

U.S. teens not as smart as their peers

By Motoko Rich, New York Times

Fifteen-year-olds in the United States score in the middle of the developed world in reading and science while lagging in math, according to international standardized test results being released on Tuesday.

While the performance of American students who took the exams last year differed little from the performance of those tested in 2009, the last time the exams were administered, several comparable countries – including Ireland and Poland – pulled ahead this time.

As in previous years, the scores of students in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and South Korea put those school systems at the top of the rankings for math, science and reading. Finland, a darling of educators, slid in all subjects but continued to outperform the averages, and the United States.

The Program for International Student Assessment, commonly known as PISA, was administered to 15-year-olds in 65 countries and school systems by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a Paris-based group that includes the world's wealthiest nations. Just over 6,100 American students took the exams.

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