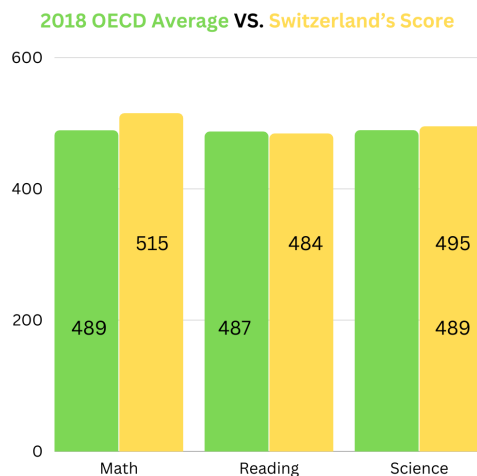


The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), a voluntary international assessment conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) every three years, assesses the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science and compares the performance of education systems across over eighty countries. It assesses students' mastery of real-world problem-solving skills and knowledge and not school curricula (*PISA Scores by Country 2023*, n.d.). PISA results are widely used by policymakers, educators, and researchers around the world and can help countries to identify strengths and weaknesses in their education systems and to develop strategies for improvement.

Switzerland has participated in PISA since its establishment in 2000 (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). The country consistently scored above the OECD average in mathematics, and science. Reading scores, however, are a different story. Figure A below shows a visual comparison of Switzerland's scores compared to the OECD's average scores for 2018. Although the reading scores are fairly close, with just a 4-point difference, it is important to note that reading has been a long-term issue for the Swiss since the first PISA results came out in 2000 and showed that only 20% of students can only read simple texts (Leybold-Johnson, 2019).



*Figure A: comparison of 2018 PISA scores - OECD average score compared to the average score of Switzerland.*

The PISA test results throughout the years have shown a decline in Swiss students' reading performance and an increase in the number of students with reading difficulties (SwissCommunity, n.d.-b). In 2022, the Swiss government announced a new national education strategy that is directly linked to PISA. The strategy aims to improve Switzerland's performance in PISA by 2030. The strategy focuses on a number of areas, including early childhood education, teacher education, and the curriculum (Ongoing Reforms and Policy Developments, n.d.). Upcoming PISA scores will determine how effective these changes and implementations are. However, it is clear that Switzerland is committed to using PISA as a guideline to improve its education system and a means to gauge its progress in comparison to previous years.

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