Response to Control #16-249E

Sent on behalf of Dr. Michael J. Martirano, State Superintendent of Schools.

Dear Leonie Haimson and Rachael Stickland, et. al.,

Thank you for your April 5, 2016, e-mail expressing your concerns about the administration and scoring of the statewide summative assessment in West Virginia, particularly regarding the scoring of constructed- and extended-response items on the English language arts/literacy assessment that is part of our West Virginia General Summative Assessment.

I would like to clarify a couple of points. As indicated in the following statement from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, West Virginia has flexibility in working directly with our testing vendor, American Institutes for Research (AIR), in how our assessment is scored:

"The Smarter Balanced Consortium does not score tests. The Consortium supports members by creating the test questions and forms. Further, the Consortium provides documentation and support regarding how to score items and tests. However, each state selects their own vendors to deliver and score the tests and report the students' scores back to teachers and students. In addition, as long as the process the state uses meets technical standards for quality, each has the flexibility to determine to what extent the state scores items via expert raters, machine or a combination of both."

It is important to note that there are different kinds of machine scoring, of which artificial intelligence scoring is one. Some items, such as multiple-choice questions and other selected-response questions where there are clearly right or wrong answers, can be and are scored by machine.

Your issue, however, appears to be with artificial intelligence scoring of items where students compose written answers, such as on some constructed-response questions and extended-response essay questions.

Currently, West Virginia does not utilize artificial intelligence scoring for any test questions. Instead, these kinds of items are hand scored by trained and qualified humans with industry-standard protocols for ensuring scoring validity, reliability and accuracy.

West Virginia works closely with AIR to ensure that all scores are valid, reliable and accurate.

I hope that this response has addressed your concerns. If you have any specific questions regarding our statewide assessment program, please feel free to contact the Office of Assessment at 304-558-2546.

Thank you,
Vaughn

Dr. Vaughn G. Rhudy, NBCT
Executive Director
Office of Assessment

Building 6, Suite 825
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305-0330
304.558.2546 P
304.558.1613 F
E-mail: vrhudy@k12.wv.us
http://wvde.state.wv.us