

## Alaska Update – February 2001

---

---

The State Board of Education has recommended that districts delay the use of graduation exit exams which would otherwise begin with the class of 2002. Under the Board resolution, the effective date would be changed to 2006 which would give the school officials more time to ensure greater alignment of content covered with the assessment instruments. Under current law, in order to graduate students would have to pass the math, reading, and writing sections of the exit exam.

Commissioner Rick Cross recently resigned and will be replaced by Shirley Holloway who served as Commissioner between 1995 and 1999. Part of the reason for Cross's retirement was the fact that between 50% and 75% of the students taking the exit exam in the Spring of 2000 failed it. One of the reasons for rolling back the effective date of the high stakes exams was the fact that the failure rate for special education students who are required to take the state assessments was over 90% in reading and math.

The Governor has asked the legislature to increase by \$16 million funding for K-12 education and early childhood programs. The proposed budget for K-12 education is \$654 million.

## Arizona Update – February 2001

---

---

Under current State policy, juniors this year must pass the reading and writing portions of the State AIMS test before they can graduate. A similar requirement addresses this year's ninth grade students who will graduate in 2004. A report in Education Week and a November 21, 2000 press conference conducted by State Superintendent Lisa Keegan suggest that the graduation requirements would be delayed largely because of high failure rates over the last year and huge gaps between minority and white students. For example, only 12% of sophomores who took the exam in spring 1999 passed the math section. These and other changes related to assessment and accountability will be taken up by the State Board of Education in February 2001.

Governor Hull has proposed a 12% increase in the K-12 budget for FY 2001 to approximately \$2.9 billion. Over the next two years, approximately \$660 will be generated by the new sales tax increase which passed in November. Following plans to eliminate the administration of the SAT 9 assessment for grades 10 and 11, an additional \$2 million has been appropriated to modify the new State's AIMS test.

The State Attorney General Janet Napolitano has ruled that Proposition 203, which would curb bilingual education, would not go into effect until the beginning of next school year. In the meantime, a number of issues remain, including: (a) whether several existing programs for students who have little or no English qualify as English "immersion" which Proposition 203 calls for; (b) the role of students' native language in the classroom; (c) whether or not Proposition 203 reverses Federal law pertaining to education and limited-English-proficient students. A recent study by a leading Democratic legislator who opposed Proposition 203 argues that the amount of State funds to implement Proposition 203 will be \$1,500 above what is currently provided or ten times the amount they currently spend on the average limited-English-proficient student.

## Arkansas Update – February 2001

---

---

The Arkansas Board of Education has licensed *Science Brainium*, an online science program sold by NTS/Brainium, for use in over 800 Arkansas Public Schools beginning July 1, 2000, through June 30, 2007. According to The Heller Report, a special committee was formed to review programs and found that the *Science Brainium* online course met 88% of Arkansas State curriculum standards and 92% of the National Science Education standards. Arkansas DOE officials involved with promoting high-quality instruction in science have been instrumental in expanding the number and quality of course offerings in the Arkansas Math and Science Model School in Hope, Arkansas, and have been active in NAEP activities in the area of science.

The Governor has proposed to increase teacher salaries by \$3,000 over the next two years. Funds would come from anticipated tax revenues .

## California Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Gray Davis has appointed former State legislator Kerry Mazzoni to serve as his Secretary of Education. Ms. Mazzoni, who could not run for re-election because of term limits, had been head of the Assembly Education Committee since 1997 and is a former board member in the Novato Unified School District. Her predecessor was former State Senator Gary Hart who resigned in February, 2000.

The California State Board of Education adopted a number of mathematics textbooks which support the skills-based approach to instruction and which also meet State math standards and the State curriculum framework. In doing so, the Board rejected several textbooks/approaches which had been rated as exemplary by a U.S.E.D. panel, such as *Everyday Mathematics K-3*, developed by the University of Chicago. However, through a waiver process those schools currently using *Everyday Mathematics* may continue to do so. Approximately \$415 million is available for purchasing instructional materials across all curriculum areas during this school year and about \$250 million is earmarked specifically for textbooks that are aligned with State standards in core content areas. This new math adoption will be in place for six years.

In his State of the State Address, Governor Gray proposed to add six weeks to the school year for middle school students which would cost almost \$1.5 billion over three years. While elementary student test scores have been increasing, middle school student test scores have been on a plateau for the last couple of years. During the first phase of this project, approximately \$770 per student would be allocated to extend school for approximately 130,000 middle school students.

A recent survey conducted by the California Association of School Business Officials reported that over 75% of the districts felt their energy costs were overbudget which will reduce expenditures for instruction. In his proposed budget for FY 2000, Governor Davis has proposed \$1 billion to cover expensive energy costs as well as to initiate an energy conservation initiative. For FY 2001, Governor Davis has proposed a 1.6% increase for K-12 to almost \$33 billion. However, his proposal includes a reduction in funding for school construction.

The Governor has also proposed an initiative to train 200,000 math and science teachers which would include 40 hours of training outside the classroom and 80 hours of follow-up over three years. The estimated budget would be \$335 million.

Governor Davis's Incentive Award Initiative, amounting to \$670 million, is beset with problems and few schools or individuals have received money thus far. One problem was created by the State Board when it decided to deny incentives for any school in which 15% or more students were exempted from taking the test; this eliminated the possibility of bonuses for 75 schools state-wide. In addition, many more schools are expected to qualify for bonuses reducing the potential \$150 per student to about \$60. In the proposed 2001-02 budget, \$350 million would be provided for the annual base funding for the performance awards, along with \$123 million dependent upon the number of schools that qualify. The final amount would be about \$150 per student. Some schools are eligible for one part of the incentive program which provides bonuses of \$500 to all employees of a school. This money should be sent out in April. Other bonuses for teachers may not be available until the end of this current school year.

## Colorado Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Bill Owens, in his State of the State address, proposed merit pay bonuses for teachers and greater flexibility for principals in spending decisions regarding new money generated by a constitutional amendment approved by voters last November. The passage of Amendment 23 requires that the State increase education expenditures by 1% above the inflation rate for each year over ten years. He also proposed earmarking \$375 million, over a ten year period, to reduce class size in K-3 to 17 students. Recently, the Governor approved a mandate requiring each school have a report card with a grade as called for in accountability legislation passed in 1999.

Governor Owens has now proposed a 5% increase in the FY 2001 budget to \$2.5 billion. \$100 million would be used over four years for full-day kindergarten, new textbooks, and merit bonuses for teachers. Some could also be used for recruitment bonuses for math, science, and special education teachers. Almost \$3 million would be used to provide tokens to parents of children in low-performing schools to commute to other public schools.

## Delaware Update – February 2001

---

---

While the new State accountability law ties school officials' performance evaluations to student achievement on State assessments for this school year, these State assessments are not "high stakes" in that decisions about student promotion, etc. are not based upon them. However, they may become high stakes tests next school year. Currently, a student who fails to meet State standards receives an individual student improvement plan and those achieving above expectations could receive scholarships.

Initially, student promotion and graduation with a regular high school diploma were based upon the result on State assessments. When the State reviewed the actual results in 1999, less than half the students would have met State standards and therefore would have not been promoted or graduated with a high school diploma. Hence, the high stakes decisions were postponed generally until 2002 and, for high school graduation, to 2004. In the year 2000, test scores were once again analyzed and found to have increased significantly in most subjects at most grade levels. A policy meeting of State's Assessment Board will occur in March 2001 to finalize any high stakes testing decisions. Another State group is currently refining the "pay for performance" provisions in the law to ensure that the "school climate" and entry level of students is taken into account in basing teacher performance on student achievement; \$5 million has been allocated this year for staff development and \$1.2 million to implement the State's accountability plan. All of the high schools in the State offer advanced placement courses with almost 40% of students taking 8<sup>th</sup> grade algebra or upper level math courses. Almost 13% of enrollment is special education students while a percentage of students from low-income families is slightly over 15%.

## Florida Update – February 2001

---

---

The Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises (PRIDE), a nonprofit, St. Petersburg-based organization has increased significantly the percentage of ex-offenders that have been successfully placed in jobs. In 1999, the legislature provided PRIDE more control over corrections instruction with the intent of providing inmates with skills so that they could succeed in jobs. At the heart of PRIDE services are job skills development, including employability skills. The percentage of ex-offenders placed in jobs increased from 55% in FY 97 to 75% in FY 98 and FY 99. College graduates receive certificates from a variety of institutions such as University of Florida, Clemson, and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence. PRIDE can be contacted at 727/572-1987 or go to [www.pridefl.com](http://www.pridefl.com).

Approximately 80% of Florida public high schools provide advanced placement courses while almost 30% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students take algebra class. The percentage of students who drop out of school between ages 16 and 19 is among the highest across the country at about 12%, although the percent of high school graduates enrolled in two-year colleges or universities is about 50%. The percent of students with disabilities is also among the highest at almost 15%, while the percentage of students from low-income families is slightly over 20%.



## Georgia Update – February 2001

---

---

According to an article in Ed Week (January 17, 2001), the Atlanta-based Metropolitan Regional Education Service Agency, which received over \$28 million in E-rate discounts during Year 1, has spent almost \$18 million mostly on infrastructure, but has little to show for the money spent. All but five school systems backed out of the project for a variety of reasons and the SLD cut off funding last summer pending findings of an audit conducted by Arthur Andersen. The system was supposed to be operating by Fall 1999.

This is the first year of full implementation of the Governor's A Plus Education Reform Act, passed last year. The assessment system is being implemented this year and the Office of Education Accountability, (which is separate from the SEA) is operational. Next school year, each school will receive two grades based upon student performance in meeting a minimal achievement level and how much scores improved.

As a result of curriculum upgrading in 1997, the Georgia Learning Connection provides teachers with online access to lesson plans that are tied to State standards at all grade levels. A new criterion referenced competency test will be given in grades 1-8 in English, language arts, mathematics, and reading, and eventually will be phased in for science and social studies. The current eleventh grade exit exam will be replaced by end-of-course exams in grades 9-12. Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 will also take SAT 9. Legislation was passed to provide funding for districts to extend school time by 20 days. Class size reduction requirements will also go into effect in the school year 2003-04. Governor Barnes has proposed a 10% increase in K-12 funding to \$5.47 billion. While teacher salaries would increase 4.5%, \$68 million would be allocated for ensuring a teacher aide in each kindergarten classroom, or approximately 6,000 aides. The State's early intervention program would receive \$19 million and would expand from K-3 to grades 4 and 5.

A contact within the State is Phillip Thomas, Director Education Technology, (404) 656-2521.

## Hawaii Update – February 2001

---

---

Student skills, in terms of performance levels that constitute standards, were developed last summer in reading, English, language arts, math, and social studies. This spring, students will be taking the new State assessments linked to these standards. These criterion-referenced assessments will be administered in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10, in reading, writing, and math. Science and social studies will be added later. The State Board is considering a 10<sup>th</sup> grade exit exam as a requirement for graduation to begin in 2007. The SAT 9 will continue to be administered in the area of reading comprehensive and math problem-solving. The State is also developing an accountability plan for schools that will be considered by the State Board later this year. About 80% of the high schools in the State offer advanced placement courses. Approximately 10% of the students in the State have disabilities while about 15% are from low-income families qualifying for Title I.

Governor Cayetano could create a scholarship program similar to the Georgia Hope Scholarship Program by transferring funds from a disaster fund. Approximately \$100 million would be used to renovate older schools and \$190 million for other capital improvements; \$21 million would be allocated to purchase 18,000 new computers which would bring the student-to-computer ratio from 6:1 to 4:1. This is the first time that technology has been a high stated priority of the Governor.

## Idaho Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Kempthorne has proposed an almost 10% increase in funding for FY 2001 to \$1.2 billion; \$8.5 million to be used only in this coming year to buy new textbooks and curriculum materials. Most of his other proposals would fund increased teacher salaries and provide bonuses, hiring counselors, and creating programs such as character education.

Governor Kempthorne, in his State of the State address, called for 90% of third grade students to pass reading assessments by the year 2004. Last year only 50% passed the test. He also called for at least 90% of the State's eighth grade students to achieve a satisfactory rating on math tests by 2004; \$6 million is proposed for a teacher quality initiative to attract new teachers. He would also ask the legislature appropriate enough funding to provide \$500 scholarships for students with high academic performance.

By the Fall of 2004, new State assessments which are aligned to the set of academic standards for students are supposed to be in place. Efforts are underway to seek additional funding for professional development. The State Superintendent will be requesting \$8 million to help districts implement the new standards, as well as provide staff development. Currently, students take the ITBS in grades 3-11, a State-developed math assessment in grades 4 and 8, and a writing assessment in grades 4, 8, and 11. Brief diagnostic reading tests are administered twice a year in grades K-3. The SEA has also proposed a new accreditation system that would require standards alignment with curriculum among all districts. Almost 20 school districts in the State have pooled their resources to contract with the Mid-Continental Education Laboratory in Colorado to help refine their standards and assessment instruments. Approximately 42% of the public high schools offer advanced placement courses and over 40% of students take high-level mathematics courses. Approximately 11% of the students have disabilities with about 20% from low-income families.

## Illinois Update – February 2001

---

---

As of the middle of last November, anyone with Internet access in the State can compare Illinois schools among each other. The Illinois school improvement site (<http://ilsis.isbe.net>) was developed by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory with support from the Illinois Business Roundtable and the State Board of Education. The site also has State assessment test scores as well as demographics on the State's 4,000 schools.

A new testing and accountability system was approved by the State Board of Education last October and, if approved by the legislature, students would take State assessments in reading and math each year from grades 3-11 starting in 2002. In turn, each school would then be provided a grade based upon student scores on those tests. The highest scoring schools and those showing the most improvement would receive financial and other incentives. Currently, the State administers the Illinois Standard Achievement Test in grades 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8. During the first administration of this test last spring, 57% of schools showed improvement over the 1999 results. However, only about half the schools in various subject areas met or exceeded State performance levels. Because of these poor results, the grading of schools based upon last year's ISAT will not be made. For low-performing schools, staff training, curriculum evaluation, and other types of technical assistance will be provided.

The ACT college entrance exam has been adopted as the State's high school testing program. In addition, two of ACT's Work Keys exams will also be administered and results will be included on student transcripts. The Work Keys exam is designed to provide potential employers with some indication of the student job readiness.

Approximately \$25 million in State funds has been allocated for professional development, or an average of approximately \$200 per teacher. Professional development participation is required of teachers to maintain certification; 54% of the public schools in the State offer advanced placement courses. 13.5% of the students enrolled in the State have disabilities with about 14% coming from low-income families.

## Indiana Update – February 2001

---

---

Newly re-elected Governor Frank O'Bannon, (D), campaigned on issues such as additional funding for K-3 reading and middle school math programs, as well as staff development for teachers on the use of technology.

Several lawsuits over the last six months have supported the State's accountability system and requirements that students must pass the State exit exam in order to receive a high school diploma. During the first administration of the test, 86% of the students passed. Newly approved standards for language, arts, math, and science are scheduled to be incorporated into State tests in 2002, while social studies standards are scheduled for integration in 2003. The State Board recently approved an accountability system that allows schools to be ranked according to student performance on State assessments, standardized tests, and several secondary standards.

Governor O'Bannon has proposed earmarking \$50 million over the next two years to create math and reading programs at the elementary and middle school level. Another \$50 million would be earmarked for early childhood programs including full-day kindergarten. An additional \$30 million will be allocated over two years for a teacher training program as part of the State's 1999 accountability legislation. Part of the funding would come from the \$410 million generated by the State lottery; \$1 million would be provided each year to schools who show annual gains in math and reading; \$27 million would be allocated for an intensive reading program for third graders and \$8 million would provide math instruction and after school programs.

## Iowa Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Vilsack has called for legislative approval of a \$40 million “pay for performance” compensation plan for teachers, administrators and other staff. Salaries would be tied to local goals related to student achievement and in-service professional development.

Last fall, districts publicly reported students’ scores in reading, math, and science. For the first time, districts established their own standards and goals rather than following any Statewide system. Iowa and Nebraska are the only states without comprehensive State-mandated assessment systems. Iowa students have taken the ITBS for over 60 years. Most districts use ITBS or Iowa Test of Education Development scores in their reports. One of the major problems in the State is retaining good teachers because Iowa teachers’ average salary is among the lowest in the country. Most agree that the pay-for-performance approaches being considered will likely use multiple criteria beyond test scores if and when districts implement them. The estimated amount of dollars to solve the teacher shortage problem (i.e., 40% of the 34,000 teachers are expected to leave teaching over the next decade) is approximately \$300 million annually.

The legislature last year appropriated a \$7 million increase to help students at risk of failing State tests. Most funding went to alternative schools and high schools. Approximately \$24 million was allocated for staff development this year with an average of approximately \$700 per teacher. Teachers must participate in staff development to maintain certification. Only 30% of Iowa high schools offer advanced placement which is surprising given the relatively high scores of Iowa students on the ITB and the fact that 64% of high school graduates go to two or four year colleges and universities.

As reported in Education Week (October 11), the traditionally Caucasian school enrollment is changing dramatically as the result of an influx of parents and children of other ethnicities. The number of LEP students enrolled in Iowa public schools has tripled since 1986, while the overall minority enrollment has increased from 2.5% to 10% over the last 15 years.

## Kansas Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Graves has proposed a 3% increase for FY 2000 for preK-12 of approximately \$2.25 billion. State funding for special education would increase approximately \$20 million to \$252 million, most of which would be devoted to teacher salaries. The State preschool program would increase \$1 million to \$5.9 million.

The Governor, in his recent address to the legislature, has asked lawmakers to renew the State legislature due to expire this year. Over \$500 million has been provided over the last five years from the lottery for economic development and K-12 funding. He also called for increased funding for special education, for programs serving at-risk children and their families, and for building a technology infrastructure.

USED has granted Kansas EdFlex authority which allows the SEA to waive many of the requirements of seven Federal education programs, including Technology Literacy Challenge Fund/Title III, in return for increased accountability. The last step in the process of achieving EdFlex status was approval of the State's assessment and accountability system particularly for math and reading under Title I. Earlier Kansas had "conditional approval" pending changes in its policies for including LEP students in the State assessment which it now plans to do. States which received EdFlex approval last year were Wyoming and Pennsylvania.

The SEA is planning to use the State's Title I school improvement funds in a unique way such that eligible schools can only receive such funds if they are willing to be held accountable. This will have the effect of providing critical mass funding in these schools. The types of products and services in highest priority would be those that can improve student achievement for lower quartile scoring students. Under the Federal CSR program, Kansas established criteria which gave handicap points to model programs listed in the CSR legislation and/or on the Northwest Regional Education Lab "list". Firms which were not on either list were not selected during the first year.

Passed in 1991, the Quality Performance Accreditation Process is a part of the State accountability

system which requires each school to renew its accreditation every five years based upon its design of a comprehensive improvement plan. Review teams also make on-site visits at least two times during the five-year period and review standardized test scores, dropout and graduation rates, and other measures. No school that has received the lowest unaccredited rating has ever received sanctions by the State. These schools in turn, usually receive technical assistance from the State. State standards are tweaked every 2-3 years which results in changes in assessments.

The State Board approved a new teacher licensure plan last year which goes into effect in 2003 for beginning teachers. Future teachers must have a cumulative 2.5 GPA and pass exams in pedagogy and content areas at which time they receive additional licenses. To receive a professional license these teachers must complete a performance assessment. Approximately \$1 million will be allocated to pay experienced teachers to act as mentors. Approximately 12% of students enrolled have disabilities with a similar amount from low-income families. A total of \$4.6 million has been allocated for professional development statewide for this year, at about \$140 per teacher. The contact person at the state level for staff development is Martha Gage. Approximately 25% of Kansas High Schools offer AP courses while 62% of high school graduates go to colleges or universities.



## Kentucky Update – February 2001

---

---

With the State budget now in the second year of its biennium, no major changes have been proposed by Governor Patton. However, he has promised to continue providing support for technology, -- claiming the State is a model for the nation -- and to monitor the implementation of a \$23 million two-year plan to improve teacher training that was passed last year.

Currently an interim accountability system tied to State tests is being implemented. Although success, in terms of student achievement, has been made according to NAEP scores, college admissions, exam passage on the ACT, and increases in advanced placement tests (32% between 1995 and 1999), the State accountability program was changed last year. Under the new system, the CTBS, along with portions of the State criterion-referenced test, will constitute the State assessment system.

Twenty-four million dollars was appropriated for this year for staff development with a heavy concentration on middle school teachers. While K-12 expenditures have increased over the last two years, increases have been minimal, such as a 2.8% increase this year and 2.7% for next year as part of the biennium budget. Of the \$24 million for staff development, \$15 million has been allocated thus far this school year for a cost of about \$375 per teacher. Participation in staff development is a requirement for maintaining certification for teachers. Sixty-eight percent of Kentucky public high schools offer advanced placement courses and about 50% of the students take upper level math courses. About 11% of 16-19 year olds in school do not have a diploma, while 53% go to college.

## Louisiana Update – February 2001

---

---

Student promotion in grades 4 and 8 is based almost entirely on State test scores. Under the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program 21, approximately 40,000 of the 120,000 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders failed the LEAP 21 State assessment last spring. Most had to attend summer school and retake the test with about 75%-80% passage. About 15% of students were held back and not socially promoted. This year, a new, more rigorous high school graduation exam will be administered as a requirement for graduation.

Public K-8 schools are given grades based upon how students score on the LEAP 21 test, the Iowa Test and other measures. The next focus of accountability will be teacher training institutions with the possibility of requiring enrollees in such institutions to meet the new standards. About 20% of the public high schools in the State offer advanced placement courses and about 40% of students take upper level math courses at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Drop-out rates are well over 10%, even though the percent of high school graduates going to college or two year institutions is over 50%.

The State math and reading initiative has been cut from \$20 million last year to \$14 million this year.

In December, the Louisiana State Board of Education adopted a policy that allows eighth grade students who fail the State exit exam five times, to enroll in an alternative program that could lead to a GED diploma and a skills certificate. Students could enroll in regular high school any time after they pass the eighth grade test.

## Maine Update – February 2001

---

---

A task force appointed by Governor Angus King and the legislature is developing recommendations on how to implement a \$50 million education technology initiative. Last year, Governor King proposed providing laptop computers to all 7-12 grade students by the year 2007. Because the proposal was not widely accepted, the task force was appointed to come up with alternatives. As reported in e School News (January 2001), task force members were leaning toward thin-client devices rather than laptop computers. A number of other issues being addressed by the task force includes equity, use of hardware by students outside of school, staff development, and initial grade levels in which computers would be used.

Governor King continues to push for a \$50 million effort to provide laptop computers to students beginning at grade 7. Under his initial proposal, students would own the computers. However, taking into account a task force report, he would go along with its recommendation that the school own the computers; the initiative also allows for purchases of less expensive computers or use their client systems. The Governor would also expand the current adult/student mentoring program from 3,000 students to 30,000 and would appropriate \$250,000 to allow religious organizations to work more closely with schools in setting up such mentoring programs.

Passed four years ago, the Learning Results Initiative has established standards indicating what students should know and how it should be measured; goes into effect in 2003. Students have been taking the State assessments in grades 4, 8, and 11 in reading, writing, and mathematics. While student performance in reading has been relatively high, results on the writing assessment have been low and have failed to increase over the last two years. Staff development is being provided to train teachers how to use student portfolios and classroom tests to monitor student progress to determine whether interventions are necessary. More than three-fourths of Maine's high schools offer advanced placement courses with about 25% of eighth grade students taking algebra classes. Drop-out rates are very low at about 3.2%, with about 55% of students going to two-year colleges or universities. Approximately 15% of students have disabilities, while about 14% are from low-income families.

## Maryland Update – February 2001

---

---

In October, State Superintendent Grasmick announced a plan for the State to set up an education portal which could offer a variety of online courses to students, incarcerated individuals, and teachers, among others. A panel of experts is being convened to address questions of funding, selection of qualified teachers to develop courses, course accreditation, and “digital divide” access issues.

Preliminary results of a multi-state study of the effects of inmate education programs on recidivism suggests an almost 20% reduction in recidivism rates for inmates who participate in education programs while incarcerated. The study, funded by USED, focused on 3,400 inmates who were released from Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio facilities in 1997-1998. Of the 1,000 former inmates in Maryland, the recidivism rate for those participating in education was 31%, while the rate for nonparticipants was 38%. If extrapolated to the overall number of inmates in Maryland, it represents slightly over 1,200 individuals not returning to the system -- which in terms of housing alone would have saved the State \$24 million a year. The State contributes approximately \$12 million each year for teacher equipment and materials. While 60% of Maryland inmates lack a high school diploma or vocational training, the number participating in prison education programs has declined from 30% ten years ago to only 19% this year due to the lack of State funds. For more information contact Steve Steurer, Executive Director, Corrections Education Association, 800/783-1232.

The State Board of Education has backed down on the implementation this year of its planned high stakes testing accountability system by postponing passage of the new State exit exam as a requirement for receiving a high school diploma. This new exam will be given in the future and will replace the previous functional exam that was a basic skills test. Another part of the new system requires students to pass tests in math, English, civics, and other subjects at the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Although the Governor requested double the amount, the legislature finally appropriated \$25 million to improve student performance, with about \$7 million allocated for preschool programs. Student results will be included on their transcripts. The Maryland High School Writing Assessment and the functional test are made available to the public for the last test administration period. About

41% of Maryland public high schools offer advanced placement programs. Approximately 13% of Maryland students have one or more disabilities and almost 7% are from low-income families. Unlike many other states, Maryland has opted for sanctions on at least three schools in Baltimore City Public Schools, who were rated as unacceptable. These three schools have been taken over by Edison Schools to be operated as Charter Schools.

## Massachusetts Update – February 2001

---

---

A report entitled “Mathematics for All,” released by teacher and administrative groups in the State suggests an alternative to the State’s existing math assessment instrument. The group argues that the current test only teaches basic skills, is based upon a traditional drill-and-practice approach, and does not take into account the recommended development of the concepts and principles recommended by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The alternative math assessment instrument is available at [www.massteacher.org/hot/mathforall2.html](http://www.massteacher.org/hot/mathforall2.html).

The kickoff for the Virtual Education Space (VES) was November 7, 2000 during the Massachusetts Computer Using Education Conference. VES is designed to supply workspace on the web for all of the State’s 80,000 public school teachers. Eventually, curriculum guidelines and lessons will be made available to teachers. Moreover, children will be able to do homework on the network and parents will be able to discuss their children’s progress with teachers.

As the 2003 effective date approaches when students must pass the English and math MCAS assessment to graduate, the legislature appropriated approximately \$50 million last year for early literacy programs, expansion of full-day kindergarten, and class size reduction efforts. While several low-performing schools have been given grants of approximately \$25,000 to improve instruction, most of the increase in State funding in an attempt to boost student scores has been in the form of a \$60 million teacher quality enhancement program which provides incentives to beginning teachers by offering scholarships, bonuses and loan forgiveness. The State does make public the most recent versions of the MCAS assessment test. It does release item-level analysis of multiple choice items and student answers on performance items. Classroom teachers are allowed to be involved in grading exams. About 90% of Massachusetts public high schools offer advanced placement programs and about 60% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students take upper level math programs. The State has the highest percentage of students with disabilities at slightly over 17.5%, while about 14% are students from low-income families.

Governor Cellucci, in his State of the State Address, proposed that the State Board of Education establish regional training centers to prepare teachers for alternative routes to teacher certification. He also called for an additional billion dollars be earmarked for K-12 over the next five years.

## Michigan Update – February 2001

---

---

In mid-November, 366 school districts filed a lawsuit similar to the Durant 1 and Durant 2 cases (which were recently settled) claiming that the State owes these districts over \$450 million to cover the cost now borne by school districts of educating students with disabilities. In the earlier Durant cases, \$840 million and subsequently \$375 million were allocated to districts across the State for mandated but unfunded special education services back to 1978. Most of these funds were used to purchase technology and other non-reoccurring products and services. One of the arguments in favor of the lawsuit filed by the districts was to change the State's formula for funding special education to allow more State funds to be allocated to special education programs. If settled in the affirmative, it is likely that once again much of such settlement funds would be used for technology. Only recently has the State appropriated funds for technology-related professional development, as noted in the last TechMIS update.

Under a new system all schools receive grades based primarily upon student results on the State MEAP assessment. The rating system takes into account absolute performance level, overall improvement, and progress in reducing gaps between racial and ethnic groups. To receive accreditation, a school must ensure that 80% of its students -- including special education and LEP students -- take the tests. To continue to receive accreditation, the 80% is increased to 90% two years from now. Also, under the Golden Apple Awards, districts which show significant improvements in student scores can receive improvement grants of \$50,000 or more. These funds have to be earmarked for projects at the school level rather than to be used as bonuses or financial rewards to staff. Local districts will be required this year to administer other assessments in core content areas in grades 1-5. Approximately \$40 million will be allocated this year to help at-risk students in grades 1-4 by establishing extended learning programs in math and reading. At the middle school level, students can receive scholarships by doing well on their MAEP tests. The ACLU has challenged the scholarship program stating that it is stacked against minority students. The State has hired Standard and Poors to conduct an efficiency evaluation to determine each school district's and charter school's return on investment.



The legislature also appropriated \$86 million to expand classes for four year olds and an additional \$45 million to help parents prepare students for schooling. Fifty million dollars is allocated for assessing reading skills of students in the elementary level and improving teaching. As previously noted, the budget also includes \$110 million for laptop computers for all teachers. Within two years, almost 90,000 teachers will have laptops and Internet access. To qualify teachers must pass a new literacy test. Through the Michigan Virtual University, 11 advanced placement courses are available online. Approximately 60% of Michigan high schools offer advanced placement, with 30% and 45% respectively of students taking algebra classes or upper level math courses. Almost 60% of high school graduates go to two- or four-year colleges. Michigan also provides funding for districts to help students who fail the MAEP test under the Chapter 39A program, which is funded \$250 million a year. Much of this State comp-ed funding is used to purchase technology and to provide tutoring and remedial programs, particularly after school.

## Minnesota Update – February 2001

---

---

The new State Profiles of Learning (Minnesota's graduation standards) were recently evaluated by Achieve (a group who has reviewed state assessments in six other states). Achieve concluded that the POL are hard to use and in some cases aren't clear, had inadequate detail, and covered too many subjects. Also participating in the evaluation was the Council for Basic Education. The State does not specify subject area content, but relies on local districts to assemble the content of lessons to meet the Profiles of Learning requirements. One of the strengths of the POL is that it does attempt to link education and learning in the classroom to the real world. The evaluators recommended: (1) revising and clarifying the standards; (2) creating tests in the areas of English, math, science, and social studies; and (3) creating a system for ranking schools which will help identify low-performing ones that should be provided special assistance.

As reported in e School News, a pilot program supported by in-kind contributions of nearly \$100,000 has been implemented to provide technical support to school district staff through "Ask Me Online," which is a portal developed by Knowledge Broker, Inc. One set of pilot programs at the district level will target school staff by providing online support. The other two are designed to help students become frontline support team members. Cisco Academy is currently working with some of these student pilot test sites. Contact in the Minnesota Department of Education is Jim Schwartz, 651/284-3351.

Governor Ventura has proposed to reduce local property taxes to support schools and to fund them through State appropriations with revenues from sales taxes rather than income or property taxes. In his recent address he emphasized the need to target teachers, training them and paying them well.

## Mississippi Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Musgrove has proposed to allocate \$2.3 million for school technology and training. Most of the overall funding increase for FY 2001 will likely be used to increase teacher salaries over the next five years in order to achieve parity with the average teacher salary in the rest of the Southeast. He has also called for all district superintendents to be appointed, not elected, as currently is the situation.

In October, implementation of the Mississippi student information system known as M-SIS began. By the end of the month, almost 150 districts as well as other schools had sent student schedules to the Department of Education. SEA officials plan to use the data reported electronically in a timely manner for budgeting purposes and funds allocation according to State formula.

Beginning this spring, students will be taking new proficiency exams in grades 2-8 that are aligned with State academic standards and curriculum. Next year, the State will start phasing in graduation exams in four academic subjects, with the class of 2003 having to pass at least three of the four exams. A new, to-be-defined State accountability system will likely provide incentives to schools and/or districts that achieve progress in improving student performance. While two districts have been taken over by the State, Mississippi will rely heavily on the North Carolina model of providing assistance to low-achieving schools. The new State superintendent previously served as a deputy superintendent in the North Carolina State Department of Education. The State is also planning new high school exit tests that will most likely be a requirement for receiving a high school diploma. Almost 40% of the public high schools in the State offer advanced placement courses and about 50% of students take upper level mathematics courses. While drop-out rates are relatively high, approximately 65% of high school graduates are enrolled in two- or four-year colleges or universities. About 12% of students have one or more disabilities with 22% from low-income families.

## Missouri Update – February 2001

---

---

The new Governor, Bob Holden (D), is an advocate of class size reduction and has called for an additional \$70 million over four years for remedial and compensatory education programs. He also supports the Parents as Teachers national program.

Under its seven year old State accountability system, Missouri for the first time has not approved accreditation for the second largest school system, Kansas City, and is threatening sanctions against St. Louis this year. The Missouri assessment program includes multiple choice items, essay questions, etc., and, by year 2002, will be administered to all students.

Districts must allocate 1% of their State aid for staff development which will be approximately \$16 million this year. The State has allocated \$15 million to reward high schools that reduce drop-out rates and increase attendance, as well as provide 5,000 college scholarships. The State also has plans underway to identify the 50 lowest performing schools in the State which will be targets for the design of school improvement plans by teams of experts; funds are likely to be allocated to these schools to implement their improvement plans. Schools that do not increase performance within two years are subject to take-over sanctions. Approximately 27% of the public high schools in the State offer advanced placement courses, with almost 50% of students taking upper level math courses. The percent of students with disabilities is approximately 14.5%, with 15.5% enrollment of children from low-income families.

## Montana Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Judy March (R) has proposed a 3.5% reduction in K-12 spending for FY 2002. As a result of reductions in State revenue and decreases in student enrollment, \$1 million would be allocated to implementing new State standards and assessments.

For the first time this school year, all 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will take the ITBS and all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students the ITED. In the past, districts had a choice of three standardized tests to administer. These two tests appear to have the greatest alignment with the State's content standards; \$1 million has been set aside for implementing the standards and assessment initiative as well as professional development; 36% of the public high schools offer AP courses.

## Nevada Update – February 2001

---

---

Superintendent Mary Peterson retired from her position in December. Appointed by the State Board in 1995, she spearheaded the State's effort to expand a new accountability system to identify and assist low-performing schools and establish an expanded State assessment program. Replacing her as State Superintendent is Jack McLaughlin, 1999 Superintendent of the Year in California; he is likely to be a supporter of technology use in education.

The State has received communications from USED that, even though it is using a national norm-referenced test, changes made in the tests it is field testing and the plans to implement the test as part of a state-wide assessment are indications that the State is making progress in the right direction. Hence, the State assessment will likely receive a "conditional approval." In the meantime, for its school improvement funds the State will develop an improved list of products and programs which eligible schools can use for purchasing. According to SEA Title I officials, the products on the list will focus primarily on remediation rather than overall change.

Governor Guinn has proposed a reading initiative such that all children will be competent in reading by the end of the third grade. Twenty million dollars will be used to reduce class size. Cash bonuses will also be provided as incentives to maintain existing critical need teachers. Governor Guinn was previously Superintendent of Schools in Clark County (Las Vegas).

For the first time, a set of standards identifying what students must know has been implemented. Districts must align their curricula with the standards, and new tests aligned to the standards are supposed to be implemented in grades 3 and 5 this Spring. The standards cover seven subject areas. A guide has been developed suggesting which of the "indicators of progress" in the standards are most important and those which are least important. To assist in implementing the new standards the legislature set aside \$3.4 million this year for approximately four days of training. The State is also revising its high school proficiency exam, with the new test to be administered next year. Approximately \$3.3 million has been set aside for ten schools classified as "needing improvement." These -- and approximately ten additional schools subsequently identified -- would receive

approximately \$100,000 each, which would be used to adopt one of 26 State-approved approaches for school improvement. Advanced placement is offered in 41% of the high schools in the State. Drop-out rates of students are among the highest in the country ranging from 10% to 17%, depending upon definitions and only 40% of high school graduates go to two- or four-year colleges, which is the lowest percent in the nation.

## New Hampshire Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Shaheen (D) will continue to resolve temporarily the State's school financial crisis. She is likely to propose a lottery at the State's four racetracks to provide funds for schools.

Last year for the first time, the SEA issued report cards on all districts. There are no sanctions or rewards attached to district rankings nor is there likely to be any in the near future. Almost \$2 million has been set aside to operate the Best Schools Leadership Institutes on school improvement. Districts are also required to develop five-year professional development plans and the State Board has raised -- from 50 to 75 hours -- the amount of professional development teachers must complete for their three-year recertifications. Almost 90% of the high schools offer advanced placement courses. Approximately 13.5% of students have one or more disabilities and about the same percent of students come from low-income families.



## New Jersey Update – February 2001

---

---

The last year of Goals 2000 funding and the last round of Technology Literacy Challenge funds are providing approximately \$100,000 - \$200,000 to each of approximately 50 districts to establish Access Collaboration Equity (ACE) centers. The lead role is provided by high-poverty districts which work with community agencies, municipalities and other groups to establish these Centers. Funds are to be used to purchase hardware and Internet connectivity, as well as teach students and parents how to use technology. About half of the \$7.4 million has been awarded, with about 25 districts submitting applications in the very near future. Most of the academic instruction must be correlated to New Jersey's core curriculum content standards. For additional information go to [www.state.nj.us/njded/techno/ace/adst](http://www.state.nj.us/njded/techno/ace/adst).

During the December State Board of Education meeting Assistant Commissioner Jeff Osowski announced a \$5.1 million grant from the Gates Foundation which will be used to provide technology-related training and leadership to superintendents and principals. Over 4,000 public and nonpublic principals and superintendents will participate in training sessions over three years. A program of the New Jersey Education Leadership Institutes for Technology in Education (N.J. ELITE) was being pilot-tested in January 2001. Participating administrators will have to pay a fee of \$150 for training sessions.

Achieve, a nonprofit organization associated with the National Governor's Association, has evaluated New Jersey's assessments and standards and found that, while the assessments have the capacity to drive improvements in teaching and learning, they lack clarity in identifying what is expected of students. It recommends that the State consider initiating an early reading initiative and focus more attention on middle grade math. Last year, State officials questioned the validity and reliability of the State's writing assessment because a disproportionate number of students scored much lower in writing than in other subject areas. State officials felt that one of the major problems was that the essay portion of the test required paper-and-pencil writing and would not allow computer-using students to use computers to complete the essays. Achieve evidently did not review the writing assessments.

Revised high school exit exams will be phased-in beginning with language arts and math for the class of 2003, followed by science and social studies over the following two years. Students spend approximately one week a year taking tests. Under a court mandate a couple of years ago, 300 elementary schools in the 28 Abbott districts will phase-in whole-school reform models this school year. The State is also requiring 120 high school programs in these districts to adopt model programs by early this year. Some of the money may come from a \$6 billion earmark of the State's \$8.5 billion for construction and renovation projects passed by the legislature last year. Nearly 97% of the public high schools offer advanced placement courses and 65% of high school graduates go on to college or universities.

## New Mexico Update – February 2001

---

---

The New Mexico SEA recently dropped 94 schools from its list of “most improved schools” due to a computer error in calculating student scores and identified 101 different schools who will receive a total of \$1.8 million in bonuses. The final results are based upon student scores between 1999 and 2000 on the New Mexico High School exams.

Governor Gary Johnson has proposed a 5% increase in K-12 spending to almost \$1.8 billion. Approximately \$25 million has been proposed for a private school voucher program that would provide students from low-income families with vouchers that would average slightly over \$5,000. The students could attend the private school of their choice. Seventeen million dollars would be budgeted to double the full-day kindergarten initiative which began last year.

Governor Johnson has also called for \$41 million to be used for merit based pay raises of 5% for teachers and \$115 million to improve school facilities. He has also called for a separate Board of Education for Charter Schools to facilitate their expansion.

The legislature has set aside \$1.7 billion for K-12 education for a 6% increase over last year; \$6.5 million has been appropriated for two years to support staff development to implement improved State standards, curricula, and assessments. The State has revised its initial content standards and expanded the grades in which a State assessment is conducted and will be using a new approach for evaluating school performance. Almost \$9 million has been appropriated for full-day kindergarten programs in 71 schools. Over 250 schools have applied for such funding. The Terra Nova second edition is being revised to ensure greater alignment with the State standards. A new test is also being developed to assess reading achievement in the first and second grades. The new State school accreditation system takes into account student achievement, regulatory compliance, attendance, drop-out rates, school safety, and parent involvement. About 47% of the public high schools offer advanced placement programs, with the number expected to increase as the result of recent Federal grants awarded to several New Mexico districts involving online advanced placement. Drop-out rates are high, ranging from 7% to 14% depending upon definition.

## New York Update – February 2001

---

---

In his State of the State address, Governor Pataki has proposed to increase K-12 spending to \$13.6 billion, the highest ever, and to align increased funding with local flexibility and greater accountability. He also proposed that large urban districts be under control of the mayors.

The Governor has proposed a 3.3% increase up to \$13.6 billion in FY 2001 for K-12. Eleven existing programs would be consolidated into a single State aid stream, providing greater flexibility over the use of funds. School construction aid, which is used to purchase hardware in many districts, would increase by \$170 million to \$1.3 billion. The Governor's proposal would also require a cap on annual district spending to 4% or 120% of consumer price index, whichever is less; \$50 million would be earmarked for teacher recruitment and staff development.

A New York State Judge ruled in early January that the State's funding formula is illegal and must be changed in the immediate future. Following examples in other states, the court ruling was based on the finding that many minority children were not provided an adequate "opportunity to learn." Hence, the State must provide more funding in these situations to increase such "opportunities to learn." Knowledgeable officials estimate that the cost would be equivalent to three times the recent annual increases which have significant.

A compromise has been reached among opponents and proponents of bilingual education in New York City that adopts the new "accelerated academic English initiative" for the one million LEP student population. This is very similar to a proposal by U.S. Secretary of Education Riley a couple of years ago that emphasized two-way bilingual education. Under this approach, both English and non-English speaking students are taught in both languages in the same classroom. The challenge now is to find the resources to implement the program.

Each district must have a plan in place this year on how it will help 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who do not reach the "competent level" on State tests and high school students who fail the required Regents exam. Types of assistance will include summer school and tutoring. Districts must also develop

annual professional development plans linked to the State's standards. The State has developed an Internet repository of extended lessons designed by teachers to be used by other teachers in mastering State standards. Of the \$13.6 billion budget for K-12, \$225 million is to be used to fund the last year of a three-year plan to make pre-kindergarten classes available across the State and \$140 million for the second year of a three-year plan to reduce class size to about 20 pupils in K-3.

Beginning with the class of 2003, students will be required to pass the Regents exam, rather than the less rigorous competency exam, in five subjects. Only a limited number of categories of special education students will be exempt. Copies of previously administered NYSTP and Regents exams are available to the public. The State also sends student results to teachers, including item-level analysis and students answers. Classroom teachers are required to grade State exams. 83% of public high schools offer advanced placement courses; 71% of high school graduates go to college, the second highest percentage among the states. Approximately 15% of students have one or more disabilities and 25% of children come from low-income families.

## North Carolina Update – February 2001

---

---

The ABC accountability initiative has been recognized nationally as one of the best accountability and assessment systems. However, with the retirement of Governor Jim Hunt, the primary advocate and point person on ABC, the primary emphasis may change from improving test scores to improving instruction. Beginning this year, social promotion is scheduled to cease and the SEA is drafting new graduation requirements that will take effect in 2003.

The SEA makes public the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade open-ended assessment and writing assessments to the public and provides student results to teachers. Almost \$12 million was allocated for professional development this year, at about \$150 per teacher. About 87% of public high schools offer advanced placement courses and almost 60% of students take upper level math courses.

The State Department of Corrections is pilot testing, in five locations, Job Start, which is a transition program to help current inmates prepare for and then hold jobs. Two of the core components of Job Start are:

- portfolios, which the inmate develops, that include all transition materials he or she needs to seek employment upon release; this includes how to complete paperwork for obtaining a social security card, sample job application forms, and transition plans;
- classroom training, which includes job seeking skills, how to prepare for an interview, and life development skills such as parenting.

For more information contact Arthur Clark, 919/733-3226.

## North Dakota Update – February 2001

---

---

John Hoeven (R), a former CEO of Bank of North Dakota, was recently elected as governor. He is a strong advocate of Internet use and would encourage the districts to obtain additional Federal E-rate and other funds to increase connectivity and to support technology-related teacher training.

The new Governor has proposed that the legislature increase by \$50 million the State's funding to pay for teacher's salaries, which would be approximately \$3,500 over the next two years. Overall K-12 spending would increase from \$604 million over the last two years to \$651 million. Revenues would come from expanded economic growth. He has also requested that the legislature provide necessary funding to complete the State's Internet access/distance learning, and workforce development initiative, which would be one of the largest of its kind in the country relative to the State's population.

Since 1994, the SEA has been developing a common standards and testing system for its school districts. Standards for math and English were completed two years later and standards now exist for science, health, social studies, and the arts. Students receiving services under Title I are the only students who are required to take the math and English assessments which are not considered high stakes tests. Approximately \$1.5 million has been appropriated this year for training teachers in the use the new standards and in preparing classroom materials. Recently the Quality Schools Committee has recommended the State provide report cards on all of its schools. About 8% of the public high schools offer advanced placement programs while over 50% of students take upper level math programs; 71% of high school graduates enter two-year or four-year colleges and universities, which is among the country's highest percentages. In addition, North Dakota students have consistently scored as one of the top three states on various NAEP assessments and achieved high percentiles on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills.

## Ohio Update – February 2001

---

---

The Governor's Commission on Student Success, appointed by Governor Taft last spring, has called for more extensive standards-based assessments, incentives for schools, and financial support to improve student academic achievements. It would also establish a system of early diagnostic assessments and interventions at the elementary level and require end-of-course exams at the high school level. The Commission also recommended postponing implementation until the Spring of 2002, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading guarantee initiative that would require students to score at proficiency levels to be promoted to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Last spring, less than 60% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students passed the 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading test. The current 4<sup>th</sup> grade test covering five subjects would be eliminated and replaced by achievements tests spread over several years. The Commission also recommended: (1) that schools rather than districts be held accountable for student achievement; (2) the establishment of a new school-level reporting system; and (3) monetary and other rewards to districts who meet progress benchmarks while it would also provide help to low-achieving schools.

Beginning in 2003, the PRAXIS III test will be used to evaluate and certify teachers. Unlike the earlier versions which are paper and pencil, the PRAXIS III involves interviews by training assessors rather than paper-and-pencil assessment. The State Board selected a score of 38 out of a possible 57 points as a prerequisite to receiving a professional teaching license.

The Ohio Proficiency Test is made public after students are assessed. Approximately \$16 million has been allocated for staff development or about \$140 per teacher. Almost 65% of the public high schools in the State provide advanced placement program course offerings and almost 50% of students take upper level math courses.

Governor Taft has called for support for several recommendations made by his Gubernatorial Commission, including establishment of clear academic standards, new focus on early childhood education, and new funding for professional development. He also unveiled his proposal to meet a court mandate regarding the inequitable school finance system which would include separate supplemental funding for low-wealth districts. Additional funding for special education will likely be supported in the legislature.



## Oklahoma Update – February 2001

---

---

State funding for vocational and technical schools increased over 7% to \$125 million for this school year. In Oklahoma, vocational technical education is a separate department from the Department of Education.

Last year, the legislature passed a law that once again provides for a single diploma system (which goes into effect in 2003) based upon the ACT core curriculum which replaces the “honors diploma.” School districts would have the option of awarding “certificates of distinction” to students completing the most rigorous programs. For students with a GPA of 3.25 or higher or graduating in the top 15% of their high school classes, a scholarship is provided to these students if their family has an annual income below \$70,000. The State makes available to the public copies of State assessment instruments that were previously given to students. Approximately 37% of high schools offer online advanced placement courses, while slightly over 40% of students take upper level math programs. Almost 13% of students served in public schools have one or more disabilities and almost 20% are from low-income families.

## Oregon Update – February 2001

---

---

A proposal has been made by the Speaker of the Oregon House which would allow parents of special education and limited-English-proficient students to spend a portion of the funds generated by their students for districts to be used in the form of vouchers to send students to other service providers. It is unclear whether the other service providers would be other schools in the district or could include for profit or nonprofit schools or groups. According to Education Daily (January 22, 2001), the total amount of funding could be as much as \$400 million. Under the proposal, each school district would still receive state funds equal to the amount it receives based on the formula for all students. However, parents of special education students will have an equal amount for choice, while parents of ESL students would have 50% of that amount, in place of the weighted funds that would have gone to the districts.

Following the 1999 accountability law, schools are provided grades based on a five-point system which takes into account SAT scores, teacher education, attendance, drop-out rates and other measures. Forty-seven low-performing schools last year received \$10,000 each in State funds to analyze their test data and develop improvement plans. Schools receiving funding will not be rated again until 2002. Students are tested in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 in math, reading, and writing, with students in grades 5, 8, and 10 being tested in science for the first time last year. Only about one-quarter of fifth grade students taking a battery of State tests achieve sufficient levels to receive a “certificate of initial mastery” which has been strongly advocated by the business community and potential employers.

The State will be one of the first in the nation to pilot test computer-based assessment rather than paper-and-pencil exams; \$3.5 million has been allocated for the development of such a system to be tested in 30 schools. Currently, a State Supreme Court case (in chamber) could rule that students with disabilities who are computer-users must be provided reasonable accommodation by allowing them to use computers in taking State assessments. A particular special education student who has successfully passed advanced placement courses failed the State assessment because the State required that the test be completed through the use of paper and pencil. This court case could have a

major national impact, particularly in light of the recently published Section 508 regulations on accessibility standards related to technology.

The State allows the public to review its math problem-solving assessment. It is also one of the few states that has a predictive test for State exams referred to as “knowledge and skills.” Slightly over 50% of public high schools provide advanced placement courses, with about 40% of students taking higher level math programs. Approximately 11% of the student population has one or more disabilities with about 20% of children from low-income families.

The Oregon K-12 budget will increase 10% over the biennium to \$2.45 billion for FY 2001. About \$110 million from the \$350 million state tobacco law suit settlement would be earmarked over two years for elementary reading initiatives to ensure that 90% of third and fifth graders meet State reading benchmarks. About \$2.7 million would be used for a drop-out prevention programs in secondary schools and \$1.5 million would be allocated for mentoring programs for new teachers. For schools designated as low-performing under the State accountability law, \$4.2 million would be provided.

## Pennsylvania Update – February 2001

---

---

A Commonwealth court judge recently ruled that a district which stated it would not administer the State-mandated writing exams in grades 6, 9 and 11, would not have to do so until a hearing could be held. However, no such hearing has been scheduled. The writing portion of the State assessment test was voluntary this year but becomes mandatory next year. According to Education Week (November 29), more than 50 Pennsylvania districts have passed resolutions opposing the exams, arguing that the district's own assessments were better indicators of writing improvement.

According to e School News (January 2001), the SEA is pilot-testing an artificial intelligence system called "IntelliMetric," developed by Vantage Learning, Inc., as a means to score the essay portion of the State's mandated writing exam. Officials are conducting a major pilot study based upon 30 studies conducted over three years and hope to reduce the amount of scoring time from several months to only minutes. While several thousand students' Spring 1999 responses to open-ended reading questions were scored using IntelliMetric in December, almost 30,000 from grades 6, 9 and 11 will participate in another field test. The article reports that IntelliMetric is currently used by the College Board, Edison, and Thompson Learning.

The State Attorney General has requested that an injunction be lifted to allow the State to take over the Harrisburg School District as required under the Education Empowerment Act passed three years ago. Thus far, 11 districts, including Philadelphia, have failed to meet appropriate standards reflected on State test scores taken by students. Additional districts may be included on a new list once the results of the State tests administered last spring are available.

Under the Education Empowerment Act, districts are labeled empowerment districts if, for two consecutive years, student math and reading test scores fall below a certain level. Twenty-five million dollars has been awarded to these districts, with Philadelphia receiving \$16 million. Districts are given the power to create custom-designed Charter Schools and sign agreements with outside providers.

The amount of financial awards will double from last year to \$34 million. Such incentive grants are provided to schools that improve reading and math scores significantly. One high school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, has received over \$60,000. While the State does not have an exit exam required for graduation, by 2003 students who receive a proficient or advanced level on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade state assessment receive special notice. Almost 75% of the public high schools in the State offer advanced placement courses and almost 60% of high school graduates go to colleges or universities.

## Rhode Island Update – February 2001

---

---

Now in its fourth year, the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) initiative has introduced State assessments in math and English/language arts in grades 4, 8, and 10, and has developed targeted proficiency levels for schools to achieve. It has entered into an accountability pact with Providence, the State's largest district, to reallocate funding to include student test scores. The legislature approved \$4 million in additional aid for the Providence school district upon signature of a performance contract with the State. Using funding from the Gates Foundation, staff development has been provided to almost 100 administrators on how to use assessment data in developing improvement plans. Currently, there are no State exit exam graduation requirements; however, three districts are pilot testing a "Certificate of Initial Mastery" initiative similar to that in Oregon. Approximately \$4 million (or \$340) per teacher has been allocated for staff development. About 73% of public high schools offer advanced placement courses; 65% of high school graduates go on to college.

## South Carolina Update – February 2001

---

---

The Education Oversight Committee, which is responsible for overseeing implementation of the State's 1998 accountability legislation, has recommended that the currently elected position of State Superintendent be replaced by one appointed by the Governor. The recommendation would also provide greater flexibility regarding revenue raising for the State's local school boards, some of whom currently have to get approval from the county.

For the first time, middle school teachers in South Carolina will have to be trained and credentialed specifically to the grade levels and subjects they teach. In the past, middle school teachers have been certified for either elementary or secondary levels. The recommended Board approval has to be ratified by the State legislature.

In his State of the State Address, Governor Hodges called for most of the \$150 million in proceeds from a new lottery to be used for \$2,000 college scholarships for students with B averages or higher. This would be in addition to existing State scholarships. The remainder of the funds would be used for technology grants to public schools. He would also set aside \$54 million to implement the State's accountability law.

School report cards are scheduled to be released in the Fall of 2001. Based upon the results of the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) first administered last in 1999, schools will receive scores on a five-point scale. The State accountability system becomes effective this year and allows the State superintendent to take over schools and/or replace staff -- which it has done with one district and could possibly do in another district later this year. The Governor was successful in obtaining \$7 million for staff development for teachers and administrators this year. Such reallocation will require legislative approval. About 92% of the public high schools in the State offer advanced placement courses and almost 60% of high school graduates go to college. Approximately 13% of students have one or more disabilities, with 18% of students coming from low-income families.

## South Dakota Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Janklow has proposed an 8% increase to \$314 million for FY 2001 for K-12. A one-time appropriation of \$1 million would be used to expand the existing \$1 million reading initiative to train teachers in grades 1-3. Approximately \$10 million of State aid would be used to reduce local property taxes.

The Governor also proposed to provide a scholarship amounting to almost \$10,000 per student over four years if they complete the State's Regents scholarship program requirements. Students would have to refrain from smoking or chewing tobacco.

The State assessment program includes the SAT 9 and the Stanford Writing Assessment Program-3. The SAT 9 is not aligned with State standards. Several of the larger districts have developed their own criterion-referenced tests which are aligned with the State and their own local standards. Including Sioux Falls district, an effort is underway to develop criterion-referenced tests for Statewide use under a \$500,000 grant. The legislature has approved a \$1.1 million appropriation for training first and second grade reading teachers, who receive a \$700 bonus upon completion . Approximately 17% of the public schools offer AP courses, while 45% of students take upper level math courses.



## Tennessee Update – February 2001

---

---

In his first annual review of schools, 48 elementary and middle schools have been designated as low-performing and are eligible to receive additional State funds to increase student performance.

The State's 1992 accountability law requires high school students to take end-of-course tests in three subjects -- algebra 1, English 10, and biology, and will become effective 2005. For the first time, schools will receive report cards and the one-third lowest performing schools were announced publicly for the first time last year. Forty-eight schools in 17 districts have been targeted for takeover. All students in grades 3-8 are tested annually in language arts, reading, math, science, and social studies. Writing assessments for grades 4, 7, and 11 are being developed. Most of the assistance to low-performing schools is in the form of a tutoring team of retired educators who helped develop school improvement plans with current "targeted" school staff. Between \$2-\$4 million each year has been provided over the last decade to increase the effectiveness of remedial programs in these schools.

Compared to last year's budget, State appropriations for K-12 education dropped from \$2.6 billion to \$2.5 billion with increased funding going to faculty salaries. Six million dollars has been allocated to set up preschool programs. The Tennessee CAT writing assessment exam is available to the public once the exam has been given. Approximately 50% of the public high schools offer advanced placement courses. Approximately 14% of students enrolled in public schools have one or more disabilities and almost 20% come from low-income families.

## Texas Update – February 2001

---

---

Former Lieutenant Governor, and now Governor, Rick Perry is placing a high priority on boosting math achievement, particularly in the middle grade levels. About \$40 million has been allocated over two years to improve the teaching of math in grades 5 and 8; the funds are to be used for teacher training in the use of proven research-based techniques. Funds could also be used to expand remediation programs. An additional \$100 million will be used to improve reading instruction. The Governor also called for alternative teacher certification routes, specifically for information technology specialists who wish to enter teaching. Approximately \$700 million would come from the education trust fund to improve teacher salaries and benefits. The student scholarship fund would triple to \$300 million and would be available for high-achieving students who enroll in two-year colleges.

Overall, Governor Perry has requested a 3.5% K-12 budget increase to \$31 billion. An additional \$150 million would be allocated for a total of \$1.3 billion for school construction and renovation. Approximately \$29 million would be used to improve math instruction for fifth through eighth graders, while \$12.5 million would be used to hire master math teachers. Literacy initiatives in early grade levels would receive an additional \$100 million for a total of \$586 million. An additional \$36 million would be provided over two years for school technology which brings the total spending on technology over two years to \$121 million.

The House Public Education Committee (PEA) recently submitted a report assessing Charter Schools and found that, in the 193 current operating Charter Schools, student performance was lower than expected and closures higher than expected, and in some schools financial trouble exists. Hence, it has recommended a moratorium on new Charter Schools. The report also criticizes the State Board of Education for lacking adequate oversight of current Charter School operations. The Committee also recommended a specific limit on the number of Charter Schools that serve at-risk students.

While the number of students passing State exams generally in 1998-1999 was about 78%, only 59%

of those enrolled in Charter Schools passed the State exams. The PEA also gave a rating of unacceptable to about 25% of Charter Schools that it evaluated. One of the primary reasons that President-Elect Bush selected Houston Superintendent Rodney Paige as U.S. Secretary of Education was the apparent effectiveness of the almost 20 Charter Schools operated within the Houston Independent School District.

The Wall Street Journal (November 15), reported that the State Public Utility Commission (PUC) is investigating contractual arrangements between Southwestern Bell and school districts to determine whether Southwestern Bell is unduly “locking-in” school districts to future contracts under the threat of increasing rates later this year. Under a 1995 law, in return for some deregulation, Southwestern Bell agreed to provide telecommunication services to school districts at no more than 5% above cost. For more information go to [www.puc.state.tx.us](http://www.puc.state.tx.us).

Currently, tenth grade students are required to pass exams in math and reading in order to graduate. However, beginning in 2003, new tests will be administered in reading and math at the ninth grade level, in science and social studies at the tenth grade level, and in all four core subjects at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade level. Students will have to pass the 11<sup>th</sup> grade exam to graduate with a regular diploma. Also, to receive a high school diploma, geometry, physics, and chemistry courses must be taken by students beginning in 2005. Starting with third graders in 2003, students must pass State reading tests in grade 3, math and reading tests in grade 5, and tests in both subjects in grade 9 in order to be promoted.

While the legislature has appropriated some funding for extended learning, the State has placed a high priority on using professional development as a means to increase school performance. Almost 15,000 kindergarten teachers attended four-day reading academies in 1999; similar academies for first and second grade teachers will occur this summer. Approximately \$40 million will be allocated this year to provide remedial support for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who are at risk of failing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade exam. In addition to changes in the State assessments in the immediate future, the acceptable levels for school report cards are also being increased next school year. The SEA makes available the TASS and end-of-course exams after they are given. Approximately two-thirds of the public high

schools in the State offer advanced placement programs and over 45% of students take upper level math programs. About 12.3% of students enrolled in public schools have one or more disabilities, while slightly over 20% of children are from low-income families.

## Utah Update – February 2001

---

---

Spearheaded by the Utah Education Association, an effort is underway to pressure the legislature to appropriate more dollars for education. Specifically, an additional \$10 million is being requested to help pay for school construction and reducing differences in revenue-raising authority across districts. In addition, between \$30-\$36 million is also being requested to replace outdated and worn textbooks. As part of this movement, teachers conducted a strike on December 5.

Governor Leavitt has proposed a 14% increase in K-12 expenditures for next year, up to \$1.85 billion. About \$50 million would be allocated to districts to reduce class size and to support other district priorities, while \$45 million would be allocated as a one-time appropriation to update textbooks and reimburse teachers for supplies. Almost \$20 million would be used to recruit and retain secondary school teachers in math, science, and information technology.

Governor Leavitt has called for incentives, as much as a \$20,000 bonus, on top of existing salaries for math and technology teachers if they sign a four-year commitment to teaching. Additional funding would be made available for other teachers to receive Master's degrees in technology or math.

The Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PAS) was administered for the first time last year. The State will use such data to identify schools not achieving acceptable levels and help them develop plans for school improvement by the year 2004. Students are assessed on the State criterion-referenced test in grades 1-11 in reading, language arts, mathematics, and science. In addition, students must pass the basic skills competency test at the tenth grade to receive a high school diploma. This year, the State Board of Education and the legislature will be attempting to develop a system of reporting on individual schools. Approximately \$2 million or about \$90 per teacher has been provided for professional development in which teachers are required to participate. About 80% of Utah public high schools offer advanced placement with almost 50% of students taking algebra and upper level math courses. Slightly over 11% of the students enrolled in the state have disabilities, while 14% come from low-income homes.

## Vermont Update – February 2001

---

---

Governor Dean would increase the K-12 budget by almost 12% to \$880 million. Approximately \$1.2 million will be used for staff development and financial incentives for teachers to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Under Act 60, which replaced local property taxes with a State-wide tax, districts are also required to offer standardized tests to students in grade 2 in reading; in grades 4, 8, and 10 in language arts and math. It is also pilot-testing a science assessment that will be mandatory for grades 6 and 11.

Under ACT 60, the State first named low-performing schools in 1999. Last year, 39 schools were identified. All schools are required to write action plans and as schools are identified as low-performing, teams of SEA and other officials provide assistance. Under a revised state special education law, the legislature provides incentives for more special education students to be served in regular classrooms to reduce costs and to take into account that cost in developing an IEP. It also removed any State special education procedural requirements beyond that stipulated in IDEA-97. About 88% of public schools offer advanced placement courses, while about 40% of students took upper level math courses. The percentage of students with one or more disabilities is approximately 11.5%, while the percent of students from low-income families is slightly higher at 13.5%.

## Virginia Update – February 2001

---

---

The State's Standards of Learning (SOL) exams and accompanying State assessments have evoked a backlash in many quarters, such that the State Board allowed high school students to use scores on acceptable advanced placement and eleven other national tests to be used in lieu of scores on the SOL exit exam. The State has approved a modified standard diploma for special education students who pass required high school courses but fail the SOL test. The percentage of schools that met State standards over the last three years has increased from 3% to 22%. Beginning with the class of 2004, students will have to pass SOL tests in grades 3, 5, and 8 in four subject areas to graduate.

Most of the funding for remedial and school improvement activities will come from the 9% increase in K-12 spending to \$3.98 billion for 2000-01. Approximately \$17 million was appropriated over two years to provide teacher training grants and to hire consultants to help align lessons with State standards; \$12 million has been appropriated over the two-year period to cover the cost of additional supplemental materials. The Virginia SEA makes available to the public the end of course exams and the SOL exams. It also will provide information on student answers on performance items. About 85% of public schools in the State offer advanced placement, with about 30% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders taking algebra classes. About 13.5% of students in the state have one or more disabilities and about 10% are from low-income families.

## Washington Update – February 2001

---

---

In an attempt to have high school students think more seriously about their career options, a graduation requirement to become effective in 2004 will require a student to develop a plan for the year following high school graduation. Moreover, another graduation requirement would be to develop and demonstrate the application of IT or other skills useful on the job. This new requirement is part of a set of Washington State initiatives, which total about \$250 million, to be allocated over the next couple of years. Another project would be funding pilot career exploration programs in 10-12 high schools that will be provided a total of \$3.5 million.

The Kent school system, the fourth largest district in the State, has embarked a new grading process which assesses not only student performance in content areas, but also assesses their job-related skills. These include work habits, teamwork, attendance, communications, and social skills. If this approach is adopted by other districts, vendors of employability and job readiness skills development programs should benefit.

The Governor also called for the legislature to appropriate slightly more funding for education and to reallocate \$100 million over the next two years from an adjustment in the State's retirement systems to go toward raising teacher salaries.

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning is slowly being implemented since the passage of its accountability legislation in 1993. This year, the legislature will be attempting to develop a definition of low-performing schools, the criteria for figuring State interventions in low-performing schools, and the actions which the State will take. A commission has recommended that low-performing schools be provided freed-up time and some money to extend instruction during the summer or after school. The plan would also bring sanctions to bear on those schools if, over time, they do not turn themselves around. If approved by the legislature, the plan could become effective next school year.



One of the major concerns is the view that the current assessments are biased against limited-English-proficient students and students from recent immigrant families. In 28 schools with high percentages of minority enrollment, a variety of approaches are being undertaken to reduce the achievement gap and increase the fairness of the State assessment. About \$40 million has been allocated for staff development, or about \$800 per teacher. This comes on the heels of the largest teacher salary increase in history. Approximately 60% of public high schools provide advanced placement courses and about 30% of students take upper level math courses. The percentage of students with disabilities is approximately 11%, with a similar percent of students coming from low-income families.

## West Virginia Update – February 2001

---

---

The West Virginia Title I Assessment and Accountability Plan has been rejected by USED because its assessment system relied only on the norm-referenced SAT-9 test for accountability purposes. The rationale for rejection was that the SAT-9 has not been demonstrated to measure higher order thinking skills and that it is not aligned to State standards. While other states had received conditional approvals as previously reported, according to Title I Reports (December 2000), “this is the first time a state has been told it must sign a compliance agreement”. SEA Title I staff have pointed out the problems of relying only on the SAT-9 for Title I reporting, while the State has attempted to use an aligned version of SAT-9 as a criterion-referenced test. The officials reviewing the proposed plan felt that content standards should drive test selection. The use of the SAT-9 in West Virginia over the last several years has been tied in closely with conflicts between assessment and state finance, as well as priorities within the legislature. West Virginia is one of the few states where a State-wide evaluation has demonstrated positive effects of computer-based instruction on student performance, in this case using the SAT-9. The evaluation, sponsored by the Milken Education Family Foundation, found that an equivalent grade gain could be achieved through an investment of about \$100 per student in technology and staff development compared to a \$600 investment in class size reduction. (See TechMIS, July 1998)

For the new school improvement funding under Title I, the SEA is using very rigorous criteria for selecting schools in which school improvement funding (as well as choice) will be targeted. By defining eligible schools as those that did not meet passing levels on the State assessment and did not meet the adequate yearly progress for Title I purposes, only 26 schools qualify. However, they will receive approximately \$150,000 per school. To the extent products and services are designed to improve school operations and increase student performance, these purchases are certainly an allowable cost.

Over the last three years student achievement at all grade levels on the State assessment (i.e., the SAT 9), have increased; between 1992 and 1996, West Virginia student math achievement scores on the NAEP increased significantly. The Southern Regional Education Board has been hired by the 82001, Education TURNKEY Systems, Inc.

State to assess all of the staff development initiatives underway. In 1998, the performance audit board identified seven schools as low-performing and the State Board recently received authority to take over certain low-performing districts on shorter notice than in the past. Approximately 65% of high schools offer advanced placement and 42% of students take upper level math courses. The drop-out rate is between 4% and 8% and about half the students who graduate from high school go to college. Almost 17% of students have one or more disabilities with about 27% coming from low-income families.

## Wisconsin Update – February 2001

---

---

USED has rejected the Wisconsin Accountability and Assessment system which must be approved in order for the State to qualify for Title I administrative funding next year and EdFlex status. The basis for the rejection was the lack of alignment between the Terra Nova norm-referenced test and State standards. USED indicated that the studies conducted by the SEA found that the norm-referenced assessment test measures no more than one-third to more than one-half of what is on the State standards. The rejection also indicated that reliance on this test as the sole measure of student achievement would not meet the accountability requirements. The denial was also based upon the allegation that Wisconsin exempted too many limited-English-proficient students from taking the State assessments; 40% of LEP students in the State were exempted.

State standards were established three years ago and subsequent assessments are now in place in grades 4, 8, and 12. Recently, however, the legislature passed a Bill that would require that promotion policies be based upon a variety of assessment criteria including academic achievement, recommendations from teachers, and locally developed criteria. All districts are required to assess student competency in English, language arts, math, science, and social studies and as measured by the Terra Nova Second Edition. The legislature has appropriated \$4 million to develop a high school graduation exam to be given twice a year to students in grades 11 and 12 beginning in 2002-03. The State makes available the WRCT assessment exam after it has been administered. About 75% of high schools offer advanced placement courses and well over 50% of students take upper level math programs while almost 40% take upper level science programs. The dropout rate in Wisconsin is between 2% and 4% and is the lowest in the country. Nearly 13% of students have one or more disabilities, while a similar amount come from low-income families.

Conducted by the Center for Education Research of the University of Wisconsin, a study of the State's four-year-old class size reduction effort called SAGE, found that reduced class size was important but that the types of instruction teachers provided is perhaps even more important in improving student performance. Findings suggest teachers should address basic skills when they have personal contact with students, ask students to discuss and demonstrate what they know, and

follow a good approach to classroom management. These techniques are more effective than project-oriented activities, problem-solving lessons, and other activities called for by several national math and science standard panels and included in annual NAEP assessments. Currently, 550 schools are participating involving 60,000 students with annual funding at \$55 million. The report is available online at [www.educationanalysis.org](http://www.educationanalysis.org).

## Wyoming Update – February 2001

---

---

The new Wyoming State Assessment System, which has been cited as a model for other states by USED, will be delaying implementation of requirements related to student graduation. The recent policy has required that high school students have to achieve proficiency levels in language arts and math beginning in year 2001 to receive a high school diploma. In November, the State Board extended the deadline until 2005. Discussions are underway to consider results of State assessments but also student scores and grades in core courses which would constitute a “body of evidence”. The Wyoming State Assessment and Accountability System was the first such system approved for Title I purposes by USED, which would allow Wyoming to apply for Ed-Flex status if it so desires.

Building upon Statewide telecommunication initiatives with US West, the State has entered into a three-year contract with Copernicus Education Gateway which will provide a dedicated website named Wyoming Education Gateway at [www.edgate.com](http://www.edgate.com). This gateway will allow the sharing of lesson plans and other education materials which must be approved by the SEA. As reported in School News (December 2000), it will also include Internet projects sponsored by NASA, Smithsonian Institution, Encyclopedia Britannica, and USED, among others.

Governor Geringer has proposed an increase in K-12 spending of approximately \$100 million, with most of the increase used to improve teacher quality, including technology-related staff development and for teacher mentoring programs.