What is the PISA for Schools project?

The PISA for Schools project contributes to improving student learning opportunities and well-being by empowering teachers and school leaders through global connections and international benchmarking based on a common scale provided by the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

The PISA-based Test for Schools (PBTS) is an assessment intended to help school leaders from across the world understand their 15-year old students’ abilities to think critically and apply their knowledge creatively in novel contexts.

What are the objectives of the PISA for Schools project?

The PISA for Schools project helps schools measure, explore and act:

1. **Measure** students’ learning outcomes in mathematics, science and reading, as well as their social and emotional skills and well-being. In particular, how well they can extrapolate that knowledge and skills and apply them in novel contexts.
2. **Explore**: Empower school leaders and teachers by providing them with data about their students’ performance, learning environment, socioeconomic background and motivation for learning.
3. **Act**: Provide global peer-learning opportunities among teachers and school leaders as they apply their insights from targeted data in their efforts to improve student learning and well-being in their school.
What is PISA?

PISA is an international study that was launched by the OECD in 1997, first administered in 2000 and now covers over 80 countries. Every 3 years the PISA survey provides comparative data on 15-year-olds' performance in reading, mathematics, and science. In addition, each cycle explores a distinct “innovative domain” such as Creative Thinking (PISA 2022) and Learning in the Digital World (PISA 2025). The results have informed education policy discussions at the national and global level since its inception.

How does the PISA-based Test for Schools deliver results on the PISA scale?

While PISA is intended to deliver national level results, the PISA-based Test for Schools is designed to deliver school-level results for school improvement and benchmarking purposes. Because both assessments are based on the same framework, the results are comparable, meaning that individual schools benchmark their performance with that of national education systems from around the world. Like PISA, PBTS assesses the extent to which 15-year-old students near the end of compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies.

How are the PISA-based Test for Schools and PISA applied in the same country?

- **The main PISA study always takes primacy** in countries that participate in PISA and in which the PISA-based Test for Schools is made available. The OECD will work with national authorities to limit interference with school recruitment, field trial or main data collection of PISA (and/or other international or local assessments, as determined by national authorities), for example by defining specific periods during which the PBTS should not be administered.

- **The PBTS cannot be used as an alternative to the main PISA study.** The PBTS is designed to deliver school-level results which can, under certain conditions, be aggregated to provide group-level results (e.g. for school networks, municipalities or other sub-national jurisdictions). However, for those countries in which sub-national jurisdictions already participate in PISA and receive jurisdiction-level results through extended oversampling, the PBTS should not be used as an alternative.

What are the benefits for schools of participating in the PISA for Schools project?

School leaders and teachers have reported using results to:

- Benchmark their performance in a global setting. Schools are using the results to set goals against the best school systems worldwide and to create a greater sense of urgency to push for higher levels of achievement.
- Better understand the challenges faced by low-performing students.
- Create peer-learning communities and networks with other schools and teachers.

Why compare school-level results internationally?

Given our global, knowledge-based economy, it has become more important than ever before to compare students not only to local or national standards, but also to the performance of the world’s top-performing school systems. There has been growing interest in comparing student performance to international benchmarks, both as a gauge of how prepared students are to participate in a globalised society and as a means of setting targets above and beyond basic proficiency levels or local expectations.
How is the PISA-based Test for Schools administered?

Since 2019, the PISA-based Test for Schools is provided as a digital assessment through an International Platform Provider (IPP). The OECD accredits a National Service Provider (NSP) for the implementation of the assessment. Under rigorous technical oversight from the OECD, the accredited NSP administers the assessment to schools using the digital platform run by the IPP.

The project's IPP is Janison, a software company that specialises in large scale implementations for global, national, and regional implementations of digital testing (www.janison.com). It is responsible for developing digital solutions for the delivery of the assessment as well as the analysis and reporting of results to schools and works in close collaboration with the OECD and the NSPs in each country.

Students respond to approximately two hours of test questions in reading, mathematics and science and answer a 30-minute student questionnaire. The testing experience for a student lasts approximately three to three-and-a-half hours, including instructions and break periods.

How does the OECD monitor quality?

The OECD accredits a National Service Provider (NSPs) for the administration of PISA-based Test for Schools in each country who adhere to the provisions set out in the Accreditation Agreement, the OECD Technical Report and the PISA for Schools General Guidelines.

The OECD provides training to NSPs prior to the administration of the PBTS, carries out quality control checks on the data collected and conducts data analysis for each school. The OECD reserves the right to withhold its approval of any school report and the use of the OECD logo if data quality standards are not met.

What is the frequency of testing?

Once the validation study in a given country is complete, the NSP can schedule delivery of the PBTS during a defined ‘test window’ of its choice, in agreement with the OECD.

Notwithstanding the above, the PBTS cannot be offered during the period in which the main PISA study conducts its data collection, which happens every 3 years in each participating country.

How are the results reported?

Schools participating in the PISA for Schools project receive a comprehensive report in electronic format detailing their school’s performance measured against national PISA results from their own country and the average of the OECD Member countries.

The data collected and the school reports generated as a result of the assessment belong to each school, which decides to what extent the data can be reported by the OECD. Nevertheless, Schools are encouraged to share and discuss their results with teachers, staff, students and parents to foster deeper understanding of the overall performance of their school as a basis for future action.

The PISA-based Test for Schools is a school-level assessment. Aggregate results for school networks may only be reported in addition to individual school-level reporting. This helps ensure that the assessment supports school-improvement discussions at the school level, with the school at the centre of the process. School networks may request to include specific sub-populations or socio-economic groups for which they wish to collect specific information. Such requests will be discussed with the accredited National Service Provider(s) in each country and agreed with the OECD on a case-by-case basis.
The results of the assessment, for individual schools or school networks, should not be used for marketing or commercial purposes by the schools themselves, by third parties or by contractors.

To be eligible to receive a school report, schools have to have tested a minimum number of 42 eligible students (i.e. those who are aged between 15 years and 3 completed months to 16 years and 2 completed months at the time of testing). To ensure that the minimum number of 42 students per school is reached, it is recommended to test at least 55 students, assuming a participation rate of 80%.

**Why does the project discourage rankings amongst schools?**

The PISA-based Test for Schools and its results are designed to provide schools with a diagnostic tool to foster reflection, peer-learning and action. They are not meant to be interpreted or used as school rankings or for “league tables”. Furthermore, the PBTS does not provide student-level performance reporting and cannot be used to rank student performance.

**How can my school participate in the PISA for Schools project?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression of interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools, school networks or public authorities send an expression of interest to the OECD Secretariat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval by national education authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The OECD Secretariat will then obtain approval in principle to offer the PISA-based Test for Schools from the relevant PISA Governing Board Representative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification and accreditation of a National Service Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The OECD accredits a National Service Provider (NSP) on the basis of its capacity to meet the standards required by the OECD, as defined by the Technical Report and Guidelines. The NSP signs an agreement with the OECD and also signs a contract with the International Platform Provider.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparations for assessment delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The PISA-based Test for Schools assessment is translated into the official language(s) and validated by the OECD. After which a validation study (field trial) is conducted in the country or school network to ensure the reliability and validity of the assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-demand testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once the validation study (field trial) is complete, the test can be delivered on demand to any eligible school which meets the criteria set out in the Technical Report and Guidelines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What costs are associated with taking part in the PISA for Schools project?

For prospective National Service Providers (NSPs) there are three main components in the overall cost of participation, as follows:

a) the international participation cost to be paid to the OECD each year through a Voluntary Contribution (VCs) to cover the development and implementation of the PBTS;
b) the cost of using the international digital delivery platform to be paid to the International Platform Provider (IPP) each year;
c) the local costs associated with administering the PBTS (e.g. promotion, sign up, test delivery, coding open-ended responses) which will vary in each country.

For individual schools or school networks, the costs are established by the accredited NSP. In those jurisdictions in which the NSP is a government agency, participation is generally free for schools.

For more details regarding costs, please contact the OECD PISA for Schools team at pisaforschools@oecd.org.

What does the future hold for the PISA for Schools project?

Looking ahead, the PISA for Schools project aims to:

Increase the relevance and value of the assessment for school improvement by offering additional support to schools to help them interpret results and apply their knowledge in the classroom.

Develop global peer-learning opportunities in which participating schools can use the common framework provided by the assessment to underpin professional development and exchange of good practices among teachers worldwide.

Increase the number and range of schools participating in the project worldwide.

Provide additional data on 21st century skills by including elements from PISA’s innovative domains, such as Collaborative Problem Solving and Global Competence, and other OECD large-scale surveys, such as the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills.