

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA): The Basics

What is it?



PISA is a system of international assessments, coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy. In addition to the core assessments, education systems may participate in optional assessments such as financial literacy and problem solving. PISA emphasizes functional skills that students have acquired as they near the end of compulsory schooling.

When is it administered?



Conducted every 3 years, each PISA data cycle assesses 1 of the 3 core subject areas (Reading, Mathematics, and Science) in depth (the major/focal subject), although all 3 core subjects are assessed in each cycle (the other 2 subjects are minor domains). The next administration was scheduled to take place in the fall of 2021, but has been delayed by one year to the fall of 2022. Only a sample of schools are selected to participate and results are representative of the nation as a whole, not of individuals, schools or states.

How is it designed?



PISA is a computer-based assessment and some accommodations are available. The goal of PISA is to represent outcomes of learning rather than of schooling. By emphasizing age, PISA shows what 15-year-olds have learned inside and outside the classroom, and provides a measurement learning outcomes while students across the many participating nations are required to be in school. Additionally, PISA measures "literacy" broadly, with content drawn from generalized subject matter. Other assessments (like TIMSS and NAEP) have stronger links to curriculum frameworks (find frameworks [here](#).)

Where can I learn more?



To learn more about Maine-specific PISA information, accommodations and more, please click [here](#). General PISA information is available [here](#). Please click [here](#) for an updated assessment calendar. For other inquiries, please contact NAEP & International Assessment Coordinator Regina Lewis, Ph. D at regina.lewis@maine.gov.

Still have questions?

Please contact Interim Director of Assessment Janette Kirk at janette.kirk@maine.gov for general inquiries.