

## About TIMSS and PIRLS

For the past 20 years, TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) has measured trends in mathematics and science achievement at the fourth and eighth grades. It has been conducted on a regular 4-year cycle since 1995, making TIMSS 2011 the fifth assessment of mathematics and science achievement trends. TIMSS Advanced, which measures trends in advanced mathematics and physics for students in their final year of secondary school, was conducted in 1995 and 2008, and is scheduled for 2015 (with the sixth assessment of TIMSS). For the past 15 years PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) has measured trends in reading comprehension at the fourth grade. First assessed in 2001, PIRLS has been on a regular 5-year cycle since then. Most recently, PIRLS was expanded in 2011 to include prePIRLS, which is a less difficult version of PIRLS. Both TIMSS and PIRLS were assessed in 2011, when the cycles of both studies came into alignment.

In general, participating countries use TIMSS and PIRLS in various ways to explore educational issues, including: monitoring system-level achievement trends in a global context, establishing achievement goals and standards for educational improvement, stimulating curriculum reform, improving teaching and learning through research and analysis of the data, conducting related studies (e.g. monitoring equity or assessing students in additional grades), and training researchers and teachers in assessment and evaluation.

TIMSS and PIRLS results are disseminated through reports and via the web through a well-documented international database for within and across country research.