

# MARYLAND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT (MSA)

*August 2011*

<p><b>What is the Maryland School Assessment?</b></p>	<p>The Maryland School Assessment (MSA) is a statewide test of reading, mathematics and science achievement which measures basic as well as higher level skills. The MSA meets the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which requires each state to test how well its students do in reading, mathematics and science.</p>
<p><b>Which students take the MSA?</b></p>	<p>Students in grades 3-8 take the MSA in reading and mathematics; students in grades 5 and 8 take the science test. Students take the reading and mathematics tests each year in March. They take the science test in late March, April, or early May, depending on when the Easter holiday occurs.</p> <p>All students, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency, are included in testing. Most take the MSA. Students with disabilities may take the Mod-MSA if they meet all eligibility criteria for participation in the Mod-MSA. Students who may be eligible for the Mod-MSA may require a test format designed to meet the need of the student's specific instructional characteristics, such as the need for test items with fewer and shorter reading passages, shorter or less complex questions, and test items with fewer answer choices. A small percentage of students with severe disabilities take the Alt-MSA.</p>
<p><b>What are the tests like?</b></p>	<p>Students in each grade take each test over two days. The amount of time students spend in testing varies by subject and grade. The test includes multiple choice questions and questions that require the student to write a short response. Information about the MSA, along with sample test questions, are available on the Web at <a href="http://www.marylandpublicschools.org">www.marylandpublicschools.org</a>.</p>
<p><b>Do individual students receive scores on the MSA?</b></p>	<p>Parents receive their child's scores from the local school system. Students' scores are reported as scale scores which range from 240 to 650. Maryland uses a scale score to provide a more precise measurement of a student's achievement and to assure that tests given at different times are comparable. Scores are reported in terms of basic, proficient, and advanced performance. The scores show how well the child learned the subject matter. Basic is the lowest level of performance. Proficient is the middle level and Advanced is the highest level. The goal is to have all students perform at the Proficient or Advanced level. The score report also shows how the school, school system, and state performed on the tests.</p>