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 2005 MSA-Reading *Technical Report* is to provide users and other interested parties with a general overview and statistical results of the MSA-Reading.

The 2005 *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
- Field test analyses
- Linking, equating, and scaling
- Score interpretation
- Test validity
- Item bank
- Quality Assurance

The second part provides the 2005 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 2005 reading tests.

The third part contains statistical summaries for the 2005 MSA-Reading. This part outlines the statistical and psychometric characteristics of the 2005 MSA-Reading.

Four appendices provide additional statistical results for the 2005 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.