
Congressional Fly In Highlights June 12-13

SIIA sponsored its “Fly In” on June 12-13 at which time members and other technology firms demonstrated education technology programs, models, and applications. In attendance were several hundred vendors, association staff, and Congressional staff persons. On June 13, teams of SIIA members met with key representatives and staff to discuss issues of concern to SIIA members and other issues of concern to TechMIS subscribers. Below are highlights of the group session of a team headed by Jenny House from Classroom Connect, (which included Charles Blaschke), Dick Fairly representing NetSchools, LuAnne Stewart of Plato Learning, and Steve Schwab from Power Up.

The most critical meeting was conducted mid-day for 40 minutes with John Boehner (R - Ohio), Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee. Only Charles Blaschke and Jenny House attended this session because the others had flights to catch or other commitments. The combined SIIA and TURNKEY agendas were covered with Jenny House expressing gratitude to the Chairman for: (1) his general support of technology; (2) that SIIA supported grants consolidation of smaller technology programs; and (3) that SIIA wanted the proposed legislation that would strongly encourage districts to use these funds for technology rather than transferring 50% in HR 1 for other ESEA purposes. Concern was expressed over two issues:

- (a) the possibility of states and districts allocating such technology funds to special education thereby reducing the amount of state funding for special education to which the Chairman’s staff responded that current legislation does

not allow such reallocation; however, when current flexibility was described in terms of what districts can do (especially in Title I schoolwide programs), they accepted the fact that some of these funds could be so used; and

(b) that states could “reappropriate” the Federal technology funds and reduce state funds currently earmarked for technology, as is happening in about five states now.

On this issue the Chairman was reminded that his predecessor, Chairman Goodling, was able to get a clause into IDEA 1997 which would allow states to reduce by only a small percentage state funds when Federal IDEA funds exceeded \$4 billion, which are currently at \$7.4 billion. The Chairman asked his staff to note the point and “check it out.”

The group’s support for accountability was made clear citing references to TURNKEY about its leadership in the accountability movement during the 1970s as recognized by Phi Delta Kappan. However, a number of probable unintended consequences were noted including: (a) if the NAEP were used to verify or confirm Title I students’ results on state-selected norm-referenced tests, students in almost 48 states could be high on one or low on the other because of the inverse correlation of the two tests. To this point, the Chairman was commended for allowing states the flexibility to select any “nationally-recognized test” -- in lieu of a mandated NAEP -- to “confirm” results. He was asked to encourage the Senate to adopt the House language. The Chairman appeared to be pleased.

Another unintended consequence in the Bush Blueprint related to the use of Federal funds to purchase technology solutions that have been “proven effective” in improving student achievement in math and reading. It was pointed out that the Senate version expands the use of technology as a means of developing 21st century technology literacy skills as a goal. The Chairman noted agreement with the concern and asked staff to check out the Senate provision.

As with a previous meeting with Congressman Wu (D-Oregon), we mentioned the possibility of Section 508 technology accessibility standards becoming effective not only for Federal agencies on June 25, but also (at a subsequent date) with state departments of education and school districts if USED issues regulations related to the 1998 Tech Act amendments (see December 2000 Washington Update). These amendments clearly state that any state or district receiving Tech Act grant funds must be compliant with Section 508. The upheaval that this would create on a short notice among districts and state departments of education, and particularly on technology publishers and education “portals,” or firms which provide students access to other websites would be great. The Chairman appeared to be somewhat surprised about Section 508 and after it was explained, he very quickly saw the potential impact. As with Congressman Wu, he asked his staff to check out the status of USED regulations and what is likely to happen.

If the Tech Act is not reauthorized during this session and hence receives no funding, then the Section 508 technology accessibility standards amendment would be null and void and USED regulations could not be released. However, the existing Section 504 of the ADA and IDEA requirements for “reasonable accommodations” would still apply. Chairman Boehner in the past has opposed the Tech Act. In the meantime, Section 508 became effective on June 25 for all Federal purchases of multimedia and related technology-based products.

One item on the SIIA agenda was concern over the proposal included in the Bush Blueprint which would create a national clearinghouse on technology “best practices” and select which ones should be included for dissemination. We mentioned the problems with the California Software Clearinghouse initiative which not only identifies “exemplary software” but also evaluates such software for which results are disseminated. I mentioned the bad experience resulting from the 1997 Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRSD) Act which listed 17 models, many of which were

later found out to have very limited data supporting the basis for their selection. The Chairman and staff responded that they were aware of those problems.

In response to the question, “are there any other issues affecting technology about which we may be unaware,” we responded with the need to do away with “advanced funding” which creates funding uncertainties in most states and, in a limited number of states (e.g., North Carolina), results in late opening of Title I programs because the bulk of Title I funds will not be available until October or November for this coming school year. We urged him to support Senator Domenici’s proposed budget revisions which would in effect do away with “advanced funding.” Both of the aides “nodded” suggesting that they would remind the Chairman to do whatever he can do to influence the appropriators to consider seriously abolishing “advanced funding.”

In closing, Chairman Boehner volunteered that while today (June 13) was by far the hottest and most sultry day of the year in Washington, that there would likely be much hotter days surrounding the House-Senate “conference” to reconcile the two versions of ESEA reauthorization and even hotter days during the appropriation process.

Additional meetings were held with Congressmen Wu (D - Oregon) and Buck McKeon (R - CA). Wu has been a sponsor of a proposal which has withdrawn (from the block grant) the PT³ private industry/education institution partnership to provide technology teacher training. The Congressman was not aware of the precedent-setting court case in Oregon which will result in all special education students -- as well as other computer-using students -- being able to take the state writing assessment on line. We also discussed Section 508 with him which piqued his interest as in a previous life he was a “high tech” lawyer. We strongly urged him and/or his staff to check with the Department of Education to determine the status of the regulations which, if published, could require

state education agencies and school districts to be compliant under the Section 508 accessibility standards for multimedia and online products.

Both of us offered to assist the Chairman's staff as well as Congressman Wu's staff by providing supporting data justifying our recommendations on the above issues.

Senate Passes Distance Education Copyright Reform Which the House is Likely to Pass Intact

As the result of several weeks of negotiations between groups representing content providers and those representing users -- such as libraries, school districts, etc. -- a new copyright law has been passed by the Senate which is designed to reform current copyright legislation and resolve "fair use" issues confronting both content owners and users. Described in the April TechMIS Washington Update, the Technology Education and Copyright Harmonization Act (TEACH) of 2001 (S.487) was passed by the Senate on June 7. The Bill, co-sponsored by then Judiciary Chairman Orrin Hatch (R - UT) and Ranking member Patrick Leahy (D - VT), would allow educators to use the same materials in distance learning via the Internet that they use in "face to face" classroom instruction. The TEACH Act eliminates the current exemption requirements of a physical classroom and expands the categories of works covered, but has specific limits on the expanded "fair use." TEACH would:

- extend the exemption to temporary copies which are made while transmitting materials over the Internet;
- allow distance learning educators to show limited portions of literary, musical and audiovisual works and sound recordings;
- require providers of distance learning to use technological safeguards to ensure that information is disseminated only to students intended to receive it;

- hold distance educators not liable for copies made by other parties beyond their control.

The Patent and Trademark Office is also directed to conduct a study on the state of technology protection systems that are being proposed to prevent infringement of distance learning.

The name of the bill was also changed through a technical amendment which provides it as a “free standing measure.” This allows the House to consider it “intact” which is strongly urged by the parties who negotiated the final settlement. On the other hand, the Senate version could be attached to the FY 2002 Appropriation Bill and become law through that process. Even with the clarification in the new bill, there will undoubtedly be technology issues that will have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis or through guidelines which are likely to be published by the U.S. Copyright Office. For more information about S.487 go to www.senate.gov/~judiciary/.

USED Grant/Funding News

Many of the Washington Update items related to funding focus upon policy changes and funding levels in formula programs which are used to purchase technology. This item addresses a number of USED grants and recent funding announcements which could be of interest to many TechMIS subscribers.

New \$50 million Grant Program to Enhance Teaching of American History

Among the \$400 million “pork barrel” projects funded last December was a new \$50 million program, sponsored by Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), which is designed to improve teaching of American History. A notice appeared in the Federal Register on May 23 with applications due July 23. The estimated number of awards are between 75

and 125 with the maximum grant being \$1 million for 36 months. Eligible applicants are LEAs working with university/colleges, nonprofit history or humanity organizations, or libraries and museums. Projects that are funded should reflect the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership. Project activities should enable teachers to develop further expertise in American History content, teaching strategies, use of technology, and other essential elements of teaching to higher standards.

Discussions with staff who formulated the grant with Senator Byrd suggest the following: (a) the successful LEAs can be from across the country, not just from West Virginia; (b) the use of online services or the Internet to deliver or enhance staff development for history teachers would be favorably received; (c) applicants that have schools where significant portions of enrollments are not passing state history assessments would receive priority attention.

Firms interested in participating in these grants should consider this a one-time opportunity, because very few potential applicants are aware of this new grant program and only a limited number of applicants (probably less than 300), are likely to apply.

21 Districts to Receive New Magnet School Funding

Twenty-one districts out of an expected 60 are now receiving \$36 million under the Magnet School Assistance Program with the remaining LEAs to receive approximately \$100 million over the next few months. While opportunities for TechMIS vendors in the past have been limited to those magnet schools with “high tech” themes, a new thrust in magnet schools to offer parents a choice of public schools is one of the highest priorities in Title I under the Bush blueprint. Hence, firms that have technology-based administrative and/or instructional applications which can be used to facilitate parent decision-making in selecting schools and then, providing effective instruction in such programs, have an opportunity to gather feedback information on the use of their

applications for use as reference sites. Approximately \$1.3 billion of Title I funding during the 2002-03 school year will be set aside to facilitate parent choice of sending their students who are in low-performing schools to either public school-based tutoring and related instructional programs or to private tutors. In fact, one of the allowable activities under this program is services or products which “encourage greater parental decision-making and involvement and reduce, eliminate, or prevent minority group isolation in participating schools.” Of the 21 Magnet School recipients, those receiving funding for the first time are Hot Springs, Arkansas; Rapides Parish, Louisiana; Lansing, Michigan; Berkeley County, South Carolina; and Harrison County, Mississippi. For a list of the 21 districts go to the ed.gov web site for the press release of June 12 or contact Melinda Malico, 202/401-1008.

Under 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant Program, 308 School Districts to Receive \$206 Million in New Grants

In an attempt to make up for a serious backlog of grants yet to be awarded, on June 15 USED announced its second round of funding for FY 2001 with more than 300 school districts receiving over \$200 million in new grants primarily for after-school enrichment and academic programs. Since 1998, slightly over 1,500 districts operating 6,800 centers serving 1.2 million children and 400,000 adults, have been funded. As stated in the June 15 Press Release, 95% of projects were designed to improve reading skills and 90% to improve math skills.

The first round of funding of FY 2001 grants occurred in January when the Clinton Administration decided to fund highly-rated proposals, submitted in May 2000, which were not funded due to the lack of funds. A January 2001 Press Release for these grants included for the first time the winning district, amount of funds, contact person, and phone number. The new listing also includes this information.

Those TechMIS subscribers who plan to target Title I -- which has received significant funding increases for this coming year as described in the enclosed Special Report -- should review the list of recent 21st Century Community Learning Center grantees as these new grants offer another potential funding source for certain types of basic skills and enrichment programs which are also likely to be used in district Title I program. For a list of the 308 grantees, funding amount, program context, and brief project descriptions, go to www.ed.gov/21stcclc/.

Net Day Releases Findings of a Recent Survey on Internet Use by Teachers

In May, Net Day released the findings of a survey of 600 teachers in both public and nonpublic schools regarding the extent to which they are currently using the Internet and how it is being used. The survey was conducted by the bipartisan Lake Snell Perry & Associates and the Tarrance Group in January-February 2001. Some general findings are:

- about 90% feel comfortable with using computers and the Internet and over 80% believe the Internet has improved the quality of instruction;
- about two-thirds of the teachers agree that the Internet is not well integrated into their classrooms and has not changed the way they teach;
- 60% of teachers with school Internet access spend less than 30 minutes a day using it, largely because almost 75% of the teachers say they do not feel any pressure to use Internet in their classroom instruction or curriculum;
- almost 80% of the teachers report that the greatest obstacle to their use of Internet for instruction is the lack of time.

Some of the findings are interesting as compared to similar surveys of teacher use of the Internet conducted by Dr. Hank Becker and the TURNKEY Survey of Technology Use in Special Education, (both of which were conducted in the 1997-98 time frame). QED also conducted a survey of teacher use of the Internet in 2000. The QED results regarding the amount of Internet use by teachers are very similar to the Net Day findings. Becker found that the type of teacher least likely to use the Internet was math teachers, while Net Day, three years later, found that the least likely type of teacher to use the Internet was English teachers, closely followed by math teachers. History teachers are much more likely to spend more time using the Internet for research and finding resources than are math and English teachers. The Becker survey found that only 16% of teachers used Internet to communicate with teachers from other schools as often as five times a year, while the Net Day survey found almost 60% of teachers use Internet for communicating with other teachers (always, very often, or somewhat often), which suggests a significant increase in Internet use for teacher communication with other teachers in the past three years. While Becker's earlier study found that almost 68% of teachers at that time used Internet to "find resources for use in their lessons," the percentage according to the Net Day findings has increased to almost 80%, which is a major use of Internet. The QED and Net Day findings suggest that approximately 25%-30% of the teachers use Internet to communicate with parents. One interesting Net Day finding is that teachers in nonpublic schools use the Internet more and are more likely to include it in class projects and updated lesson plans than are teachers in public schools.

In contrast to QED, Becker, and Net Day findings relating to samples of "all teachers," TURNKEY's 1997 survey of Technology Use in Special Education found that 2-3 times more special education teachers were using the Internet at that time compared to teachers generally and those who use the Internet use it for "directed student research projects," "for professional development," and to "download software." It is not surprising that special education teachers are more likely to have been among the early users of Internet

because during the 1980s many had access to and used SpecialNet, which was an online service operated by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. Interestingly, the Net Day survey found that teachers who feel pressure to use the Internet say it comes primarily from district administrators (28%) and only 1% feel pressures from associations or unions. In the special education market niche, early pressures from national and state associations along with subsidized funding, were primarily responsible for the current high use of Internet and special education.

Preliminary results of the current TURNKEY survey of Technology Use in Special Education will be available to early subscribers to the survey by the end of June to assist them in planning for the next large purchasing cycle which will begin in October-November.

End-of-Course Exams Replacing Norm-Referenced Standardized Tests in Rapidly Increasing Numbers of States

The number of states which are adopting “end-of-course exams,” to replace or to be used in conjunction with state exit exams in assessing student performance, is increasing dramatically; and these end-of-course exams are increasingly given more weight as high stakes tests in determining promotion and awarding regular high school diplomas. Largely as the result of the Southern Regional Education Board which has been a leading advocate of end-of-course exams, many Southeastern states -- including Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia - - have already adopted such exams. Such tests are given greater weight in overall student performance for graduation in New York, Virginia, and Oklahoma. As reported in Education Week (June 13), Cornell University recently conducted a study which found that 8th graders in New York and North Carolina out-performed students in other states on the NAEP in reading, math, and science. Evaluations conducted by SREB found that

North Carolina students -- particularly minority students -- out-performed similar students in states without end-of-year courses. Current Chairman of the Governing Board of the NAEP is Mark Musik who is also the CEO of SREB.

In mid-June, the North Carolina State Board of Education voted to eliminate the following tests: the Iowa Test of Basic Skills; the State Open-Ended Assessments which is a written response test aligned with state standards; and the High School Comprehension Test in Reading and Math. Concurrently in California the state senate passed legislation which would expand the number and types of end-of-course exams which are tied to the State's academic standards while diminishing the role of the SAT 9. Several studies have found that the SAT 9 is not highly correlated with the California State content standards.

Under the Bush proposal, which is reflected partially in both the House and Senate ESEA versions, all students in grades 3-8 would be tested in reading and math with a sample of students taking the NAEP to "confirm results" (in the Senate bill) or an alternative nationally recognized test for confirmation (in the House bill). As noted in previous TechMIS reports, numerous studies have found very little correlation between student results on national norm-referenced tests and the NAEP. To the extent that the apparent, much closer correlation between end-of-course exams in North Carolina and New York with the NAEP allowed states to use end-of-course exams rather than other types of state assessments, then one might conclude that student success on the NAEP is likely to increase in the future. However, within this context the NAEP Governing Board, as well as critics of the current NAEP administration, have argued the need for a serious overhaul of the NAEP instruments and administration. The NAEP is very likely to undergo significant changes in the immediate future including the following.

- Including scores of students with disabilities or limited-English-proficiency in the overall test results; currently such students' scores have been not included because the nature of the accommodation, (e.g., extended test taking time) would affect the validity of the results.
- Adding new test items in reading and math to allow the proposed annual testing of third through eighth graders.
- Combining the national and state samples for NAEP, thereby reducing the need to test some students two times a year.

With the growth of online assessment, increased use of technology in test taking will also likely be allowed.

To the extent end-of-course exams do, in fact, reflect state content standards in the various assessment domains, then the current dilemma for software and other publishers in many states where the state assessments are not aligned closely with standards will diminish --- namely, whether to design instructional materials and lessons which are correlated to the state standards or to the state assessment instrument.

Achieve and College Board to Develop and Sell Middle School Math Instructional Materials and Imbedded Assessments

Created five years ago by the National Governor's Association, Achieve and College Board are planning to design, develop, and sell a middle school mathematics package which will include: (a) standards and correlated benchmark assessments for monitoring student progress; (b) a guide and instructional materials; and (c) professional development for implementation. Fourteen states have joined the Mathematics Achievement Partnership under the leadership of John Engler of Michigan; \$6 million will be raised for development and field testing with products to be available in Fall 2003. The states participating in the project and which will be the first to receive the package include Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire,

North Carolina, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, California, Georgia, Ohio, and Oregon. These states which represent about 40% of the national middle school enrollment. Governor Engler has, as reported in Education Week (May 30), stated that the new program would be used as end-of-course tests in sixth and seventh grades and that the Achieve 8th grade test would replace the current 8th grade math test as part of the Michigan Education Assessment of Progress (MEAP).

For College Board, this is their first entry into middle school activities. In the recent past the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) administered by College Board has come under criticism on the grounds that it is not closely aligned with most high school curricula and is culturally-biased. College Board will be selling the product which according to Robert Schwartz, President of Achieve, “for cost and not for profit.” However, College Board recently created a for-profit subsidiary which offers SAT preparation software to help middle school students prepare for college. The effort at College Board is headed by Peter Negroni, Vice President for Teaching and Learning, who prior to joining College Board was Superintendent of Schools in Springfield, Massachusetts for eleven years. It is not clear whether Achieve and College Board will be actually developing instructional materials that are aligned with the 8th grade and other benchmark assessments and the new math standards, or whether they will select components from existing publishers materials that are effective and are aligned with the to-be-developed standards and assessment.

New NCEO Report Can Provide Extremely Useful Guidance to Publishers of Administrative and Instructional Software for Special Education Programs

A new report by the National Center for Education Outcomes, University of Minnesota, includes the results of its recent survey which examined state Individualized Education Program (IEP) forms to determine the extent to which they include documentation of

standards and assessments for special education students. Of the 41 states with IEP forms, only five states specifically addressed education standards on their forms while 31 states addressed the general curriculum on the forms. IEP forms in 30 states listed three or more options for assessment participation, including standard participation in general state and district assessments, participation through “reasonable accommodation,” and alternative assessment participation.

The 1999 Federal regulations for IDEA state that the purpose of special education is “to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.” Although IDEA does not address standards-based IEPs directly, the emphasis on general curriculum is extremely strong as the curriculum is generally defined by state content standards. Only five states (Alaska, Colorado, New Jersey, North Dakota, Wyoming) addressed, on the required state IEP form, state and district standards. Hence, if a publisher’s instructional program is correlated to state standards in these states, then one can be generally assured that special education students could use its materials.

While 30 of 41 states listed three or more options for assessment alternatives, only eight states had IEP forms which required there be a statement of how a child who does not participate in state level assessments will be assessed. In eight states, alternative assessments are not listed as an option and, in two states, predetermined “accommodations” are not specified in the IEP. The report also includes, for each of the 41 states, what types of mention is made in the IEP form regarding standards assessment. This can be extremely useful in deciding what states to target if a publisher has materials that are correlated or aligned with current state standards and/or assessment domains. To the extent a publisher has aligned lessons and materials to alternative assessments, then it can become even more competitive under the current law since July 2000 and even more so under the Bush Blueprint (e.g., not more than 5% of students can be exempted from

grade 3-8 annual testing). Firms with potential solutions to assessment problems for special education students will be very competitive regardless of the cost as the result of existing over-riding testing mandates. For a copy of the report go to <http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Synthesis/38.html>.

Southern Regional Education Board Heads a Coalition of Twelve Southern States to Improve Algebra Instruction and Assessments at the High School Level

Similar to the Achieve Initiative, SREB -- which heads a coalition of twelve of the sixteen SREB member states -- requested proposals for the 12-state consortia from firms which develop and sell tests and groups that provide professional development to implement the initiative. As reported in Education Week (June 20), SREB has identified commonalities among algebra standards across the states and has built an Algebra 1 test item bank. SREB will be responsible for creation of an end-of-course test which will measure whether a student has mastered algebra. The data bank of algebra test items will be provided to teachers to assemble their own tests. The professional development effort under the direction of SREB will prepare not only teachers but also administrators. States participating in the SREB initiative include Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Georgia, Maryland, and North Carolina. The latter three states are also participating in the Achieve effort noted above. Officials representing both groups are reportedly considering these current efforts as being complimentary rather than competitive according to the Education Week.

New USED Report Concludes that Charter Schools Result in Changes in Public Schools To Become More Competitive

During his speech before the Manhattan Institute in New York on June 14, Secretary Paige announced the findings of a four-year evaluation initiated during the Clinton Administration which generally concludes that: (a) the existence of Charter Schools provides competition for public schools who are forced to improve their educational programs; and (b) Charter Schools are more likely to hold their staff and students accountable to high standards than regular public schools. Mr. Paige noted that it is particularly promising for students in low-performing schools. During his stay as Superintendent in Houston Independent School District, Dr. Paige established almost 30 Charter Schools/public school choice options for students in schools designated as low performing based upon TAAS results.

Some of the findings reported by RPT International, which conducted the evaluation through site visits to 49 schools in five states, found:

- many districts added extra programs or services at regular schools, such as gifted education or all-day kindergarten, to attract or keep students;
- after Charter Schools were established, regular schools were more likely to improve communications with parents;
- almost half of the districts reported losing state and/or Federal funds as students transferred to Charter Schools;
- most districts losing funds to Charter Schools became “more customer service oriented.”

Previous studies of the impact of Charter Schools on regular public schools in the same districts have been mixed. For example, a study several years ago in Michigan found that Charter Schools would not adopt innovative approaches, but rather, like the regular public schools, used similar curriculum and teacher methods designed to boost student performance on the Michigan Assessment of Education progress. AFT critics of the

current studies questioned the evidence that districts spent more time and money to improve teaching. On the other hand, as reported in Education Week (June 20), groups supporting choice -- such as the Center for Education Reform -- felt that the findings would result in even greater support for the Administration's proposals for increased school choice, especially in the 14 states which do not have Charter School legislation currently.

Education Leaders Council Expands Membership Focusing on Education Reform Which Could Have Major Political Impact

The Education Leaders Council is expanding its initiative to include "practicing reformers" and membership beyond the state superintendents. What began as an ultraconservative group of state superintendents (some of whom dropped their membership from the Council of Chief State School Officers), has now expanded its governing board to include Bill Goodling, former chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee and has partnered with the Center for Education Reform, which includes grass roots activists and private sector officials who are interested in promoting school choice and accountability. One of the founders of ELC, Lisa Graham Keegan, the former State Superintendent in Arizona, has been appointed as the new Executive Director. Another founder of the ELC, Eugene Hickok, former state superintendent in Pennsylvania has been appointed as the third highest official within USED. Hickok was instrumental in having his former state technology coordinator within the Pennsylvania Department of Education, John Bailey, appointed as Special Assistant to the Secretary for Technology in charge of the office previously directed by Dr. Linda Roberts. Rumors have been reported in the press recently that Secretary Rodney Paige may be going back to Texas after the passage of the reauthorization of ESEA is finalized, with a possible replacement being Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania. We will continue to monitor developments in this arena.