

Appendix C.1: Information about the Students Assessed in TIMSS 2011

Reported by National Research Coordinators

| Country | Grade 4 | | Grade 8 | | Information About Age of Entry, Promotion, and Retention |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| | Country's Name for Fourth Year of Formal Schooling* | Average Age at Time of Testing | Country's Name for Eighth Year of Formal Schooling* | Average Age at Time of Testing | |
| Armenia | Grade 4 | 10.0 | Grade 8 | 14.6 | Children must be 6 years old to begin school the following December 31st. The age of entry policy has changed within the past ten years. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–5, but dependent on academic progress for Grades 6–8. |
| Australia | Year 4 | 10.0 | Year 8 | 14.0 | Varies by state, but children generally must begin school by age 6. Most children actually begin school at the minimum age of 4.5–5, and the age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. Policy on promotion and retention varies by state but, generally, there is automatic promotion for Grades 1–8. |
| Austria | Grade 4 | 10.3 | | | Children must begin school in the September following their 6th birthday, but parents can request early admission for children who turn 6 by March 1st of the following year. Automatic promotion for Grade 1, but there is retention in Grades 2–4 for students failing one or more compulsory subjects. |
| Azerbaijan | Grade 4 | 10.2 | | | Children must be 6 years old by the end of September to begin school on September 15 of that year, but children the Ministry of Education identifies as talented who are born before the end of November can begin school in September of the year they turn 6. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–4, but is dependent on academic progress for Grades 5–8. |
| Bahrain | Grade 5 | 10.4 | 3rd Intermediate | 14.4 | Parents must register their children at school when they are 7 years old. Children must be 6 years old by the end of June to begin the following September. The age of entry policy has changed within the past ten years. Promotion is dependent upon passing Arabic, Mathematics, Science, and English. |
| Belgium (Flemish) | Grade 4 | 10.0 | | | Children must begin school on September 1st of the year of their 6th birthday. Parents can keep their child in kindergarten until age 7, with approval. Promotion is decided by each school and/or parents; students not having fully attended preprimary education must pass a language qualification test to begin primary school. |
| Chile | Grade 4 | 10.1 | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Compulsory schooling begins at age 6. Children must be 6 years old by March 31st to begin in March of the same calendar year. Promotion is dependent on academic progress for all grades. |
| Chinese Taipei | Grade 4 | 10.2 | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Children must be 6 years old before September 1st to begin school in the September of the same calendar year. There is automatic promotion for Grades 1–8. |
| Croatia | Grade 4 | 10.7 | | | The age of entry policy, which has changed within the past ten years, says that all children must begin school by 7 years old. Although children must be at least 6 years old by the end of March to begin the following September, children typically begin school at age 7. Student promotion is dependent on meeting minimum standards in Grades 1–8. |
| Czech Republic | Grade 4 | 10.4 | | | Compulsory schooling begins at the beginning of the school year (September 1st) following the child's 6th birthday unless granted a postponement, which an increasing number of parents are seeking. Promotion is dependent on academic progress in all compulsory subjects, but is automatic for students who have repeated a year. |
| Denmark | Grade 4 | 11.0 | | | Children begin preprimary education the year they turn 6 and primary education the following year. Delaying entry by a year requires municipal board approval, but parents can have their child begin a year early. This policy has changed within the past ten years. There is automatic promotion in Grades 1–8, though in special cases students may be promoted or retained based on individual assessments, with parental consent. |
| England | Year 5 | 10.2 | Year 9 | 14.2 | Children begin school the term (typically September, January, or April) of their 5th birthday. Many local authorities make provision for all children to begin in the September of the school year in which they will turn 5 and some have changed the discretionary time so that children can begin at a younger age, although all of this is subject to parental discretion. There is no policy on promotion and retention. |
| Finland | Grade 4 | 10.8 | Grade 8 | 14.8 | Children begin school the autumn of the year of their 7th birthday, although it is possible to enter school either one year earlier or one year later than the official policy, following discussions with an expert (e.g., school psychologist). There is automatic promotion for Grades 1–8, with retention only in extreme situations. |
| Georgia | Grade 4 | 10.0 | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Compulsory schooling begins at age 6 according to the Law on General Education, which has been updated within the past ten years. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–4, and dependent on academic progress for Grades 5–8. |
| Germany | Grade 4 | 10.4 | | | Compulsory schooling begins the year a child turns 6. Children must be at least 6 years old before a statutory qualifying date (which varies by state; in most states the date falls between June 30th and September 30th) to begin on August 1st. The official policy grants parents the right to request early admission or postponed enrollment, but the school administration has the final decision. The policy on age of entry has been revised within the past ten years. There is automatic promotion in Grade 1, and promotion policies differ between states for later grades. |

SOURCE: IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study – TIMSS 2011

* The TIMSS target population is the grade that represents four years or eight years of schooling counting from the first year of ISCED Level 1. However, IEA has a policy that students do not fall under the minimum average age of 9.5 years old (Fourth grade) or 13.5 years old (Eighth grade) at the time of testing, so England, Malta, and New Zealand assessed students in their fifth year or ninth year of formal schooling.

Appendix C.1: Information about the Students Assessed in TIMSS 2011 (Continued)

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| | Country's Name for Fourth Year of Formal Schooling* | Average Age at Time of Testing | Country's Name for Eighth Year of Formal Schooling* | Average Age at Time of Testing | |
| Ghana | | | Junior High School Form Two | 15.8 | Children begin school the calendar year of their 6th birthday. Promotion is automatic in Grades 1–6 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 7–9. Promotion is mostly automatic in public schools. |
| Hong Kong SAR | Primary 4 | 10.1 | Secondary 2 | 14.2 | Children begin school the September after they turn 5 years, 8 months old. Representatives of the Education Bureau may prescribe a maximum rate of repetition. |
| Hungary | Grade 4 | 10.7 | Grade 8 | 14.7 | Children begin school during the calendar year they turn 6 if their birthday is before May 31st; however, children may begin during the calendar year of their 6th, 7th, or 8th birthday at parental request. Promotion is automatic in Grades 1–3, and dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. |
| Indonesia | | | Grade 8 | 14.3 | Children must be 7 years old by the end of June to begin on July 12th, although parents have some choice in starting children at age 6. Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8. |
| Iran, Islamic Rep. of | Grade 4 | 10.2 | Grade 8 | 14.3 | Children must be 6 years old by September 22nd to begin school September 23rd, although there are few private schools that allow registration at 6.5 years. Students with failing grades in June must take a cumulative exam in September to determine promotion or retention. |
| Ireland | Fourth Class | 10.3 | | | The Education (Welfare) Act of 2000 requires children to attend primary schools from the time that they are 6 years old but not before they are 4. In practice, nearly half of 4-year-olds and almost all 5-year-olds are enrolled in infant classes in primary schools. Children only are allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. |
| Israel | | | Grade 8 | 14.0 | The official policy is that children begin school the calendar year of their 6th birthday, but parents have the final say if they feel their children are not ready to begin. There is retention only in exceptional cases. |
| Italy | Grade 4 | 9.7 | Grade 8 | 13.8 | Children begin school the calendar year of their 6th birthday, but parents can enroll children who will turn 6 years old by April 30th of the following calendar year in the calendar year of their 5th birthday. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8. |
| Japan | Grade 4 | 10.5 | Grade 8 | 14.5 | Compulsory schooling begins at age 6, and children must be 6 years old by April 1st to start school. There is no policy for promotion and retention. |
| Jordan | | | Grade 8 | 13.9 | Compulsory schooling begins at 6 years old. Children must be at least 5 years, 8 months old by September 1st to begin school. Promotion is dependent on academic progress in Arabic and mathematics for Grades 1–3, with parental consent, and dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. Students should not repeat a grade more than twice. |
| Kazakhstan | Grade 4 | 10.4 | Grade 8 | 14.6 | According to the Law of Education (2007), children must begin school at age 6, though parents can postpone enrollment for one year. The age of entry policy has changed within the past ten years. Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–4, and dependent on successfully passing exams for Grades 5–8. |
| Korea, Rep. of | Grade 4 | 10.4 | Grade 8 | 14.3 | Children begin school during the calendar year of their 6th birthday, and must be 6 years old by the end of December to begin school in March of that year. Parents can decide to send their children a year later (at age 7), for health reasons, or a year early (at age 5). Promotion is dependent on academic progress and attendance for Grades 1–8. |
| Kuwait | Grade 4 | 9.7 | | | Children must be 6 years old by March 15th to begin school that calendar year, and children typically begin primary school at age 5.5 or 6. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–3 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. |
| Lebanon | | | Grade 8 | 14.3 | Children must be 6 years old by the end of June to begin school the following September, although in public schools, special cases may be authorized by the Ministry of Education. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–6 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 7–8. |
| Lithuania | Grade 4 | 10.7 | Grade 8 | 14.7 | Children must begin school by the calendar year of their 7th birthday, but parents can enroll children one year early if the child satisfies the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. There is no national policy on promotion and retention; decisions are made at the school level. |
| Macedonia, Rep. of | | | Grade 8 | 14.7 | Since 2007, children must be 6 years old by the end of December to begin school the following September. Before 2007, children had to be 6 years old by the end of May to begin school the following September. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–5 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 6–8. |
| Malaysia | | | Form 2 | 14.4 | Children begin school at the beginning of January of the calendar year of their 6th birthday. There is no policy for promotion and retention. |
| Malta | Year 5 | 9.8 | | | Children begin school in late September of the calendar year of their 5th birthday. Students repeat a class only in exceptional circumstances in primary school and on the basis of their academic performance and other factors in exceptional circumstances in secondary school. Students can be retained only once during each education cycle. |

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| Morocco | Grade 4 | 10.5 | Grade 8 | 14.7 | Children must be at least 5 years, 6 months old by the beginning of September to begin school, and parents rarely postpone the start. Promotion depends on academic progress for both primary and secondary grades. |
| Netherlands | Group 6 | 10.2 | | | Children must begin kindergarten on the first school day of the month after their 5th birthday. Most children begin kindergarten when they turn 4 and primary education at age 6, although some children begin primary education a year later at age 7. Promotion and retention are decided by the school, dependent on academic progress. |
| New Zealand | Year 5 | 9.9 | Year 9 | 14.1 | Children must be enrolled in school by their 6th birthday but have the right to begin school at age 5, and nearly all children begin school on or soon after their 5th birthday. There is automatic promotion, with retention only in very special circumstances with school and parental input. |
| Northern Ireland | Year 6 | 10.4 | | | Children must be 4 years old by July 1st to begin school in September. The majority of children start and continue with their age group, but some transfer to post-primary a year late or early. |
| Norway | Grade 4 (4. trinn) | 9.7 | Grade 8 (8.trinn) | 13.7 | Children must begin school the calendar year of their 6th birthday. There is automatic promotion for all grades. |
| Oman | Grade 4 | 9.9 | Grade 8 | 14.1 | Children begin school the year of their 6th birthday. Children must be at least 5 years, 9 months old at the start of the academic year (beginning of September), but parents can enroll their children in private schools where the official entry age is 5 years, 5 months. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–4 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 5–8. |
| Palestinian Nat'l Auth. | | | Grade 8 | 13.9 | Children must be 5 years, 9 months old by the beginning of the September in which they enroll. Parents can enroll children in private schools two months earlier than public schools. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–3 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. A maximum of 5% of students in each class may be retained. |
| Poland | Grade 3 | 9.9 | | | Children must begin school the calendar year of their 7th birthday, but parents can postpone the beginning of school for medical or psychological reasons. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. Parental consent is required for retention in Grades 1–6, and promotion is dependent upon academic progress in higher grades. |
| Portugal | Grade 4 | 10.0 | | | Children must begin school the year of their 6th birthday if they turn 6 years old by September 15th. Parents can enroll children who turn 6 years old by the end of December, depending on school availability. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. Promotion is automatic for Grade 1, and dependent on academic progress for Grades 2–8. |
| Qatar | Grade 4 | 10.0 | Grade 8 | 14.0 | Children must begin school in the September of the calendar year of their 6th birthday, but parents can enroll their children in private schools where the official entry age is 5 years, 5 months. Promotion is dependent on academic progress for Grades 1–8. |
| Romania | Grade 4 | 10.9 | Grade 8 | 14.9 | According to the law of education, which has been revised within the past ten years, children must begin school at age 6, although parents can postpone enrollment for one year. Promotion is automatic for Grade 1, and dependent on academic progress for Grades 2–8. |
| Russian Federation | Grade 4 | 10.8 | Grade 8 | 14.7 | Children must be at least 6 years, 6 months old by the end of August to begin school in September but typically begin at age 7. Promotion is automatic for Grade 1 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 2–8. |
| Saudi Arabia | Grade 4 | 10.0 | Intermediate Year 2 | 14.1 | Children must begin school the calendar year of their 6th birthday. There is no policy on promotion and retention. |
| Serbia | Grade 4 | 10.8 | | | Children must begin school between the ages of 6.5 and 7.5 years old. Schools may recommend one year of continued preparatory preschool for children not considered school ready. The age of entry policy has changed within the past ten years. Promotion is automatic for Grade 1 and generally automatic for Grades 2–3, except by parental request. In Grades 4–7, students failing 2 or more subjects must pass makeup exams. |
| Singapore | Primary 4 | 10.4 | Secondary 2 | 14.4 | According to the Compulsory Education Act, children must begin school the calendar year of their 7th birthday, although parents may seek a deferral of registration based on medical grounds. There is automatic promotion for Grades 1–4; retention is at principal's discretion for Grade 5 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 6–8. |
| Slovak Republic | Grade 4 | 10.4 | | | Children must begin school in September if they turn 6 years old by August 31st. Children may begin school early or after an approved delay, based on psychological tests and professional recommendations. Promotion is dependent on academic progress. Students failing 1–2 required subjects must pass a makeup exam; students failing more than 2 are retained. |
| Slovenia | Grade 4 | 9.9 | Grade 8 | 13.9 | Children must begin school the calendar year of their 6th birthday, but some children who are 6 years old in January enter school in the September of the calendar year before they turn 6. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. Generally, there is automatic promotion for Grades 1–8, except for students with learning difficulties. |

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| Spain | Primary Education Year 4 | 9.8 | | | Children must begin school the calendar year of their 6th birthday. Almost every child begins kindergarten at the age of 3 even though it is not compulsory. Students can be retained for 1 year during Grades 1–6, but students with special needs can be retained twice. Students that don't reach the goals in Grades 7 and 8 can be retained in both grades. |
| Sweden | Grade 4 | 10.7 | Grade 8 | 14.8 | Children begin school in the fall of the calendar year of their 7th birthday but can begin the year they turn 6 or 8 years old for special reasons. There is automatic promotion for all grades. |
| Syrian Arab Republic | | | Grade 8 | 13.9 | Children must begin school the September following their 6th birthday. Promotion for Grades 1–8 is based on academic progress, but promotion is automatic when a student fails a grade for the second time. |
| Thailand | Primary 4 | 10.5 | Middle School 2 | 14.3 | Children must begin school by the year of their 7th birthday, but can begin at the age of 6. There is no policy for promotion and retention. |
| Tunisia | Year 4 of Primary Education | 10.0 | Year 8 of Basic Education | 14.3 | Children begin school in the September of the calendar year of their 6th birthday. Younger children are accepted if there are school vacancies in the area where they live. Promotion is dependent on academic progress in Arabic, French, mathematics, and science for Grades 1–6, and dependent on academic progress for Grades 7–8. |
| Turkey | Grade 4 | 10.1 | Grade 8 | 14.0 | Children begin school in September of the calendar year of their 6th birthday, although they can begin a year later, at parental discretion. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–3 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. |
| Ukraine | | | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Compulsory schooling begins at age 6. Children must be at least 6 years old by September 1st to begin school, and parents can decide if children begin school at age 6 or 7. Retention is decided by parents, and students can take external examinations to advance into higher grade levels. |
| United Arab Emirates | Grade 4 | 9.8 | Grade 8 | 13.9 | Children can begin school when they are 5.5 years old. Parents or guardians can decide when children begin school, but it must be by age 8. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. Students in Grades 1–5 are subject to remedial instruction for promotion, and promotion in Grades 6–8 is dependent on academic achievement. |
| United States | Grade 4 | 10.2 | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Varies by state, but children commonly begin kindergarten at age 5 (by parental choice) and typically begin primary school at age 6 (by law). |
| Yemen | Grade 4 | 11.2 | | | Children can begin school the year of their 6th birthday, but some flexibility exists at the discretion of the school's director. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–3 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. |

Out of Grade Participants

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|--------------|------------|------|---------|------|---|
| Botswana | Standard 6 | 12.8 | Form 2 | 15.8 | Children must be 6 years old by the end of June to begin school in the January of the same calendar year, but children from remote areas may begin school later than age 6. There is up to 12.5% retention in each class and accelerated progression is possible after parent consultation. |
| Honduras | Grade 6 | 12.7 | Grade 9 | 15.7 | Children must be 7 years old by the end of January to begin school the following February, but about 30% of children typically begin primary school at age 6, per principals' decisions. Promotion is dependent on academic progress on exams prepared and administered by teachers. |
| South Africa | | | Grade 9 | 16.0 | Children must be 6 years old by June 30th of the year in which they enroll and children are encouraged to begin at age 7. The age of entry policy has been revised within the past ten years. In principle, students should progress with their age cohort. The norm for repetition is one year per school phase where necessary. |
| Yemen | Grade 6 | 13.2 | | | Children can begin school the year of their 6th birthday, but some flexibility exists at the discretion of the school's director. Promotion is automatic for Grades 1–3 and dependent on academic progress for Grades 4–8. |

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| Benchmarking Participants | | | | | |
| Alberta, Canada | Grade 4 | 9.9 | Grade 8 | 13.9 | The law requires all children who are 6 years old by September 1 to attend school, although school boards may set their own age requirements for entering school, and many allow children to enter Grade 1 if they are 6 years old by March 1 of the following year. Parental discretion or choice is allowed. School principals make promotion decisions in line with school policies. |
| Ontario, Canada | Grade 4 | 9.8 | Grade 8 | 13.8 | Children must attend school in September if they turn 6 years old by September 1 but also have the right to attend school in September if they will turn 6 by December 31 of that calendar year. Parents may choose to enroll their children in junior kindergarten at age 4 or senior kindergarten at age 5. School principals make promotion decisions, appealable to the school board. |
| Quebec, Canada | Grade 4 | 10.1 | Secondary 2 | 14.2 | Children must be 6 years old by September 30th to begin school in the September of that calendar year. School boards determine promotion and the Ministry sets rules for obtaining diplomas. |
| Abu Dhabi, UAE | Grade 4 | 9.7 | Grade 8 | 13.8 | Children must be 6 years old by October 1st of the school year in which they enroll. Parents sometimes place students in private schools that accept younger students, then transfer them to the public system. The age of entry policy has changed within the past ten years. There is automatic promotion in Grades 1–5, except in special cases and with parental consent. Promotion is dependent on academic progress in Grades 6–8. |
| Dubai, UAE | Grade 4 | 9.8 | Grade 8 | 13.9 | Children can begin school the calendar year of their 5th birthday. The policy on promotion and retention varies by school type. |
| Alabama, US | | | Grade 8 | 14.4 | According to the code of Alabama 1875 Section 16-28-3, children must begin school at age 7, and typically children actually do begin at age 7. The age of entry policy has changed within the past ten years. There is no policy for promotion or retention. |
| California, US | | | Grade 8 | 14.1 | California law requires a child to be 6 years old on or before December 2 for the 2011-12 school year to enter Grade 1. However, the cut-off date for entry is in the process of being moved earlier by several months (California Education Code Section 48010). Although kindergarten is not required, most parents and guardians choose to enroll their children in kindergarten. There is no policy for promotion and retention. |
| Colorado, US | | | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Children 6 years old on or before August 1st are required to begin school during that calendar year. Parents may opt to send their children to private or parochial schools or home school them if they choose not to meet the state policy. The age of entry policy has changed within the past ten years. Promotion and retention policies are decided by local education agencies. |
| Connecticut, US | | | Grade 8 | 14.1 | Children must begin school by the time they are 7 years old. A 4-year-old may enroll in preprimary education (kindergarten) at the beginning of a school year (August or September) if he or she will turn 5 on or before January 1 of that school year. Some parents elect to delay school enrollment for younger children, and state law allows this practice provided students are enrolled in school when they are 7 years of age. Promotion and retention decisions are made locally at the district or school level. |
| Florida, US | Grade 4 | 10.4 | Grade 8 | 14.4 | Florida law (Section 1003.21 (1) (a)) specifies that children who are 6 or who will be 6 by February 1st of that school year are required to attend school. If a child enters public school at age 6 without completing kindergarten, they will be placed in kindergarten. Children who have attained the age of 5 on or before September 1 of the school year are eligible for admission to public kindergarten during that school year based on rules prescribed by the school board. Statewide, students are retained after Grade 3 if they do not pass the state reading assessment. Otherwise, policies for promotion and retention are determined by districts, based on academic performance. |
| Indiana, US | | | Grade 8 | 14.4 | Children are not required to be in school until the school year in which they turn 7 years old. Children must be 5 years old on or before August 1st to begin kindergarten during that calendar year. Students are retained after Grade 3 if they do not pass the state reading assessment. |
| Massachusetts, US | | | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Each child must attend school beginning in September of the calendar year in which he or she turns 6. Each school committee may establish its own minimum permissible age for school attendance, provided that such age is not older than the state mandatory minimum age (established by state law 603CMR 8.00). There is no policy for promotion and retention. |
| Minnesota, US | | | Grade 8 | 14.3 | Compulsory schooling begins at age 7. Children must be at least 5 years old by September 1st to begin kindergarten, or 6 years old by September 1st to begin Grade 1 (MN Statute 120A.20). Any school board may establish a policy for admission at an earlier age. There is no policy for promotion and retention. |
| North Carolina, US | Grade 4 | 10.2 | Grade 8 | 14.2 | Compulsory schooling begins at age 7. If the child is 5 years old on or before August 31st the child is eligible to begin kindergarten. The statute recognizes that some students will be presented for enrollment who can be more appropriately served at a higher grade level, and it authorizes the school principal to make such decisions. There is no policy for promotion and retention. |

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