

INTRODUCTION

The *Maryland School Assessment (MSA)* is a measure of students' reading and mathematics comprehension. The *MSA* fulfills recommendations of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools and meets the federal testing requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* of 2001.

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, developed a series of reading tests to measure students' achievement against the new academic standards.

In 2003, the *MSA-Reading* was introduced in grades 3, 5, and 8; grades 4, 6, and 7 were added to the program in 2004.

The purpose of the 2009 *MSA-Reading Technical Report* is to provide users and other interested parties with a general overview and statistical results of the *MSA-Reading*.

The 2009 *Technical Report* is composed of four sections and four appendices.

The first section contains the following information:

- General overview and purposes of the *MSA-Reading*
- Development and review of the *MSA-Reading* items and test
- Test form design, test form specifications, item type, and item roles
- Operational form construction using the Rasch model
- Test administration
- Scoring procedures
- Operational item analyses
- Linking, equating, and scaling procedures
- Score interpretation
- Test validity and Unidimensionality analyses
- Field test analysis and item bank construction
- Quality assurance

The second section provides the current year's reading achievement results for grades 3 through 8. It contains information about the cutoff score and pass rate at each performance level for the 2009 reading assessment. In addition, students' performance levels were analyzed by key student subgroups such as gender, ethnicity, and LEA (Local Education Agency).

In the third section, we summarized detailed statistical procedures used for the 2009 reading test. This section provides detailed psychometric information to those who might be interested in learning specific psychometric characteristics and procedures applied to the *MSA-Reading*.

The last section contains statistical results of the 2009 MSA-Reading. It includes descriptive statistics for the 2009 reading test based on raw scores and scale scores, accuracy and consistency of the 2009 reading test, rater agreement rates, correlation coefficients among substrands, and total and substrand RS/SS conversion tables. Accordingly, this section provides the statistical and psychometric characteristics of the 2009 MSA-Reading.

Four appendices provide additional statistical results for the 2009 MSA-Reading: Appendix A contains stratified random sampling results; Appendix B contains 2009 MSA-Reading scale score histograms and Tukey charts; Appendix C contains both classical and Rasch (One-Parameter Logistic Item Response Theory) item parameters. The last appendix contains test blueprints for grades 3 through 8.