

**MASSACHUSETTS MATHEMATICS LEAGUE  
CONTEST 6 - MARCH 2015 SOLUTION KEY**

**Team Round – continued**

D) For  $a = 1$ ,  $L_1 (y = ax + b)$  and  $L_2 \left( \frac{x}{a} - \frac{y}{b} = 1 \right)$  do not intersect on  $L_3 (y = x)$ ,

since  $L_1$  is parallel to  $L_3$  for nonzero values of  $b$ . Therefore, all ordered pairs  $(a, b)$ , where  $a = 1$  must be excluded, regardless of the value of  $b$ , and we have  $p = 1$ .

How about when  $a \neq 1$ ? Substituting for  $y$  in the second equation,

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} y = ax + b \\ \frac{x}{a} - \frac{y}{b} = 1 \end{array} \right\} \Rightarrow bx - ay = ab$$

$$\Rightarrow bx - a(ax + b) = ab$$

$$\Rightarrow x(b - a^2) = 2ab \Rightarrow \boxed{x = \frac{2ab}{b - a^2}} \quad \text{Substituting in the first equation for } x,$$

$$y = a \left( \frac{2ab}{b - a^2} \right) + b = \frac{2a^2b + b^2 - a^2b}{b - a^2} = \frac{a^2b + b^2}{b - a^2}$$

$$\text{Thus, the point of intersection is } \left( \frac{2ab}{b - a^2}, \frac{a^2b + b^2}{b - a^2} \right).$$

Since, we were given that  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  intersect,  $b - a^2 \neq 0$ .

$P$  can only be on  $L_3$ , if  $2ab = a^2b + b^2$ . Since  $b \neq 0$ , this simplifies to  $2a = a^2 + b$  or

$$b = -a^2 + 2a.$$

Thus, if  $b \neq -a^2 + 2a$ , the point  $(a, b)$  cannot be on  $L_3$ , and we have  $(p, q, r) = \underline{(1, -1, 2)}$ .