



July 2, 2012

**PARCC Governing States**

Arizona  
Arkansas  
District of Columbia  
Florida  
Georgia  
Illinois  
Indiana  
Louisiana  
Maryland  
Massachusetts  
Mississippi  
New Jersey  
New York  
Oklahoma  
Ohio  
Rhode Island  
Tennessee

Mr. Doug Kubach  
Group President & CEO, Assessment & Information  
Pearson  
5601 Green Valley Drive  
Bloomington, MN 55437

Dear Mr. Kubach:

In recent years, states have been providing unprecedented leadership for education reform. The Common Core State Standards and the common assessments now under development by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) provide an essential foundation to improve instruction, strengthen accountability, increase transparency and help prepare all students for postsecondary success. Working together, states have set the table for a much needed transformation of public education.

The PARCC assessments have been designed by chief state school officers, state assessment directors and leaders of state postsecondary education systems to advance an education reform agenda we share within and across states. Their development and implementation will be critical steps in the transformation process.

We have contracted with your firm to help develop and implement the PARCC assessments and have done so expecting your firm's good faith support for and commitment to our objectives. We have been disappointed by recent reports that lead us to have doubts about your support and commitment.

In recent weeks we have heard persistent rumors that testing companies under contract or subcontract to PARCC are working to develop and market alternative assessment products. The market success of those alternatives would be undermined by PARCC's success, thus creating an inevitable conflict between the firm's dedication to PARCC or the alternative. This conflict of interest may have motivated recent public statements that have come to our attention that are critical of PARCC assessments. My colleagues and I on the PARCC Governing Board are deeply concerned about this development.

**PARCC Participating States**

Alabama  
Colorado  
Kentucky  
North Dakota  
Pennsylvania

We have been entrusted with public funds to develop the PARCC assessments. PARCC thus wants to be certain that our contracting partners, all of whom are instrumental to the success of PARCC's objectives, do not take public funds while simultaneously making critical remarks about PARCC and otherwise undermining PARCC's objectives. In our view, it is an obvious conflict of interest for PARCC contractors, paid with public funds to help develop PARCC's assessments, simultaneously to pursue a business strategy that depends on or benefits from the failure of PARCC, SBAC, or both. PARCC expects its contractors to be committed fully to the objective of developing assessments of the highest quality, and to refrain from making public comments or taking other actions that are detrimental to that objective.

Consequently, we are requesting an immediate response to the following questions:

- Is your firm developing or supporting any assessment products that purport to be alternatives to the PARCC assessment under development?
- If so, what steps will you take, and what commitments will you make, to assure that your firm will put forth the strongest possible efforts to help PARCC create high quality assessments at the lowest possible cost?
- How can we be confident that your firm will devote its top personnel talent to exclusively developing PARCC assessments, even if doing so could adversely impact your other business interests?
- How can we be confident that the public funds you obtain and intellectual property that you produce through your contract with PARCC will not be used to develop assessments that are intended to advance the interests of your firm rather than those of PARCC?

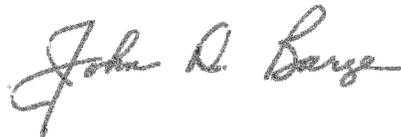
In light of the serious concerns raised by reports of statements that are critical of PARCC, the PARCC Governing Board is considering all of its options, including cancellation of contracts if necessary to ensure the best interest of PARCC and its member states. We look forward to receiving your written responses to the questions above by July 9, 2012.

Sincerely,

The PARCC Steering Committee



Mitchell Chester  
Commissioner of Education  
Massachusetts  
Chair, PARCC Governing Board



John Barge  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Georgia



Janet Barresi  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Oklahoma



Tony Bennett  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Indiana



Deborah Gist  
Commissioner of Elementary  
and Secondary Education  
Rhode Island



Stan Heffner  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Ohio



John King  
Commissioner of Education  
New York



Chris Koch  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois



Gerard Robinson  
Commissioner of Education  
Florida

Cc: PARCC Governing Board and PARCC K12 Leadership Team