



## Facts for Parents

### About the eTIMSS 2017 Pilot



Between April and May of this year, your child's school will be one of about 55 nationwide taking part in the 2017 pilot of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). 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-graders or eighth-graders. Your child was among those students selected to take part in the eTIMSS 2017 pilot.

#### 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 knowledge of fourth- and eighth-graders. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, conducts TIMSS in the United States. Along with more than 60 other nations, the United States will take part in the next TIMSS study, as we have done in all previous TIMSS cycles since 1995.

#### What is the purpose of the eTIMSS pilot?

The eTIMSS pilot is testing questions in both electronic and traditional paper and pencil formats in approximately 55 schools (about 30 in grade 4 and 25 in grade 8) in the United States in preparation for the 2019 international study. This pilot will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not reliable or fair in the new electronic format as well as understand differences in student performance between electronic and paper formats.

#### What is involved?

TIMSS staff will visit the school and administer the pilot. For fourth-graders, the pilot will take approximately 3 hours over two sessions, which in many schools will be divided into 1½ hours the first day and 1½ hours the second day (some schools may test both sessions in one day). For eighth-graders, the

pilot will take approximately 4 hours over two sessions, which in many schools will be divided into 2 hours on the first day and 2 hours the second day. In one session students will take a paper and pencil assessment and in the other session an electronic assessment on a tablet. Each session in both assessments takes either 72 or 90 minutes, depending on the grade, but there will be breaks between sections and a short questionnaire that takes 10 minutes. In the questionnaire, students will be asked about themselves and their experience using computers and digital devices. The information from the questionnaire is helpful for understanding how students perform on electronic tests. Participation in the study is voluntary.

#### 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 that of their peers in countries around the world. Our country benefits from the pilot by ensuring that the questions used are fair and appropriate for U.S. students. It also will help us understand any effect that electronic testing may have on student performance compared with traditional paper and pencil tests. Schools that participate in TIMSS will receive \$400, and students who participate will receive a small gift that we believe they will like.

## Who administers TIMSS?

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. 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 (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 <https://nces.ed.gov/timss> or <http://timss.bc.edu>, or if you would like to contact a TIMSS staff member directly, feel free to call the TIMSS hotline at **855-445-5604** or email us at [TIMSS@westat.com](mailto:TIMSS@westat.com).

