

## **Purpose**

This publication is designed to provide information to Maryland testing coordinators, educators, parents, and interested citizens about the development, implementation, scoring, and technical attributes of the portfolio-based Alternate Maryland School Assessment, otherwise known as the ALT-MSA.

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the ALT-MSA that will help schools and educators use the assessment and interpret the results. It is hoped that the information presented in this manual will enable schools and educators to make informed assessment-based decisions in order to improve instruction, which will lead to enhanced teaching and improved student learning.

In addition, this technical report outlines the purpose of the ALT-MSA so that parents, educators, and students have a clear understanding of why their participation in the assessment program is so important. This understanding is a critical component of any testing program. If the stakeholders do not understand the underlying purpose of the assessment they may be reluctant to give it their full attention and support.

One of the main goals of any assessment system is improved learning through informed instruction. This is a challenging goal and one that will require the commitment and dedication of all those involved: state agency personnel, local administrators, teachers and students.