

INTRODUCTION

The *Maryland School Assessment (MSA)* is a measure of students' reading and mathematics comprehension. It will eventually include the measure of science as well. The *MSA* replaced the *Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP)* to meet the new federal test requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* that was reauthorized and renamed from the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in 2002.

New academic standards were designed to inform parents, teachers, and educators of what students actually learned in schools and to make schools accountable for teaching contents measured by the *MSA*. To this end, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in collaboration with hundreds of educators across the state and Harcourt Assessment, Inc. (Harcourt), developed a series of reading tests to measure students' achievement against the new academic standards.

The purpose of the 2004 *MSA-Reading Technical Report* is to provide users and other interested parties with a general overview and statistical results of the *MSA-Reading*.

The 2004 *Technical Report* is composed of four parts, and the first part contains the following information:

- General overview and purposes of the *MSA-Reading*
- Development and review of the *MSA-Reading*
- Test administration
- Operational test analyses (Grades 3, 5, and 8)
- Field test analyses for scoring purposes (Grades 4, 6, and 7)
- Linking, equating, and scaling
- Standard setting (Grades 4, 6, and 7)
- Score interpretation
- Test validity
- Item bank

The second part provides the 2004 *MSA-Reading* results for students in grades 3 through 8. It contains information about the cutoff score and pass rate at each performance level for the 2004 reading tests.

The third part contains statistical summaries for the 2004 *MSA-Reading*. This part outlines the statistical and psychometric characteristics of the 2004 *MSA-Reading*.

Four appendices provide additional statistical results for the 2004 *MSA-Reading*: Appendix A contains scale score frequency distributions and histograms; Appendix B contains both classical and *item response theory (IRT)* item parameters; Appendix C contains test blueprints for grades 3 through 8; and Appendix D provides information about the recentered 2003 *MSA-Reading* raw score to scale score conversion tables.