



May 19, 2016

Thank you for your letter sharing the concerns you have regarding the computer scoring of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests. It should be noted that automated scoring is not a new tool for Maryland assessments. Maryland has been using automated scoring on the extended constructed response questions included in the science assessments for the past decade. This has provided accurate results for educators, parents, and students.

Here are the answers to the specific questions posed regarding PARCC's ELA assessment.

**1. What percentage of the ELA exams in our state are being scored by machines this year, and how many of these exams will then be re-scored by a human being?**

The scoring process requires about a third of all responses to be scored by humans. Additionally, 10 percent of all written responses receive a second (and possibly a third) human score for quality control purposes. PARCC was built to be a digital assessment, integrating the latest technology in order to drive better, smarter feedback for teachers, parents, and students. Automated scoring drives effective and efficient scoring of student assessments, resulting in faster results, more consistent scoring, and significant cost savings to PARCC states. Although the goal, maximizing the benefit of automated scoring, would be to score 100% of the written responses using automated scoring, certain parameters have to be met. Each item is studied ensuring the automated scoring accuracy is within acceptable parameters which are comparable to or exceed those that have been scored by humans.

**2. What happens if the machine score varies significantly from the score given by the human being?**

Studies have shown that automated scoring is as accurate as human scoring and more consistent and efficient. However, if there is a significant difference between automated scoring and human scoring, the test will receive a second human score that will serve as the score of record.

**3. Will parents have the opportunity to learn whether their children’s ELA exam was scored by a human being or a machine?**

Each test is not solely scored by either a human or through automated scoring. Tests will have a combination thereof. The mode by which a particular item was scored within an individual student test is not readily available; thus, it cannot be reported to parents.

**4. Will you provide the “proof of concept” or efficacy studies promised months ago by Pearson in the case of PARCC, and AIR in the case of SBAC, and cited in the contracts as attesting to the validity and reliability of the machine-scoring method being used?**

Yes, you may find the link to the proof of concept report [here](#). (Attached)

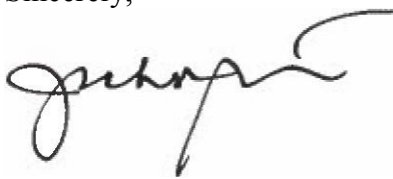
**5. Will you provide any independent research that provides evidence of the reliability of this method, and preferably studies published in peer-reviewed journals?**

The proof of concept report has three pages of references at the end that provide evidence of reliability. You can also find the same information [here](#). (Attached)

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to questions posed about Maryland’s assessment program and the State’s long history of experience with automated scoring tools. Our State began its accountability program in the early 1990s, and it has served the students and educators. We look forward to continuing our State’s work in this area.

If we can be of additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Doug Strader, Director of Assessments, at 410-767-0048 or [douglas.strader@maryland.gov](mailto:douglas.strader@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



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Interim State Superintendent  
Maryland State Department of Education

Enclosures  
cc. Dr. Doug Strader