were selected randomly to represent the nation’s schools with eighth-grade students. Within each school, eighth-grade students were selected randomly to represent the nation’s eighth-graders, and your child was among those students selected to take part in the ICILS field test.

What is ICILS?

ICILS is an international assessment that measures student computer and information literacy. ICILS provides a unique opportunity to compare U.S. eighth-grade students’ computer and information literacy skills and access to and use of technology with that of their peers in countries around the world. ICILS was developed internationally as a response to the increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) in modern society and the need for citizens to develop relevant skills to participate effectively in the digital age. ICILS was first administered internationally in 2013 in 21 education systems and will be administered again in 2018. Along with more than 10 other nations, the United States will take part in the 2018 ICILS cycle. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education conducts ICILS with the United States.

What is the purpose of the ICILS 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. The 2017 ICILS 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?

ICILS staff will visit the school and administer the study. The assessment will take approximately 3 hours and include a questionnaire that asks students about themselves and their educational experience.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from ICILS by having a greater understanding of how computer and information literacy knowledge and skills of U.S. eighth-graders compare with eighth-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 ICILS will receive $200, and each student who participates will receive a small gift.

Who administers ICILS?

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 (NCES).

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 ICILS?

More information about ICILS is available at the ICILS website at https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/icils, or feel free to call the ICILS U.S. home office at 1-855-445-5604 or email us at icils@westat.com.