



Foreword

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys, which take place every three years, have been designed to collect information about 15-year-old students in participating countries. PISA examines how well students are prepared to meet the challenges of the future, rather than how well they master particular curricula. The data collected during each PISA cycle are an extremely valuable source of information for researchers, policy makers, educators, parents and students. It is now recognised that the future economic and social well-being of countries is closely linked to the knowledge and skills of their populations. The internationally comparable information provided by PISA allows countries to assess how well their 15-year-old students are prepared for life in a larger context and to compare their relative strengths and weaknesses.

PISA is methodologically highly complex, requiring intensive collaboration among many stakeholders. The successful implementation of PISA depends on the use, and sometimes further development, of state-of-the-art methodologies and technologies. The *PISA 2009 Technical Report* describes those methodologies, along with other features that have enabled PISA to provide high quality data to support policy formation and review. The descriptions are provided at a level that will enable review and, potentially, replication of the implemented procedures and technical solutions to problems.

This report contains a description of the theoretical underpinning of the complex techniques used to create the *PISA 2009 Database*, which includes information on 470 000 students in 65 countries.¹ The database includes not only information on student performance in the three main areas of assessment – reading, mathematics and science – but also their responses to the Student Questionnaire that they completed as part of the assessment. Data from the principals of participating schools are also included. The *PISA 2009 Database* was used to generate information and to be the basis for analysis for the PISA 2009 initial report.

The information in this report complements the *PISA Data Analysis Manuals* (OECD, 2009), which give detailed accounts of how to carry out the analyses of the information in the database.

The PISA surveys are guided by the governments of the participating countries on the basis of shared policy-driven interests. The PISA Governing Board, which decides on the assessment and reporting of results, is composed of representatives from each participating country.

The OECD recognises the creative work of Raymond Adams, of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), who is project director of the PISA Consortium and John Cresswell who acted as editor for this report. The team supporting them comprised Alla Berezner, Wei Buttress, Steve Dept, Andrea Ferrari, Cees Glas, Béatrice Halleux, Khurrem Jehangir, Nora Kovarcikova, Sheila Krawchuk, Greg Macaskill, Barry McCrae, Juliette Mendelovits, Alla Routitsky, Keith Rust, Ross Turner and Maurice Walker. A full list of the contributors to the PISA project is included in Annex H of this report. The editorial work at the OECD Secretariat was carried out by Marika Boiron, Elizabeth Del Bourgo, Miyako Ikeda, Maciej Jakubowski, Sophie Vayssettes and Elisabeth Villoutreix.

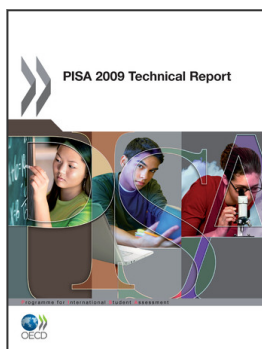
Lorna Bertrand
Chair of the PISA Governing Board

Barbara Ischinger
Director for Education, OECD



Note

1. The implementation and data for PISA 2009 plus countries are not discussed in this report, however, the procedures, technical standards and statistical methods used in the PISA 2009 plus study were identical to those discussed here.



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