

From: **Wulfson, Jeffrey R** <JWulfson@doe.mass.edu>
Date: Thu, Apr 7, 2016 at 6:34 PM
Subject: RE: Letter Demanding Answers on PARCC Machine Scoring
To: "leoniehaimson@gmail.com" <leoniehaimson@gmail.com>
Cc: "Lee, Robert" <RLee@doe.mass.edu>, "Bettencourt, Helene H (DOE)" <HBettencourt@doe.mass.edu>, "Varon, Joshua (DOE)" <JVaron@doe.mass.edu>, "Sheehan, Marie T (DOE)" <MSheehan@doe.mass.edu>

Ms. Haimson –

Commissioner Chester has asked me to respond to your recent inquiry through our website regarding scoring of our state assessments.

As you know, this is a transition year, with some schools administering the MCAS assessment and some schools administering the PARCC assessment. All student tests in Massachusetts, whether MCAS or PARCC, will be scored by humans.

Although we know that the field of artificial intelligence is advancing rapidly, at this point in time we are content to sit on the sidelines, follow the research that is being done, and learn from the experiences of other states that are using AI scoring. All of our efforts right now are focused on developing the next generation MCAS test that will debut in the spring of 2017. The 2017 tests will also be hand scored.

At some point in the future, I'm sure we'll want to take a closer look at this issue. But I can assure you that we would never make such a significant change without extensive research, study, consultation with our educators as well as experts in the field, and the opportunity for public comment.

You asked for copies of the research being done by the PARCC consortium:

PARCC's proof of concept study: http://www.parcconline.org/images/Resources/Educator-resources/PARCC_AI_Research_Report.pdf

References from PARCC: <http://www.parcconline.org/images/Resources/Educator-resources/References.pdf>

There's a lot of misinformation being circulated on this topic, so I appreciate your taking the time to contact us and seek out the facts. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Jeff Wulfson

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From: Leonie Haimson [<mailto:leoniehaimson@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2016 4:28 PM
To: WWW
Subject: Letter Demanding Answers on PARCC Machine Scoring

April 5, 2016

Dear Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester:

As parents and advocates, we have many outstanding concerns about the administration and scoring of the PARCC and SBAC Common Core exams this spring. There are several unresolved questions the answers to which have not been publicly revealed. The original PARCC contract called for two thirds of the students to have their ELA exams, including written responses, entirely scored by computers this spring, with only 10 percent of them re-checked by humans.

Similarly, according to the SBAC contract, 100 percent of students' written responses would be scored by computers, with only half re-checked by a human being.

This is despite the fact that many experts have cited the inability of computers to assess the creativity and critical thought that the Common Core standards were supposed to demand and these exams to assess, no less distinguish nonsense from coherent narrative and reasoning. In each case, however, states had the option of having the exams entirely hand-scored for an additional charge.

So we demand that you answer the following questions:

- 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?
- 2- What happens if the machine score varies significantly from the score given by the human being?
- 3- Will parents have the opportunity to learn whether their children's ELA exam was scored by a human being or a machine?
- 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?
- 5- Will you provide any independent research that provides evidence of the reliability of this method, and preferably studies published in peer-reviewed journals?

Attached an issue brief showing the lack of evidence for machine-scoring, which can also be read here: <http://tinyurl.com/jvfztnm>.

We look forward to your prompt reply,

Leonie Haimson and Rachael Stickland, Co-Chairs, Parent Coalition for Student Privacy
Julie Woestehoff, Executive Director, Parents Across America and Wyoming parent advocate
Carol Burris, Executive Director, Network for Public Education

Monty Neill, Executive Director, FairTest

Save Our Schools New Jersey

Parents Across Rhode Island

Lee P. Barrios, M.Ed., NBCT, Louisiana Friends of Public Education

Cheri Kiesecker, CO parent, privacy advocate and blogger, Missouri Education Watchdog

Cassie Creswell, More Than A Score, Chicago IL

Dawn Collins, board member, East Baton Rouge (LA) school board

Stephanie Zimmerman, Idahoans For Local Education

Wendy Katten, Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education

Michelle Fine, Lynn Fedele, C. McGoey , R. Tuma & E.Halberstadt , Montclair Cares About Schools [NJ]

Arthur Freitas and Kayla Kirkpatrick, M.Ed., Colorado parents

Sheila Resseger, retired teacher from the RI School for the Deaf