

BACKGROUND

1. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) is an independent international cooperative of national research institutions and government agencies, with a permanent secretariat based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. For the past 50 years, IEA has been conducting large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of policies and practices within and across systems of education internationally.
2. In 1990, IEA decided to measure student achievement and collect information to facilitate student learning in Mathematics and Science on a regular basis every four years.
3. The first of the large-scale international studies to measure trends in student performance began in 1994-1995 with the original TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study). TIMSS 1995 compared the performance of 45 education systems at Grades 3, 4, 7¹ and 8.
4. TIMSS 1999 compared the performance of 38 education systems at Grade 8. A majority of the participating systems had also participated in TIMSS 1995.
5. Renamed as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, TIMSS was conducted for a third time at Grades 4 and 8 in 2002-2003. Students from 49 education systems took part in TIMSS 2003.
6. TIMSS 2007 is the fourth cycle of assessments that measures trends in fourth and eighth grade students' achievement in Mathematics and Science and reports on the background contexts within which students learn Mathematics and Science. 59 different education systems participated in TIMSS 2007.

¹ Grades 3 and 7 correspond to Primary 3 and Secondary 1 respectively.