Foreword

Pisa 2009 at a Glance *offers a reader-friendly introduction to five of the six volumes of PISA 2009 Results.*

PISA, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment, evaluates the quality, equity and efficiency of school systems in some 70 countries that, together, make up nine-tenths of the world economy. PISA represents a commitment by governments to regularly monitor the outcomes of education systems within an internationally agreed framework. It also provides a basis for international collaboration in defining and implementing educational goals in innovative ways that reflect judgements about the skills that are relevant to adult life.
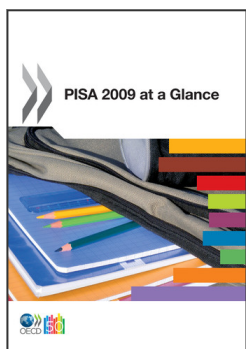
Around 470 000 students participated in PISA 2009, representing about 26 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 65 participating countries and economies. Some 50 000 students took part in a second round of this assessment, representing about 2 million 15-year-olds from 10 additional partner countries and economies.

The main focus of PISA 2009 was reading. The survey also updated performance assessments in mathematics and science. PISA considers students' knowledge in these areas not in isolation, but in relation to their ability to reflect on their knowledge and experience and apply them to real-world issues. The emphasis is on mastering processes, understanding concepts and functioning in various contexts within each assessment area.

For the first time, the PISA 2009 survey also assessed 15-year-old students' ability to read, understand and apply digital texts.

The structure of PISA at a Glance 2009 mirrors that of the PISA 2009 Results *volumes. The first section, "What Students Know and Can Do", presents an overview of 15-year-olds' performance in reading, mathematics and science in the 2009 assessment. The second part, "Overcoming Social Background", discusses how socio-economic background is related to learning opportunities and outcomes. "Learning to Learn", the third part of* PISA at a Glance, *surveys students' attitudes towards, and their levels of engagement in, reading and learning. The last section, "What Makes a School Successful?", examines how education policies and allocation of resources are associated with student reading performance. Findings from the fifth volume of* PISA 2009 Results, Learning Trends, *are incorporated throughout.*

Figures and charts are all accompanied by a dynamic hyperlink, or StatLink, that directs readers to an Internet site where the corresponding data are available in Excel™ format. Reference is often made to charts and tables that appear in PISA 2009 Results *volumes. This material can generally be accessed via the StatLinks accompanying the charts or at www.pisa.oecd.org, where readers can find out more about PISA.*

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