



International Benchmarking for School Improvement

Project Outline

August 2024

BACKGROUND

The PISA-based Test for Schools (PBTS) is built on the global PISA assessment but designed to be used by individual schools and districts.

Teachers, school leaders and local educators are just as interested in international benchmarking as national policymakers. They know how important it is for their students to be prepared to enter a global economy where the benchmark for educational success is no longer the national standards alone, but the best performing education systems internationally. Moreover, they find real value when that information comes with tangible insights on how to leverage improvement in their own school.

Teachers are also actively seeking to connect with their peers around the world to share their professional insights by collaborating and learning from one another. This is not about copying prefabricated solutions from other places; it is about looking at good practices in our own environment and elsewhere to become more knowledgeable about what works and in which contexts. Supporting school leaders, teachers and educators in achieving their aspirations is what PISA for Schools is all about.

OBJECTIVES

The **PISA for Schools** project contributes to improving student learning and well-being by empowering teachers and school leaders through global connections and international benchmarking based on items that measure the same competences as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is the world's largest comparative education survey, present on its 2025 edition in more than 90 countries and economies worldwide.



The PISA for Schools project has three objectives:

1. **Measure** students' learning outcomes in mathematics, science and reading, as well as their social and emotional skills school environment, attitudes toward learning and student well-being. In particular, how well they can extrapolate that knowledge and skills and apply them in novel contexts.
2. **Explore:** Empower schools, leaders at the system and national level, and other interested stakeholders by providing them with internationally comparable insights on students' performance, learning environment, socioeconomic background, and motivation for learning.
3. **Act:** Provide peer-learning opportunities among teachers, school leaders guided by assessment experts as they apply their insights from targeted data in their efforts to improve student learning and well-being.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODOLOGY

Target population

Like PISA, the PISA-based Test for Schools (PBTS) is designed for students who are between 15 years and 3 completed months to 16 years and 2 completed months at the time of assessment. By following the same methodology used in the main PISA Study, school PBTS results will be directly comparable to the main PISA results both at the national and international level.

Eligible schools

All schools that fall within the target population are eligible to participate in PBTS if they meet the minimum requirements. Each school must have 42 or more eligible students. In addition, 80% or more of the sampled students must take part in the assessment to be able to produce a school report. To ensure that the minimum number of 42 students per school is reached, schools are encouraged to test at least 55 students.

Field Trial

The validation study (field trial) is a mandatory element of the assessment process. It ensures the psychometric properties of the instruments in the context of the country of administration. The schools selected for participating in the field trial should be as diverse as possible in terms of level of achievement, school size, intake and type. The schools that participate in the field trial will receive a school report if they meet the eligibility requirements described above.

Testing period

The Service Provider can choose the testing period when they wish to administer the PBTS. Testing must be avoided during the assessment period of other OECD tests such as PISA and TALIS. The testing period should be held within a period of 6-8 weeks. Scoring and coding activities can be launched during the testing period and can be completed after the testing period concludes.

Administration mode

To ensure alignment with PISA, the PBTS is available only in digital format in the country's language of instruction, with multilingual options available for countries that have multiple languages of instruction. The provision of the PBTS can take place both online and offline. This



flexibility provides valuable support for schools that have poor internet connections, allowing them to take the test offline and to copy the student responses to the PBTS platform after students have completed the test.

OUTCOMES

School reports

Each participating school will receive a comprehensive report aimed at school improvement efforts and international benchmarking. Each report will be unique to the individual school and will be delivered in a digital and PDF format.

School group report

School networks or groups of schools can also request (at an additional cost) a comprehensive Group Report geared toward improvement efforts at the network level.

Data

Together with the abovementioned reports, Service Providers will also receive the complete datasets generated by the administration of the PBTS in their territory. Thus, they will be able to autonomously carry out any desired additional analysis on the data.

Capacity building

Building capacity for educational improvement is one of the main aims of the PISA for Schools project. Capacity building activities can be broadly addressed either to participants (e.g. school staff) or to other stakeholders (e.g. Service Provider staff, analysts from educational authorities and other interested parties). For both groups, the OECD will provide international networking opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

Online and in-person events are organised regularly to offer a space for school leaders, teachers, and educators to share and solve problems, learn from other contexts and experiences, and support others to understand the results from their School Report and implement change in their classrooms.

At the same time, Service Provider's staff will acquire hands-on experience in competence-based educational assessment, from implementation to post-assessment activities. Staff will apply the principles of survey management, digital test administration, validation studies, data analysis and processing, and item analysis and development, drawing from the expertise and experience of the OECD and other partners of the PISA for Schools project.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Service Provider (SP)

The PBTS is co-ordinated in each territory by a Service Provider (SP), which is responsible for implementing the project and is accredited by the OECD.

External Contractor(s)

If the SP does not have all the capacities required for carrying out the project, it can outsource some of the responsibilities to one or several other External Contractors accredited by the OECD.



International Platform Provider (IPP)

The PBTS is administrated using a digital platform developed by the OECD's partner Educational Testing Service (ETS), who acts as a IPP and is responsible for providing digital authoring, delivery and reporting tools to participating schools.

OECD

The OECD is responsible for certifying the SP and for informing the PISA Governing Board representative about the progress of the project in that country.

The OECD also provides technical advisory services, support and oversight the development of the PISA for Schools project. The OECD's tasks include: providing test material, leading the translation and adaptation of the test, verification of translations and adaptations, developing reporting templates, etc.

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

Timeline

The initial implementation of the PISA for Schools project takes approximately six months from the moment of signature of the agreement between the OECD and the participating schools or system before the test is available to be administrated to students. This first six months are used to properly prepare the PBTS for implementation and include, among other activities: translation and adaptation of the assessment, sampling of participating schools (when required), school recruitment and training of school administrators. Once the PBTS has been administrated, data is analysed by the PISA for Schools team and school reports delivered to all participating schools that reached data quality standards approximately four months after the date of the last test administration.

Therefore, in total it takes approximately 10 months to prepare the test, implement the test in the schools, analyse the data, and deliver school reports to participating schools. After the first testing cycle, the assessment can be provided on demand (and therefore with a shorter implementation window) to any school in country or territory.

Cost to implement PISA for Schools

The costs of implementing PISA-based Test for Schools two main components: international and national costs:

- International costs consist of a payment via a Voluntary Contribution (VC) to the OECD's PISA Programme of Work and Budget. This VC is calculated to recover the costs of implementing the project at the OECD and the provision of the PBTS testing platform.
- National costs consist of local costs associated with delivery of the PISA for Schools, including technical support, logistics for test administration, marking of open-ended questions, among other tasks performed by the SP. Schools and systems usually implement the PBTS through a bilateral contract between schools or systems and the SP.

Quotes for international costs will be provided once the scope of the project is outlined between the OECD and interested schools and systems.



STEPS FOR JOINING THE PISA FOR SCHOOLS PROJECT**1. Expression of interest**

Schools themselves or interested systems send an expression of interest to the OECD via email or through the website.

**2. Approval by national education authorities**

The OECD obtains approval in principle to offer the PISA-based Test for Schools from the relevant PISA Governing Board Representative or relevant education authority (e.g. Ministry or Secretary of Education).

**3. Identification and accreditation of a Service Provider**

The OECD accredits a Service Provider (SP) to implement the PBTS at schools, following standards defined by the Technical Report and Guidelines. The SP signs an agreement with the OECD.

**4. Preparations for assessment implementation**

The PBTS instruments are translated into the relevant languages of instruction and validated by the OECD.

**5. On-demand testing**

The PBTS can be delivered on demand to schools within the agreed testing period.



CONTACTS

For further information on the PISA for Schools project please see our website:

<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-for-schools>

For more information, contact the Tanja VUJICIC (Team Leader) at tanja.vujicic@oecd.org or PISA for School team via email at pisaforschools@oecd.org.



ANNEX 1: RESPONSIBILITIES

The table below provides a description of the tasks involved in the project, and the team that is responsible for each task.

PGB Member= PISA Governing Board Member

SP = Service Provider

IPP = International Platform Provider

Territory= it can be a local, regional or national entity.

1. Expression of Interest	Responsibility
Receive an expression of interest from country/school network	OECD
Seek approval by PGB Member (for new countries)	OECD/PGB Member
Identify a SP for Territory	OECD, Territory
Prepare OECD/SP/Territory Agreement	OECD
Prepare IPP/SP Contract	IPP
2. Adaptation	Responsibility
Set up country authoring environment in international platform	IPP
Establish procedures for the security, protection, and confidentiality of all materials	IPP, SP, Territory
Provide manuals and localisation support for SP operations	IPP
Provide PBTS test materials to the SP	OECD
Lead adaptation workshop for test materials with SP	OECD, SP
Translation and adaption of PBTS test materials	SP
Verify adapted versions of PBTS test materials	OECD, contractor
Author PBTS test materials in platform (including localisation)	IPP
Adaptation and translation of school level reporting templates	OECD, SP
3. School Recruitment	Responsibility
Agree on testing window	IPP, SP, Territory OECD
Compile a database of schools to be tested	Territory, SP
Identify school coordinators	Territory, SP
4. Test Cycle Planning	Responsibility
Sampling - Create school lists and select participating schools/students	SP
Manage communication for participating schools.	SP
Design and develop testing window and all checks for delivery capability	IPP
Booking of testing slots	SP
Create and perform user acceptance plan	IPP
5. Preparation & Readiness Check	Responsibility
Publish practice tests	IPP
Recruit and train Coders for open-ended questions (in local languages)	SP
Provide training workshops for SPs	IPP
Create spreadsheets for IPP for sampled students	SP
Train School coordinators and Test administrators	SP, IPP
Generate School PINs	IPP
Perform checks of school equipment in Territory	SP, IPP



6. Delivery & Coding	Responsibility
Provide support to SPs for test delivery	IPP
Deliver the test	SP, IPP
Report on administration process by IPP	IPP
Report on administration process by SP (template provided by OECD)	SP
Enable data extraction for open-ended questions by SPs	IPP
Coding of open-ended responses	SP
7. Validation & Data Analysis	Responsibility
Data checks and data validation for open-ended questions	SP, contractor
Data checks and data validation for close-ended questions	SP, IPP, OECD
Provide validation study template	OECD
Provide raw data in final database containing student scores	IPP
Perform validation study (only in Year 1)	SP
Validate validation study (only in Year 1)	OECD
Validate final results provided by the IPP	OECD
8. Reporting	Responsibility
Generate reports and data on digital dashboard for validation by OECD	IPP
Validate school report	OECD
Deliver digital school reports to participating schools	SP
9. Post Test Activities	Responsibility
Send information about PISA for Schools Online Community	SP
Organise post-launch activities (e.g. webinars, launch events in schools)	Territory, SP, OECD
Administer survey for school satisfaction	IPP, OECD, SP



ANNEX 2: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

This section provides a brief explanation of the additional support activities that the PISA for Schools team can provide to the SP:

Data coding training, quality check and double marking

Each SP will need to allocate a certain number of Coders in order to mark open-ended items in the cognitive test and open-ended questions in the student questionnaire. The OECD will provide training either directly to the coders or to some trainers (who will later train the coders), depending on the SP's needs assessment.

Sampling framework design for representative sampling

Although mainly focused on School-level improvement, the PISA for Schools instruments can be used to draw conclusions at more systemic levels, on a given network of schools, a given subgroup of the student population or the entire Territory, provided that a statistically representative sample of schools and students has been drawn according to PISA technical standards.

This item will cover costs incurred by the OECD and External Contractors in designing a sampling framework and other procedures required to obtain a sample that allows for statistically valid conclusions regarding the group of interest.

Workshops

For schools participating in PISA for Schools, it is often the case that the work is not over once students finish taking the PBTS – it is only the beginning. In order for all the information contained on its school report and dataset to make a difference, teachers, support staff and school leadership must often understand how to act on PBTS findings. As the PBTS measured, and the school reported on what students know and can do, post-assessment capacity-building workshops with experts mediated by the OECD empower schools and system to act on their PBTS results. These workshops, which are planned and tailored to fit each participating country and network, are intended to build staff capacity to understand, analyse and construct assessments that can enable schools and school systems to plan improvement initiatives and to measure the impact of interventions.

ding their own country or economy's PISA findings and feel more empowered and capable to understand and interpret assessment results, as well as increased overall data literacy. This overall improvement comes from the built-to-suit nature of these workshops, which are tailored to better support its audience. Some recent examples of workshops delivered by the PFS team include:

- **Workshops for school-based educators** to build assessment and data literacy.
- **Workshops on Test Development** to build capacity of school-system staff to develop and implement standardised assessments, and
- **Workshops for data specialists** for educators who are already comfortable with statistics and data, who wish to develop further their capacity to analyse test response data, using item-response theory and/or perform secondary-analysis on data from international large-scale assessments like PISA and the PBTS.

These interventions can be delivered both in person or through webinars and can last from 60 to 120 minutes for shorter “how to read your school report” sessions to full- or multiple-days on more involved topics and broader objectives. As of 2024, educators from Australia, Brazil, India,



Portugal, and from several countries that are part of the European School Network have benefitted from PFS capacity building workshops.

In addition, the PFS team is working on the proposal of an **Integrated test development and management project**, a much larger collaboration with interested education systems, where much of the content of the three other streams is tailored and delivered to a group of system-level staff who are working to develop a new assessment, over at a minimum, of 2-years, but potentially longer, periods. In this endeavor, the PBTS is proposed as a monitoring instrument providing key indicators for education policy, and targeted interventions and analyses are planned to better act on PBTS findings. Interested education systems are invited to reach out to the PFS team at the OECD for more detail.

Tailored data analysis and reporting

The content of the data analysis and reporting will be defined together with the SP. It is possible to include analyses that will look at specific groups of students and schools (e.g. resilient schools, low/high performing schools, or rural/urban schools) and into details about their development of Social and Emotional skills.

The OECD and the SP will determine if (and which) additional questions could be added to student questionnaire in order to provide additional analysis according to specific local or context needs.

Group report

In addition to the School Report, the OECD can analyse the final results at a regional, municipal, or school network level and provide a group report.

The OECD and the SP will determine if (and which) additional questions could be added to student questionnaire in order to provide even more meaningful analysis in the national context.

Dedicated capacity building activities

Depending on their needs, Service Providers can request dedicated capacity building activities which will go beyond the inherent capacity building that naturally takes place through SP participation in the PISA for Schools project.

A non-exhaustive list of possible topics for these dedicated capacity building activities include survey management, test design, item analysis and development (i.e. psychometrics), validation studies and secondary analysis with PBTS data.

OECD mission

This will cover the costs related to one mission of OECD staff to the country where the project is being or will be implemented. The OECD recommends that this takes place in order to deliver the “Initial workshop, training and support to SP” in person. If needed, other missions can be requested later on by the SP.

The most common activities of the post-assessment workshop are aimed at capacity building and include: interventions to increase data literacy of school principals and teachers, creating opportunities to promote peer-learning or presenting compendia of OECD findings on particularly relevant topics. The final content and topics will be agreed upon with the SP.

