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### MEMORANDUM

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TechMIS Subscribers

**FROM:** Charles Blaschke

**SUBJECT:** Washington Update and State Profile Updates

This TechMIS mailing includes a number of Washington Update items in the context of the closing days of ESEA reauthorization, which is now in a House/Senate Conference Committee. An overall summary comparing the House and Senate versions prepared earlier this month by the Congressional Research Service, is attached to this memorandum (in pdf format). While efforts are underway in certain quarters to protect the interests of technology vendors and supporters, much more progress has yet to be made on several issues, including:

- discouraging districts from taking funds out of the education technology block grant and transferring a large portion (up to 30-50%) to other ESEA programs;
- the inclusion of a “maintenance of effort” clause to prevent states from decreasing state funded earmarks for technology by the amount of the likely increase in Federal funds under the block grant through a “reappropriation” by legislature, which is otherwise very likely in half the states;
- a large increase in Federal or state and local expenditures on testing (from \$400 million to \$1 billion), perhaps at the expense of purchases of technology products and services;

- lack of clarity in the assessment and accountability provisions which could result in wide variations in state-operated Title I and other programs that could create a need for greater product customization by technology vendors;

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- lack of clarity as to training and other services which can be used for contracts with for-profit organizations; and
- the possibility that, over time, a larger portion of IDEA Federal funds will be used as a “block grant,” thereby reducing the amount of technology purchases in local special education programs.

As the Conference Committee decides these and funding issues, we will be sending ESEA Alerts to TechMIS subscribers.

The Washington Update section includes:

- Highlights of a Senate Appropriation Subcommittee hearing on Federal support of technology and education in which some issues were adequately addressed, but one witness unnecessarily created confusion which restricted the time to address the more important issues;
- The Final Report on Education Technology by the CEO Forum which is on target, but the question is whether it will have an impact on this Administration’s policy?;
- Settlement by a U.S. District Court regarding the implementation of the CIPA filtering requirement for E-Rate, whose deadline will essentially be extended by one year for libraries; a similar lawsuit by school groups may still be filed;
- New proposed Federal and state laws which have the net effect of allowing more immigrants to enter community colleges paying residential tuition which, in combination with increases in Veteran’s education benefits, could create a significant increase in demand for remedial services at the college level;
- Large differences between House and Senate definitions of “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) in the ESEA reauthorization, which are likely to result in amending existing definitions and processes;
- Two new reports from the National Center for Education Statistics which provide a wealth of information for vendors of vocational education materials by identifying course offerings at the secondary and post-secondary level (i.e., market size);

- A new report by the National Center for Education Outcomes which describes state-by-state use of various procedures to implement assessment and accountability provisions in IDEA students that can be extremely useful to TechMIS subscribers who wish to target specific states;

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- Creation of a state-level working group to facilitate greater coordination and integration between special education and Title I programs which could result in greater “commingling” of funds and thereby increasing critical mass funding for purchasing high-ticket items;
- Recent passage by a House Subcommittee of key Web-based Education Commission recommendations which would allow students taking distance learning courses to qualify for Federal aid;
- Proposed policy changes in IDEA made by both conservative and liberal think tanks which are based upon a consensus of philosophies rather than upon empirical evidence;
- A Presidential Executive Order which suggests that the Department of Labor be more proactive in promoting the use of technology to deliver education and training programs, which could create opportunities in Job Corps; and
- The abolishment of the Federal School-To-Work program at the end of September due to sunset legislation, even though states will continue to implement allowable activities under new Federal and state funding.

The State Profile Updates address a number of issues including: (a) K-12 budgets for next year or the biennium; (b) funding increases -- or in some states decreases -- in earmarks for education technology; (c) efforts underway in certain states to continue school-to-work activities in programs using state funds or Federal funds; and (d) changes in state assessment and exit exam deadlines, among others.

As always, call me directly if you have any questions.