

Alabama Update – April 2001

Governor Siegelman is proposing that \$9 million be used to connect all public school classrooms throughout the State by 2003. In addition, the State is planning to use approximately \$20 million of Federal funds to supplement State funds for connectivity. Additional funds would likely have to be appropriated for purchasing software and for staff development. About 50% of Alabama classrooms currently have no Internet connectivity or have outdated equipment. One of the major goals of the widespread availability of Internet would be to provide distance learning to rural schools.

Governor Siegelman has ordered a 6.2% across-the-board cut totaling \$180 million in K-12 aid based on expected reductions in sales tax and other revenue sources. Several Alabama education associations have filed lawsuits to exempt the schools from statewide budget cuts on the basis that education is an essential function of government.

A special session of the legislature concluded in early March without any progress toward settling the issue of whether or not K-12 budgets for this school year would have to be prorated taking into account the overall budget reduction. It is likely that the next round of State funds will be as originally planned and then, the following month, funds could be reduced by amounts between 4.1% and 6.9%. Currently, the thinking is that the cut will be within each line item, not allowing districts to determine cuts among programs. This means that some of the line items for compensatory education and at-risk students would not be wiped out as many were concerned but would be reduced by the prorated amount.

Alaska Update – April 2001

A task force appointed by Governor Knowles has recommended that slightly over \$40 million be spent this year -- and a total of \$100 million over five years -- to help schools to meet the new accountability standards which are included in the quality schools law. While the Governor is generally supportive of the task force recommendation, thus far he has not made any major commitment.

Governor Knowles has recommended approximately \$130 million in the coming year to renovate schools, especially in remote parts of the State as a result of a ruling two years ago that found the State discriminates against rural areas by providing inadequate school buildings. Last year, the Governor proposed \$510 million which was cut to \$93 million. Much of the money went to Anchorage rather than rural areas. Because both houses in the legislature are controlled by Republicans, Democratic Governor Knowles may not get his way once again.

Arizona Update - April 2001

The State Government Information Technology Agency has awarded \$100 million to Qwest for the purposes of installing at least one computer drop in every instructional area, networking all computers to the Internet, and providing content management equipment and firewalls. Funding was provided by the School Facility Board. An initial meeting, to which all superintendents have been invited, is scheduled for May 6 in Phoenix. Both Qwest and Cisco have agreed to provide additional education discounts beyond the State contract pricing. Qwest will provide a 24-hour technical support hotline and training. Cisco will install academies in districts that want them. Contact Philip Geiger, 602/542-6501.

The School Facility Board is updating guidelines for atlases, almanacs, and encyclopedias, and will not allow purchases of electronic versions unless the date is 2000 or later. Currently, districts are completing forms indicating what types of new materials and online services are required; a volume discount purchase will be made in the near future.

A recent study by the Goldwater Institute has found that students being served by charter schools for two or three consecutive years perform better on reading tests than their counterparts in public schools. The results in math showed no differences. About 14% of Arizona's student enrollment are in charter schools, which receive about \$4,500 in per-pupil revenues compared to \$7,000 for traditional public schools. The studies were headed by Lewis Solmon, an adjunct fellow at the Goldwater Institute. Dr. Solmon also directed a major study of the effects of computer-based instruction on student achievement in West Virginia several years ago. That study found that similar gains could be achieved by disadvantaged students for a cost of approximately \$100 per pupil to purchase technology, software, and staff development vs. slightly over \$600 to reduce class size to 15 to 1. In Arizona the "size effect" was about one extra month per year for students served by charter schools, of which there are currently approximately 400 which are publicly financed but otherwise independent.

Arkansas Update - April 2001

Governor Huckabee has proposed a 6% increase in K-12 funding to \$1.8 billion in addition to \$3,000 across-the-board teacher salary increases. A major effort is underway to attract and retain teachers in the Mississippi Delta region.

Arkansas was one of the first states to develop a web-based IEP system that can be used by districts across the State for monitoring special education student progress. The criterion-referenced State assessment program is also closely aligned with the NAEP test. When the next round of NAEP assessments occur, look for Arkansas to go to the top 20 states in terms of increases in student performance in various subject areas.

Much of the funding increase in education would come from increased tax revenues which could be affected negatively by a slowdown in the economy.

The Governor has signed legislation establishing a trust fund which can provide computers to students who have scored at the proficiency level on math and literacy on sixth grade benchmark tests and have 95% or higher attendance. The fund is being financed through a State license plate program which will generate \$25.00 from each driver who purchases special license tags. The trust fund will be administered by the Committed to Education Foundation which expects about 20,000 license plates to be sold each year. This will provide approximately 3,500 technology incentives or computers by 2006, the first year students will become eligible.

California Update - April 2001

The State Senate has passed a bill to postpone by one year -- from 2004 to 2005 -- the use of high stakes testing and exit exams as part of the requirement for high school graduation. Moreover, this year's scheduled administration of the exam taken at the ninth grade level is planned to be a practice test. The State has already watered down the math test by removing some of the difficult algebra questions. Final actions by the California House and the Governor will probably have to wait for a review of the results of the ninth grade practice test in the next one to two months.

On January 18, the SEA released almost \$170 million in new education technology grants. Approximately 100,000 multimedia Internet-capable computers will be purchased to reduce ratios of multimedia computer to students to 1:5. About 1,800 high schools will receive grants. In addition, approximately \$4 million will be allocated to about 150 high schools who can use such funds for infrastructure and to cover the fees of online advanced placement courses. Each school has agreed to use technology to provide a total of four or more AP courses this fall.

An article in Education Week, (March 14), reports that ninth grade students from California, who volunteered to take a "practice test" for the State's new high school exit exam, were told two days before taking the exam the test would count. Supporters of the "test run" were voted down at the last moment by the State legislature. Students who do not pass the test required for graduation beginning in 2004 will have other opportunities to do so.

Connecticut Update - April 2001

In October, Lieutenant Governor Jodi Rell announced a new program, referred to as “Play It Safe Online,” designed to prevent fifth graders from becoming victims of online crime. According to e Schools News (December 2000), the participating school districts are Beacon Falls, Derby, Glastonbury, Meriden, Milford, Newtown, North Haven, Prospect, South Windsor and West Hartford.

Governor John Rowland has suggested that any new State funds be targeted on low-income urban areas in an effort to reduce the gap between students in rich and poor communities. For a number of years, Connecticut students have scored the highest in the nation on the NAEP tests. Although the State has a budget surplus of nearly \$500 million, there are caps limiting the increases local districts can make in their operating budgets. The Governor has indicated his intention not to change those caps.

Governor Rowland has proposed a 4.3% increase in K-12 funding for FY 2002. About \$10 million would be set aside for a five-year demonstration of alternative choice initiatives, whereby funds would be provided to low-income parents who wish to have their children educated in alternative schools or settings. An additional \$14 million would be allocated over the next two years -- for a total of \$66 million -- to create and expand enrollments in magnet schools (approximately 6,500 students now to almost 12,000 in two years).

Delaware Update – April 2001

Delaware has requested and been approved for Ed-Flex status. Approval came shortly after USED approved the State's accountability and assessment plan for Title I, which is a prerequisite for Ed-Flex status. Under Ed-Flex, the State can use Federal funds in a much more flexible manner and is freed from some of the regulatory requirements under which non-Ed-Flex states have to operate. Other states receiving Ed-Flex status are North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Massachusetts, and Oregon. Additional states with Title I approval who are likely Ed-Flex candidates are Louisiana, Washington, and Wyoming.

The NSF-funded DELAWISE Project will provide a comprehensive Statewide support structure for teachers which promotes access to high-quality instructional units and resources that are aligned with State's academic standards. It is to be a technology tool for standards-based reform. A consortium of four districts has developed a prototype. Discussions are being held with several Southeastern states in terms of forming an interstate consortium through which costs can be shared. The current project website represents a prototype that teachers can use to locate lessons, assessments, and teaching videos that are aligned to State content standards (www.DELAWISE.org/home2.asp/).

Florida Update – April 2001

Governor Bush's K-12 budget would receive a 1% reduction to \$7.6 billion, although funding for higher education would increase about 1.3%. Lottery funds would increase almost 5% to \$775 million, with a quarter of that amount allocated for the Bright Future scholarship program, and about \$370 million for elementary and secondary schools. Unexpectedly, \$175 million from the Florida retirement system that was supposed to be passed on to school districts was not included. A new \$50 million fund will be available for teacher recruitment and retention. It would provide \$1,000 in signing bonuses for first-time teachers. These bonuses would have to be matched with local funds. About \$11 million in new funding for professional development that focuses on reading would also be provided to serve approximately 10,000 K-3 teachers. In a surprise, the Governor's budget does not include any funding for technology and one of the legislative houses has agreed with this item being deleted from the budget. It is not clear what the other house will be doing. Discussions with the new State technology coordinator, Linda Crowley (who formerly directly E-Rate activities for the state), strongly suggest that districts are counting on the \$62 million (the amount provided last year) to allow them to provide assurances in their application for Round 4 E-Rate discount funding that adequate funding for purchasing noneligible staff development, software and hardware will be available. If such funds are not available, some of the districts may decide to withdraw their requests for E-Rate discounts for Year 4. We will continue to monitor this item.

The Florida Learning Alliance -- which consists of three regional consortia representing 112 high schools (including the Florida On-Line High School) and middle schools and 102 elementary schools in 31 rural school districts -- is developing telecommunications network courses for teacher training and online services under a five-year \$10 million Technology Innovation Challenge Grant Program. The Alliance has also received some funding for administrative training from the Gates Foundation. Since the beginning, it has applied for E-Rate refunds approximating \$3.8-\$4 million each year for all of the participating rural districts, which have been receiving average discounts of about 70%. It is developing standards for distance learning for teacher training working with the North Carolina Department of Education and SREB. These standards, along with rubrics for evaluation, are available on the Alliance website. It has also received \$1.4 million from the State legislature to set

up an education channel. The Executive Director of the Alliance is Dr. Wendy Culler, who has had more than 30 years experience in directing large scale education initiatives within the Florida Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education (www.fllearningalliance.org).

The Florida DOE has published a guide entitled “Developing Quality Individual Education Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families.” It has also developed guidelines for speech therapists which are rich in examples and illustrations of how to integrate therapy based upon the general curriculum which the individual student’s IEP must address. For more information about the guide, contact clinel@mail.doe.state.fl.us.

The Florida House recently passed, by a 63 to 54 margin, a Bill that would provide vouchers of up to \$3,000 per student who attend over-crowded schools in order to expand the State’s two-year-old voucher program. Another Bill passed by a larger margin would allow corporations to allocate 75% of their corporate income taxes to non-profit organizations that would provide scholarships of up to \$4,000 to cover tuition at private schools for students from high-poverty families. Currently, only 50 students from two Pensacola schools receive vouchers.

A report by the Manhattan Institute and Florida State University has found that many Florida schools which would have otherwise been forced to participate in the State’s voucher program during the last year, increased student achievement enough to be no longer threatened by vouchers. The “voucher effect,” according to the report motivated low-performing schools to increase student performance on the new Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test. An article in Ed Week, (February 21), which summarizes the “voucher effect,” did not indicate whether the researchers attempted to determine so-called “regression toward the mean” under which low-performing schools on standardized tests would normally move toward the mean rather staying at the same level or dropping. Another point not mentioned in the article is that, last year, overall student achievement in Florida schools increased to such an extent that the \$60 million that was available for rewards was not enough and the legislature had to appropriate supplement funds to live up to their end of the bargain of providing bonuses to teachers and schools whose students’ performance increased significantly.

The Governor has also proposed to phase out the intangible personal property tax on stocks, bonds and securities, and to reduce school property tax. His plan calls for full funding of the A Plus Accountability plan and another initiative designed to expand diversity and access to higher education.

Georgia Update – April 2001

The Georgia Learning Connection is a gateway allowing teachers to access materials and lessons aligned to the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum standards. It also includes a lesson plan builder which is a tool for developing high-quality plans and which allows teachers to submit their most successful plans for posting on the GLC site. In the future, the GLC plans to serve as a clearinghouse for gifted education, technology integration, general software evaluation (to help educators select appropriate software), and professional development, particularly related to the criterion-referenced test assessment and resources aligned to it. As part of the SREB, the GLC hopes to build a larger learning connections project in which states would share the cost of electronic distribution of resources.

The Georgia legislature has passed a bill to end social promotion in grades 3, 5, and 8, beginning with third and fifth grade students in 2004. Students will have to pass the State reading test. A similar test would be administered under similar conditions to eighth grade students in 2005, in reading and math. In addition to Governor Barnes, a major proponent of the new legislation is the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education headed by Tom Upchurch, a former superintendent in Carrollton City, Georgia, which is in a district represented by the former U.S. Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. While at Carrollton, Superintendent Upchurch was a proponent of inner district choice and an advocate of technology.

Hawaii Update – April 2001

The State legislature is threatening to withhold approximately \$140 million in special education funding in an attempt to control the cost of these programs in the State as a result of the 1995 Felix vs. Hawaii decision where an additional \$300 million had to be provided to special education. The regular cost of special education is about \$350 million a year. The Felix decision basically instructed the State to spend whatever it needed to get into compliance with Federal and State special education mandates.

The Hawaii SEA has placed a high priority on virtual services for students and teachers. The Magnet Electronic Academy, referred to as E-Academy, has established virtual onsite magnet schools which among other things provide unlimited access to professional development. One of the goals is to expand extended learning opportunities outside of schools. E-Academy's primary focus is advanced technology, science, and math where technical staff from industry work with teachers in the professional development activities. It has also adopted the Generation www.Y where students partner with teachers to develop materials that can be used by other students. One offering is in computer systems and operating systems; another is a basic course in networking.

The Technology Telecommunications for Teacher Initiative is designed to support student learning and includes web page design and development, e-mail, chat, video conferencing, teleconferencing, and Internet. For more information go to www.eschool.k-12.hi.us. The contact is Diana Oshiro.

Illinois Update – April 2001

For FY 2002, the Governor has proposed a 5.4% increase or \$460 million of new funding for K-12 education. About 51% of new State revenues would be allocated to education and workforce training. In addition, the Governor has announced a major reorganization of the State Education Agency in which a number of functions would be transferred to other State agencies.

The proposed budget for this coming year would increase per-pupil expenditures by \$135 to \$4,425 per year. The Governor also supports a State Board of Education recommendation that every student in grades 3-11 would be required to take State tests yearly starting in 2002. The cost of this testing initiative is almost \$60 million annually.

The Illinois School Improvement website is the data storehouse of school and district test scores and other assessment measures that can be used for data-driven decision-making. Districts can chart their own progress along subject areas, making comparisons across the State with schools and districts that have similar demographics. It also provides access to resources and tools designed to enhance communication between schools and communities. The site has been developed through a partnership of the North Central Regional Education Lab, the Illinois Business Roundtable, and the State Board of Education. It is patterned after a similar, but much more advanced, project which is fully operational in Maryland (see Maryland Update).

A recent court ruling orders the State Board of Education to certify special education teachers. This judgment overrules several bills passed by the legislature to prevent such a certification system.

Iowa Update – April 2001

The Iowa Department of Education has been supporting the development and, now, operations of a para-educator certification program which requires 90 hours of training in behavioral management, exceptional and at-risk child behavior, collaboration skills, interpersonal relation skills, child and youth development, technology, and ethical responsibilities. A supplemental course addresses ESL. Successful completers can earn an Associate degree or 62 semester hours of college credit. Iowa is only one of two states (the other is Utah) which have staff development programs for teacher aides, of which there are approximately 350,000 part-time and full-time aides currently working in special education nationwide with an additional 100,000 in Title I programs. It is very likely that in the immediate future, all Title I aides will have to be certified or must have taken a minimal amount of staff development. This is an area where few, if any, private sector vendors have attempted to take advantage of this relatively large niche market. For more information, contact Bertha Caldwell at 515/281-0345.

Kentucky Update – April 2001

The Kentucky Virtual High School joins Kentucky Virtual University and Virtual Library in providing learning anytime, anywhere opportunities. KVHS offered core graduation courses, foreign language and advanced courses its first semester. Now, it provides courses developed by certified teachers using licensed content from Apex Learning, the University of Colorado, Intelligent Education, and Kentucky Education Television. Hosted by e-college.com, it has the capability to launch a variety of online solutions. It received a \$1.1 million Federal grant over three years to expand advanced placement courses. It now offers six weeks of online professional development courses. The contact is Linda Pittinger, 502/564-4772.

Louisiana Update – April 2001

Governor Mike Foster would increase the K-12 budget for next year by 7% to \$2.6 billion, of which \$140 million would be used to increase teacher salaries. Revenues would come from special taxes on riverboat casinos and other sources which have to be approved by the legislature. About \$26 million would be added to the State school accountability program which is basically a remedial instructional program for students who fail the State's high stakes test. Expansion of after-school, as well as summer school, programs would be funded with the new allocation. Some funds could be used for rewards based upon student performance. The State's K-3 reading and math initiative will be level-funded at \$14 million.

Following up on a pledge to increase teacher salaries, Governor Mike Foster has called a special session of the legislature which has passed a \$2,000 pay raise. Half of the money will come from gaming revenues and the other half from State-level budget changes. Under the new legislation, all of the State's casinos could conduct gaming activities while permanently docked in return for an increase from 18.5% to 21.5% in taxes. In addition, the tax on the land-based Harrah's Casino, which amounted to \$100 million last year, will be cut. Most of that money was used to increase teacher and college faculty member salaries over the last year.

Maryland Update – April 2001

On January 30, the Maryland Technology Inventory (which is completed every two years), was released by the Maryland Business Roundtable and the Maryland SEA. Unlike inventory surveys conducted by other SEAs, the Maryland survey and data is designed to be used by State and district policymakers for monitoring progress, on technology “benchmarks,” and on how technology is actually being used by students. The report indicates how the use of computers, for example, varies by demographics, (e.g., higher poverty schools use computers to teach basic skills more than for the development of problem-solving or high-level thinking skills; low-poverty school students are three times more likely to use technology to perform measurements and collect data involving information processing).

About 55% of high-poverty school students do not use e-mail, electronic bulletin boards, or home pagers. The State Board of Education has concluded that while the “digital divide,” in terms of infrastructure, between high- and low-wealth schools has almost disappeared, the divide currently exists with respect to the quality of use and its potential impact on student achievement. During the February CCSSO conference, the Maryland technology director, Barbara Reeves, indicated that further analyses will show that students who use the computer to develop a higher order of thinking skills are more likely to show progress on state assessments which are performance-based. The data that are available through this project could help firms which have certain types of products to determine very quickly whether the products would be in high demand among Maryland schools and particularly what types of schools (high vs. low poverty). This information can also assist in positioning products and developing much more targeted direct sales campaigns. To review the data, go to msde.aws.com or contact Barbara Reeves, Director, Instructional Technology, breeves@msde.state.md.us or 410/767-0382.

According to a preliminary report entitled “Children Entering School Ready to Learn,” conducted for the Maryland Department of Education, only two out of five Maryland children are fully prepared for kindergarten. The instrument used for the assessment is the work sampling system developed by a University of Michigan professor and is used Statewide in Maryland. Governor Glendening has

proposed approximately \$20 million for a new early childhood initiative to reduce class size and pay for programs in preschool through grade 3. Among the less prepared children are those with disabilities or having limited English proficiency.

The Maryland House has repealed a State law which had denied students rights to bring cell phones onto school campuses; it will now go to the Senate.

Massachusetts Update – April 2001

A group headed by Lieutenant Governor James Swift has recommended that districts be allowed to provide a graduation certificate to disabled students who meet all the requirements on their IEPs but do not have passing scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. The report also describes the increased number of reasonable accommodations that can be provided to students with disabilities when they take the State assessment.

A report in Education Daily, (January 24, 2001), concludes that 1.1 million workers in the State lack the skills necessary to fill jobs. About 6% of the State work force, or nearly 200,000 workers, do not possess the minimal language skills and 9% of the work force do not have a high school credential. About 21% have high school credentials but still do not have the necessary literacy skills for jobs which are available but not filled. While the State has increased State adult basic education funding from \$4.1 to \$30 million since 1994, the report calls for expanded funding for outreach programs and programs for limited-English-proficient populations and GED prep. The report is available online at www.massinc.org.

The Massachusetts Virtual Education Services Project has a goal of 40,000 educators in the State using it weekly by Spring 2001. VES is a workspace portal with communication and collaboration tools including a set of curriculum/instructional design tools referred to as CLASP, which is designed to be owned by Massachusetts educators. VES is attempting to expand beyond the State by creating a national consortium to reduce the cost of content delivery and development to \$1 per student. During the first year, it has provided a million dollar contract with Mass Networks to act as a general contractor for VES implementation and, in turn, \$500,000 for Statewide licenses for use of Blackboard's Portal, a course delivery system. Another contract has been awarded to Classwell for the design of a documentation process for the online CLASP.

Project MEET will be launched in the spring of 2001 and include the following activities for education administrators:

- Massachusetts Technology Leadership Consortium funded by the Gates Foundation;
- Technology and Curriculum Integration Leadership Program; and
- CLASP/VES Online.

CAST Inc. and Children's Hospital continue to provide services to ensure the implementation of universal design and assistive technology in order to provide reasonable accommodations to special education students. Part of the funding comes from a TLCF grant. The contact is Joan Crampa, 781/338-6826, who is director of Project MEET.

State Auditor, Joseph Denucci, has alleged in a recent audit that, in 1999 and 2000, over \$14 million was spent by the Department of Education Technology Division, on a variety of trips, parties, etc., which are non-allowable costs. In addition, eight consulting firms were paid funds to cover costs of 125 consultants. The report suggests as much as \$9 million may have been spent through bad judgment or on non-allowable items. The Massachusetts Department of Education's Technology office, as noted above, has come up with some "nontraditional" activities in the recent past. This audit report has a potential for creating a considerable amount of notoriety which could affect firms dealing or attempting to deal with the Department.

As the result of several recent studies comparing results of computer-using students vs. non-computer-using students on writing assessments, the SEA is considering allowing students to take certain parts of its high stakes assessment using the computer. This result is similar to a recent decision in Oregon which was prompted by a lawsuit filed on behalf of a computer-using special education student who was not allowed to use a computer to take, and failed the State's paper-and-pencil writing assessment the assessment two years ago. A recent study, conducted by Boston College researchers, found that computer-using students who were allowed to take the State MCAS language arts test via computer, scored about 10% points higher than non-computer-using students who took the test via longhand. As we predicted in the last TechMIS issue, with the assistance of special education advocacy and legal groups leading the charge, more and more states are going to be forced to allow students, especially those with disabilities, to use technology to take high stakes tests.

Michigan Update – April 2001

Governor Engler has mounted a PR campaign to attack school districts that are filing lawsuits claiming the State owes them \$417 million for special education this year. Under previous lawsuits which supported the districts, over \$1.5 billion has been provided to districts to cover the previous cost of special education. The Governor is reported to have stated that districts “should stop litigating and start educating.” In the past, most of the Durant funding provided to districts was used to purchase non-reoccurring items, including significant investments in hardware and other technology products. Until recently, Michigan did not have State funding for hardware purchases by schools under the teacher laptop initiative. Over \$100 million is being provided to schools to purchase computers for use by teachers who have received adequate training.

A study conducted by Ferris State University has found that only 12% of high school students in the state believes their guidance counselors or teachers help them make career decisions. In fact, almost half of the students surveyed indicated that no one really helped them choose a career. The report recommends expanded career counseling at the college level and offering more opportunities for high school seniors to earn college credit. The partnership for career decision-making at Ferris State University which conducted the survey, is co-chaired by the Lt. Gov. and Ferris President William Sederburg, who at one time was the head of the Senate Education Committee in the Legislature.

A study by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation has found that preschool children from poor families who attended a preschool program had more interest in schools, better attendance, and were likely to take initiative, than those who did not participate in the program. The Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP) began in 1985 and now has a budget of \$73 million serving over 20,000 four-year-olds and almost 500 school districts across the state. A TURNKEY survey conducted in 1998 found that, across the country, the High/Scope model was the most widely used technology-based instructional model at the pre-K and K level. The High/Scope group requires teachers to go through five days of intensive training before they agree to sell the High/Scope and third-party software and supplemental materials to a participating school.

Governor Engler is proposing a 5.4% increase to approximately \$11 billion for pre-K-12 in FY 2002. About \$300 million is to be allocated for early childhood programs to help children prepare for school and meet State standards in the primary grade levels;\$10 million would be earmarked for school improvement efforts as rewards for schools where significant increases in student performance have occurred.

The State Board of Education has selected Thomas Watkins, Jr., to replace Superintendent of Public Instruction, Arthur Ellis.

Mississippi Update – April 2001

The State has developed *Success Mississippi Style*, an interactive CD which is designed to accelerate the adoption of best practices for the infusion of technology in classrooms across the State. The best practices were identified by ISTE, SEIR TEC, and NCREL. It also includes links to the Mississippi curriculum framework and Mississippi teacher exchange website.

The Mississippi student information system, to be operational in the Fall of 2001, is designed to serve as a central repository for school and district data for State and Federal reporting purposes. It provides schools with electronic student transfer capabilities, up-to-date information on student achievement, immunizations, vocational education, and licensure. The contact is Helen Soulè, 601/359-3954.

Missouri Update – April 2001

Governor Holton is proposing a 5.2% increase in K-12 spending to \$4.5 billion for next year; \$4 million would be provided in one-time funding for technology grants to schools, much of which would be used for connectivity access to Internet. Almost \$6 million would be allocated for special education programs for three and four year old students with disabilities.

Under the State Foundation Program created in 1993, budget item line 14 provides State aid for at-risk students and students with special needs. The amount of funding has increased from \$75 million in 1994 to slightly over \$300 million in 2000. Most of these funds are used at the district level to provide remedial courses and dropout prevention programs. Some funding is also used to serve special education students.

Approximately \$16 million has been set aside for A Plus schools. These are public high schools which have upgraded curricula, reduced dropout rates, and increased student performance such that a large portion of their enrollments qualifies for State-paid college tuition. Currently, 34 of the 122 districts are first-year projects which receive approximately \$150,000 per school. Under the State's Outstanding School Act, approximately \$15 million is available to help schools acquire computers and other technology. Districts are eligible for a basic acquisition grant (based on a formula of \$2,000 plus \$3 per student) and enhancement grants (based upon \$4,000 plus \$6 per student). All 525 districts in the State have participated in this program since 1992. Districts can also apply for demonstration grants which are awarded competitively, ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, to support computer networks in grades K-9. Such competitive grants were awarded to 37 districts last year.

The State's funding formula also provides incentive funding for extended learning programs. In 1999, almost 80% of Missouri school districts offered summer school, serving approximately 210,000 students, which is more than double the number enrolled in 1984. Much of the State-supported staff development is conducted by nine regional professional development centers located in colleges or universities across the State. Some of the funds are also used for the Select Teachers as Regional Resources or STARR program. The teacher training is linked to the Missouri

Assessment Program. Approximately 25 teachers are on sabbatical and several thousand teachers participate in 1,500 seminars conducted by the STARR teachers. Several of the CSRD model programs (such as Accelerated Schools and Coalition of Essential Schools) are the focus of such training. A clearinghouse has also been established for best practices, referred to as Success Link.

The EMINTS project has been funded through State E-Rate refunds on Internet services. In addition, districts have been providing local matching funds. This teacher training initiative, which also uses students as mentors for staff development related to technology, is designed to promote a constructivist, inquiry-based approach as described during the CCSSO meeting by Deborah Sutton, Director of Instructional Technology. Forty-four projects in as many districts were initiated during the first year with 38 new projects initiated this school year. EMINTS is operated by the State ISP (MoreNet). All teachers are provided laptops with students having one laptop per two students. All hardware has been purchased off the state contract for three years. Each project is funded at approximately \$60,000 for a total of \$2.4 million during this school year.

In Kansas City Public Schools, five schools have been labeled as academically deficient. Under the Missouri Assessment Program, schools whose students fail to achieve certain performance levels are required to be provided technical assistance by the SEA, which will be occurring in the next few months. Meanwhile, the State legislature is considering a State takeover of the Kansas City Public Schools in toto.

New Hampshire Update – April 2001

During Round 4 of the TLCF program, one-third of the funding provided to New Hampshire school districts will be used to purchase one of three professional development product offerings which focus on integrating technology into the classroom. Two-thirds will be allocated to hardware purchases for districts that have yet to achieve a 10:1 student:multimedia computer ratio. Approximately 70% of the 450 schools in the State have not reached the 10:1 ratio yet. The first of these professional development products allows teachers to take online courses for credit. The second from Vital Knowledge, called Teachers' Tech Tutor, provides individualized training, access to virtual knowledge websites, and appropriate applications. The third is a set of home-grown modules relevant to specific subject areas. The contact is Chris Bouvier, Education Technology Consultant with the SEA, 603/271-8049.

Governor Shaheen has proposed a 5.5% increase \$950 million for the first year of the biennial budget which does not include an \$18 million "education trust" that is now set aside in another state budget. In an attempt to meet court orders relating to school finance inequities, some funds may be provided for schools that are having trouble; \$6 million would be allocated over two years for literacy instruction in K-3 and to expand health insurance for low income families; \$1 million would be set aside for scholarships for high performing graduates to attend in-state colleges and universities.

New Jersey Update – April 2001

The Technology Leadership and Fellowship Institute will be launched in the very near future with a focus on student achievement of the New Jersey core curriculum content standards. The purpose of this project is to accelerate the delivery of data so that all districts have an opportunity to share curriculum offerings, ongoing projects and programs, and professional development. In addition to administrators and teachers, students will also be able to access mentors, curricula, and best practice ideas from anywhere at anytime. Under the Teacher Fellowship Initiative one teacher in each of the State's 21 counties has a year off to provide mentoring and modeling of exemplary technology-using practices. Under the 5.1 three-year Gates Foundation State Leadership Development Plan, approximately 3,500 principals and superintendents will be able to participate in seven comprehensive, hands-on, small group institutes and seminars which will include video conferences with web-based programs, online support, and mentoring opportunities.

A new report entitled "Implementing Whole School Reform in New Jersey: Year Two" has found that low-performing schools in the so-called 28 Abbott districts are having difficulties in implementing the State-mandated reform initiative which began in 1998. Since that time, 370 schools have been implementing school reform models. One model, used in slightly over 60 of the schools, is "Success For All." One of the problems is inadequate buy-in on the part of the schools. At one time, various State officials had projected that 250 schools would select "Success for All."

North Carolina Update – April 2001

Governor Mike Easley has proposed a voluntary statewide preschool program for four-year-olds who are at risk and class size reduction in grades K-3. The Governor has also proposed a State lottery system which would generate between \$400 and \$500 million annually to pay for such programs. While the legislature has failed to pass lottery bills in the past, pressures are being exerted to have them do so this year. The Governor has projected a shortfall in the State budget. However, cuts will come from areas other than K-12.

Regarding the State accountability system which is in place, the Governor has proposed to provide teachers and students with tools to help them to meet the high State performance standards.

Governor Easley has proposed a 3% increase for the first year of the biennium budget, which includes \$72 million to increase teacher salaries by 2%. Almost \$50 million would be set aside to reduce class size in elementary schools and \$5 million would be used to recruit teachers.

In mid-February, the State Board of Education decided to postpone the administration of the new high school exit exam for two years, which is now scheduled to begin with the class of 2005. Passage of the exam will be a prerequisite to receiving a regular high school diploma. Additional field testing will begin on some test items this Spring. Numerous other states (including Alaska which has a highly rated state assessment system) have also postponed administration of high stakes testing. On the other hand, the State will proceed on its anti-social promotion initiative. This year, fifth graders will have to pass end-of-course tests to be promoted. Next year, third- and eighth-grade students will do likewise.

Even though the State has a projected \$800 million shortfall, the Governor is not likely to cut back in midyear K-12 funding. Like many southern states, North Carolina relies heavily on sales tax revenues which feel the impact of economic downturns rather quickly.

Under a ten-year contract, Informatica is being used to transmit data from schools to a centralized

decision-making database, referred to as the North Carolina Window of Information for Students Education (NCWISE). Eventually, the State data warehouse will be accessible by authorized school districts and State users. The school district component builds on the student information system developed by Administrative Assistants Ltd. Users access the application through the Internet using a “thin client” installed on their desktop. During the pilot phase, 1,500 users in three districts located at 22 sites are involved in certification. If the pilot is successful, Phase 2 will cover the remainder of the schools in the State over three years.

NCWISE OWL is the State’s website which has several descriptive databases including Grolier’s New Book of Knowledge for Middle School Students, and Grolier’s Multimedia Encyclopedia for Middle and High School Students. Another includes three Gale databases, including DISC Discovering Authors which includes almost 400 of the most studied authors in middle and high school curriculum, Gale custom newspaper databases, and Gale’s InfoTrack periodical database. The teacher area on NCWISE OWL supplements the curriculum and online courses to help teachers meet State technology requirements. The media and technology area focuses on State guidelines for media and technology programs. Parents also have an area on the website which is designed to help them work with their child’s homework and Internet searching. NC WISE OWL has been funded with TLC administrative set-aside dollars and \$1.5 million in State funds annually. The contact is Frances Bradburn, Director of Instructional Technology, 919/715-1530.

Ohio Update – April 2001

Governor Taft has proposed a 2% increase in pre-K-12 for FY 2000 to approximately \$7.3 billion. Approximately \$7 million will be added to a new fund totaling \$8.5 million to provide development and support for the new academic standards across major subjects. An additional \$13 million would be provided for intervention strategies including teacher training and itinerant literacy teachers to work with at-risk students in reading and writing. An 80% increase has been proposed for long-term school construction and repairs totaling \$84 million in 2002.

The Cincinnati School Board requested an audit of its special education programs. Conducted by Indiana University, the audit found that almost three-quarters of the district's special education students do not take the Ohio proficiency test. Students have to pass ninth grade exit exams in order to receive a high school diploma. The audit also indicated that special education within the district was a separate system and has to be integrated into overall district operations.

The Ohio SEA is designing a database which eventually will track the almost two million students across the State and will include data on each student's attendance, reading proficiency level and other information. The Statewide Student Identifier System will also be used to identify which students need interventions and remediation. The estimated cost of the system will be \$1.5 million. The State plans to contract with a third party who will assign student identification numbers in lieu of names and social security numbers in order to overcome privacy issues. In the early 1970s, such a system whose initials were also SSIS, was developed in Maryland to track special education students and the services which were provided to them by multiple State agencies. In order to get around privacy issues, the State assigned students soundex numbers, a system which was supposed to have been foolproof. However, legal problems arose when soundex numbers were found to include information of the wrong students.

Oklahoma Update – April 2001

Governor Keating has proposed a 5% increase in K-12 funding to slightly over \$2 billion next year. In addition to incentives to reward schools that reduce administrative costs and improve student performance, the budget would add \$14 million to the textbook budget. Approximately \$5 million would be allocated for state testing of students at all grade levels. About \$2 million would be available to schools who wish to adopt the core knowledge program or to participate in advanced placement courses.

The Governor has proposed a \$100 million initiative consisting of several components. One block grant totaling \$15 million would be provided on a one to one matching basis to school districts that reallocate dollars from administrative and overhead items to classroom instruction. This approach is similar to one instituted in Michigan during the 1970s (under the leadership of Dr. John Porter), which was referred to as a profit sharing/cost saving incentive program. Under a second block grant, about \$12 million would be awarded to districts whose students achieve high levels of performance. Another \$53 million would be allocated to districts as improvement grants whose funds could be used for a variety of purposes, including teacher incentives, technology and other activities designed to increase student performance. Another \$14 million would be allocated to districts to purchase textbooks and \$6 million to expand special needs programs.

While no funds have been earmarked by the legislature for technology, there has been, over the last few years, a proposed \$15-\$30 million earmark to be paid for through oil and gas revenues. However, since these revenues have been down, the legislature has not passed such legislation.

The State has received \$5.5 million in Technology Literacy Challenge Funds. Grants between \$75,000 and \$150,000 will be provided to districts at least 50% of whose schools are poverty. Each school can receive only one grant over five years. Over three years, Oklahoma has received approximately \$90 million in E-Rate discounts and an increasing portion of the refunds are being used for professional development. About 97% of the districts in the State applied for E-Rate discounts.

The SEA has partnered with Microsoft, Dell, and Intel to create a State network for online reporting, as well as hosting online curriculum, the first Internet school in Oklahoma (Vision); \$400,000 has been spent on developing an online math curriculum. The legislature appropriated an additional \$500,000 last year for network implementation through the State's ISP OneNet. Nine schools are testing the system in the fourth and ninth grade levels.

Pennsylvania Update – April 2001

Governor Tom Ridge has proposed providing \$24 million in new funds for grants of up to \$500 each to parents of low-achieving third, fourth, and fifth grade students to pay for private tutoring services. About \$50 million would be used to make up for a 50% tax credit for businesses who donate money to nonprofit groups for student scholarships and other education services. Another \$35 million would be provided to about 30 districts who have received less revenue than in the past because of declining wealth; \$2 million would be allocated to set up independent schools which are still part of a district. Overall, the proposed budget for next year would represent a 3% increase to \$6.4 billion, with a 10% increase in special education funding to \$861 million; the largest single year increase in over a decade. The School Performance Incentive Program would increase by 10% to \$38 million.

The State Board of Education has abolished regulations which required low class size for students with certain disabilities; rather, the new mandate would only recommend small class sizes. IDEA does not require class size limits, however the school districts in the state must still meet the procedural safeguards in IDEA; otherwise if it does not comply, it will lose several hundred million dollars in IDEA funding. The 1975 PL 94-142 (now IDEA) was built around a Pennsylvania court ruling in the 1970s referred to as the Parc case; a similar case in Massachusetts recently also relaxed its data requirements which were more rigorous than IDEA.

In mid-March, the Chester/Upland school district governing board established by the State decided to have three private corporations operate district schools. The district has an enrollment of 7,500 students and has been designated as one of 11 districts in the State as critically low-performing and, therefore, requiring reconstitution. The State-appointed board of control selected Mosaica Education Inc., Learn Now, and Edison to operate the district schools. Privatization has been a major priority of Governor Ridge and his Secretary of Education, E.W. Hickok, who has been nominated as the third highest level official within the U.S. Department of Education.

The State has allocated approximately \$50 million for this school year for the Learn to Link project and almost \$5 million for partnerships between universities and districts to collaborate on technology

projects. About \$6 million has been set aside for nonpublic schools which can be used to purchase technology and related services.

About \$5 million has been allocated to the digital school district initiative. Recently, the State selected the following districts as winners of the State's competition: Carlisle Area in Cumberland County; Quaker Valley in Allegheny County; and Spring Cove in Blair County. Spring Cove plans to set up community education centers which will use laptop computers and wireless technology for online courses. Quaker Valley will provide a network of notebook computers and e-books to all students in grades 3-12 who will have access to school resources via Internet. In Carlisle, 24-hour tutoring, customized lessons, and virtual courses for all community members will be provided. For more information go to www.l2l.org/digitalsd.

The William Goodling Institute for Research and Family Literacy has been established with a \$6 million endowment as one of many earmarked Federal projects funded at the end of the last Congressional session. The Institute's namesake, Bill Goodling, was chairman of the Education Committee (under various titles) in the House for almost 30 years and was generally considered the father of family literacy. It will be affiliated with Penn State University which also houses the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy with which the Goodling Institute will create curriculum and family literacy courses. It will also collaborate with the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, Kentucky in developing and evaluating programs to determine their effectiveness. For any vendor who is interested in developing or having new products which target family literacy or literacy generally, the Institute could be an important ally in any market rollout situation.

To replace Gene Hickok, Governor Ridge has appointed his policy director as acting Secretary of State. Mr. Zogby has been very instrumental in developing education technology policy for the State.

South Dakota Update – April 2001

Under the leadership of Governor Bill Janklow, who will leave office in approximately one year, the Digital Dakota Network is up and running. All public school computers are networked and up to 70% of computers can be online simultaneously, approximately 70,000 computers. In addition, numerous staff development efforts for teachers and administrators are underway and the SEA has licensed a number of online courses from firms such as Apex, and has worked with other companies such as Cisco in expanding Cisco Academies. The legislature created the Office of Education Technology this year with a budget of approximately \$500,000. Courses are being offered for student instruction and staff development through the video conferencing capability currently available to 220 locations. In addition, the SEA has entered into a contract with EdVision to provide Internet-based computer-adapted assessments. During the CCSSO meeting, officials estimated approximately 70,000 South Dakota students will be assessed online, including all Title I assessments this coming school year. The first reading test will average approximately 32 minutes to complete. The next assessment will focus on mathematics. Funding for the State network has come from a Star Schools Grant for \$3 million, a \$13 million gift from Qwest, and approximately \$10 million from the State legislature over the last two years. The new director of the Office of Technology is Tammy Bauck, 605/773-6118.

Governor Janklow, as a leading technology advocate, has proposed creating a \$2 million learning center at Northern State University and to make the Aberdeen campus a national center for distance education. Upper-level high school chemistry, physics, calculus, and other courses would be available via distance learning to K-12 districts, particularly small rural districts. Approximately \$1.3 million from the State's general fund would be earmarked for the project as would about \$.5 million from the Great Plains Education Foundation. NSU would contribute \$450,000. South Dakota is clearly the most "wired" state proportional to its population and quietly was the first to initiate online assessment of over 70,000 Title I students.

Texas Update – April 2001

Commissioner of Education, Jim Nelson, and new Governor, Rick Perry, recently proposed a one-year postponement of the mandate to end social promotion for students who enter the third grade in 2002 which would shelve the effective date by one year. Their arguments were based upon the administration of a newer, more rigorous TASS Skills 2 assessment and the fact that it would take more time for teachers to become familiar enough to teach to this upgraded TASS version. Shortly after they announced their proposal for the postponement, President Bush's spokesperson said the President was opposed to such an extension and their proposal was retracted. The Bush proposal for ESEA reauthorization requires extensive testing; such a postponement in his home state could undermine the Administration's national approach for such assessments and an end to social promotion.

The Dallas Independent School District will begin to integrate approximately 13,500 students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms beginning next Fall. This change in policy can be attributed to pressures by disability groups in the State or TEA which announced that DISD new policy would be in compliance. Since February 2000, DISD has been assigned a special monitor by the TEA to oversee its special education programs. The goal is to have 75% of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environments by next Fall.

Beginning in July, State special education funds can no longer be used to pay for special education services provided to students assigned to private schools. Rather, the districts will be encouraged to use Federal IDEA funds to cover such costs.

Virginia Update – April 2001

In December, the Virginia Department of Education announced the three consortia to be involved in the initial demonstration phase of the State's \$114 million initiative to provide online assessments and remedial programs aligned to the Standards of Learning. It also announced the nine school districts participating in the demonstration. Northern Virginia school districts, which have generally been in opposition to the SOL, are not included among the demonstration sites. Each vendor will demonstrate their testing system at three of the nine schools and will be eligible for a one-year contract extension as the State moves toward full implementation of the initiative. By 2003, every high school classroom will be connected to an Internet-ready LAN which will provide access at a ratio of one computer for every five students. All Virginia teachers will have access to an online database of software and websites evaluated by teachers for their usefulness in teaching the SOL. All of the applications must execute on both Macintosh and Windows platforms. The successful vendors were BTG, which also includes CTB/McGraw Hill; NCS Pearson Inc.; and Vantage Learning, which includes Harcourt Education Measurement.

Over the two year biennium approximately \$6 million has been allocated to the SEA to create five work groups. One of the groups is evaluating software and providing evaluative information to districts based upon evaluations conducted by districts and national groups, including the SREB. Another group is coming up with ways to communicate the experience in Virginia to other states who would be interested in replicating it.

While 11 groups responded to the RFP, three were selected and during the demonstration phase will receive approximately \$1 million each to pilot test their respective programs in three sites each. Overall responsibility for this project is within the office of the Secretary of Education.

Assistant State Superintendent for Technology Lan Neugent, indicated one of the biggest initiatives in the State is the privatization of LAN and WAN operated by school districts. The rationale for outsourcing these functions is that overall it is cheaper to keep such systems, including software applications, "refreshed" rather than purchasing them. Most of the school district purchases of

infrastructure have been through local bond issues and E-Rate.

The Governor is proposing a 1.5% increase in K-12 funding which would include an additional \$6 million to be used to help turn around low-performing schools. An additional \$1.4 million would be allocated at the State level to implement the State SOL online assessment and remedial program noted above.

West Virginia Update – April 2001

The SEA has released its “School Technology Planning Guide” which is designed to help districts and schools to develop plans which take into account Federal, State, and local policies and regulations. The results will be used to update plans required by applicants for E-Rate and Title III Federal funding.

The Reinventing Education Project, a partnership with IBM, includes juried lesson plans that are available via the Internet and the electronic curriculum environment. Using a PT³ grant, this portal now provides preservice education and develops best practices for technology integration into high school instruction. In addition to the continuation of its basic skills computer education K-6 program and SUCCESS Technology Initiative in grades 7-12, the State has worked with Cisco in establishing over 30 Cisco academies. Contact is Brenda Williams, 304/558-7880.

The SEA has begun implementation of its alternative assessment program for special education students. Over 600 teachers of students with disabilities will be trained to administer and score the alternative assessments. Six days of training for each teachers have been scheduled throughout the year. The West Virginia Alternative Assessment will include 11 of the objectives from the general education curriculum for all students. Performance on these 11 skills will be measured using functional age-appropriate instructional activities. The SEA will be conducting an evaluation of the new assessment process. For more information contact Mary Pat Farrell at 304/558-2696.

Governor Wise has proposed a 2% increase in K-12 spending for next year to about \$1.5 billion. Approximately \$12 million will be allocated to “promise scholarships” in which high-achieving students could receive scholarships to enter college. In addition, his budget calls for the creation of a Statewide council which would assist college preparation programs and activities throughout the State and make recommendations. Teachers would receive \$1,000 pay increases effective next year. In addition, \$750,000 would be allocated for the creation of a character education program.

Wisconsin Update – April 2001

The Wisconsin Technology Survey for Spring 2000 results have been released. Respondents were district technology coordinators. Some of the highlights of the survey include:

- 73% of classrooms have one or more computers connected to the Internet, representing a 12% increase over the previous year;
- half of all districts have filters on all computers while almost 20% have filters on some computers;
- the number of students per multimedia computer is approximately six;
- the greatest needs for technical assistance were professional development (74%), integrating standards (68%), technology support (43%).

The survey also asks for amounts of funding budgeted for last school year and plans for this School year 2000-01 in specific areas. Line items in which expenditures will likely increase are:

- technical support and maintenance (\$19-\$20 million);
- IST costs (\$1.9-\$2.0 million);
- telecommunication charges excluding E-Rate or teach Wisconsin subsidies (\$22-\$22.5 million).

Small declines are expected in instructional software (from \$12-\$11 million), administrative software (from \$6.2 to \$5.7 million), and professional development (from \$7.6 to \$9.2 million). Overall planned expenditures for 2000-01 are estimated to be \$141 million down from \$185 million in 1999-2000.

The WISC consortia provides Internet services to most districts in the State and provides filtering as part of its service. Hence, the State is not likely to have any State licenses for Internet filtering.

Governor McCallum has proposed a 3.5% increase for the first year of the biennium budget to \$7.4 billion and, for the second year, to \$7.6 billion. The budget calls for modifying the State aid formula for special education which would shift more of the cost of educating students from the school district level to the State. Hence, State special education spending would increase from \$319 million

to \$329 million during the first year. Funding for a class size reduction program in high poverty schools would also be increased from \$58 million to \$65 million and State funds for development of State assessments and administration of such instruments would increase from \$6 million to \$11 million.