

**AASA Announces its Opposition to HR 1 - the ESEA Reauthorization Bill Which is Currently Progressing through the Conference Committee**

In addition to AASA's published position, recent discussions with officials in other national education associations, suggest their growing opposition although the particular provisions the associations oppose may be somewhat different.

In its November letter to Conference Committee Chairman John Boehner, AASA supports several provisions including consolidation, flexibility, and the transferability provisions, among others. However, it opposes several items currently decided or likely to be decided shortly. As stated, "Both the House and Senate versions wrest control over both evaluation of schools and accountability of professionals from the states and federalize those critical educational policies. Both the House and Senate bills also establish federal supremacy in setting teacher qualifications, and set qualifications that are simply beyond the ability of schools to meet by requiring certified teachers in every classroom in a time of a severe teacher shortage. Beyond overreaching federal control is the failure of the bill to improve the targeting of Title I and Title II funds to schools where poverty is concentrated. Finally, the Hagel/Harkin full funding for IDEA provision may not be included in the final conference report."

The letter asserts that there is a "disconnect" between the underlying premise that education is a state responsibility by "asserting Federal supremacy in the three most crucial areas of schooling: teacher qualification, evaluation, and accountability." Not only does HR. 1 reduce the targeting of funds to high poverty schools, it also does not provide the funds "needed to attract more qualified teachers and improved materials."

AASAs proposed solution to the stated flaws, which if met would result in their support of HR. 1, include:

- limiting Federal control over evaluation and accountability to Title I schools only or placing all public schools under the state evaluation and accountability system;
- the proposed Federal requirement that every teacher be fully certified should allow states to be responsible for certification in the context of their state's economic situations and ability to attract qualified teachers;
- targeting of Title I and Title II funds must ensure that schools with the greatest problems should receive adequate funding to raise student achievement; and
- full funding for IDEA must be included under a mandatory line item in the Federal education budget.

During its recent annual conference, officials from the Council of Great City Schools voiced their opposition to proposed provisions in HR. 1 which would result in less funding under the proposed block grants to urban districts, particularly the proposed Core Technology Block Grant formula for allocating funds to districts (which is biased against large urban districts). NSBA's growing opposition has been expressed in off-the-record comments during the Technology and Learning conference on November 8-10 in Atlanta. While opposition in additional quarters (such as the National Conference of State Legislatures) is growing, committee staff of key democratic Senators involved in the reauthorization, such as Senator Ted Kennedy, suggest that attempts to include recommendations from groups such as AASA would erode the remaining bipartisanship and put in jeopardy passage of a large increase in FY 2002 appropriation for education. As the White House has strongly hinted, it would veto the FY 2002 proposed budget increase unless most of the ESEA reauthorization which the Administration proposed is passed. If opposition grows stronger and bipartisanship efforts dissipate, then a compromise might be to pass the President's Reading First initiative as separate, stand-alone legislation, as happened several years ago for Even Start, and carry over the ESEA reauthorization negotiations to next year. One positive side of this scenario would be that

the technology block grant would not become effective this school year and thereby states and districts would be prevented from reallocating technology funds to other areas in which state budget cuts have occurred, as noted in the October TechMIS Special Report. For a copy of the AASA letter, go to [www.aasa.org](http://www.aasa.org).

### **Commission on Instructionally Supportive Assessments Recommends Nine Requirements that States Need to Follow in Developing and Selecting State Assessments as Increased State Assessments Likely Under New Federal Mandates**

The Commission on Instructionally Supportive Assessments, convened by five major education associations (AASA, NAESP, NASSP, NEA, and NMSA), has recommended that state policymakers follow nine requirements in guiding the development and/or selection of assessments which will meet the dual goals of: a) ensuring assessment results are used to improve instruction; and b) holding schools and districts accountable for improving student performance. The eleven-member Commission was chaired by Professor James Popham, Professor Emeritus, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, and included other recognized leaders in assessment standards and student instructional improvement, including Professor Eva Baker, Co-director of NCRESST and member of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing; and two members of the National Center on Education Outcomes, University of Minnesota, among others. Some of the requirements, if followed, could provide opportunities for publishers of instructional software and firms already in the testing business (or planning to enter it), among others. If the requirements are followed by all states (at least to some degree), the greatest benefits will be increased uniformity among state assessments and closer linkages between assessments and instructional programs to improve student performance.

As the report notes, if state policymakers who pass accountability legislation have in mind this dual outcome of assessing and improving student performance then a positive

impact will occur. “But, all too often, while state-administrated achievement tests measure performance, they have little value for instruction. This minimizes their usefulness in an accountability system that assumes information from tests will result in appropriate changes in instruction,” the report concludes.

Addressing many of the current problems associated with instructional/assessment systems, some of the nine key requirements include:

- to prioritize state content standards because, in many states, teachers do not have time to address a large number of content standards and states do not provide the kind of information to educators to improve instruction;
- to describe clearly high-priority content standards so that the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate competence are evident and that the standards and descriptions identify age- or grade-appropriate skills and knowledge that build from grade to grade; and
- to provide assessment results on a standard-by-standard basis for each student, school, and district, and that the results be provided to students, parents, educators, and the community in general.

A recent report cited by the Heritage Foundation in Education Daily (October 29), found that at least 34 states offer some kind of online database on schools and school districts in the form of “report cards.” High-level USED officials such as Dr. Eugene Hickok, Under Secretary of Education, has argued that web-based report cards ensure greater accountability, citing Pennsylvania, where until this year he was Secretary of Education, and Colorado, which the Heritage Foundation found to have one of the best report card systems in the country.

Several requirements could provide opportunities for software publishers, as well as firms specializing in assessments. One such requirement is that a state must provide educators with optional classroom assessment procedures that can measure student progress in meeting content standards not assessed by state tests because “educators need good assessment tools to monitor student achievement and rarely have the time and resources

to develop such tools.” A related requirement is that a state must monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that instructional attention is given to all content standards and subject areas, including those that are not assessed by state tests because “students benefit from a rich and deep curriculum and because some states could narrow curriculum coverage unduly otherwise.”

In another related requirement, the Commission recommends that a state must ensure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of state standards. Consequently, states must provide well-designed assessments appropriate for a broad range of students with a combination of alternative assessment measures available for students who need them, because “all students must be given appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the degree to which they have mastered the state content standards and Federal statutes require such opportunities be offered in particular ways.” To enforce the last requirement, states should develop guidelines for districts about how all students will participate in the assessments -- with or without accommodations -- and using, where necessary, an alternative assessment linked to state content standards. A recent report by the National Center on Education Outcomes (which provided two of the eleven Commission members), found that two years ago only three states reported that assessments taken by special education students were linked to state content standards; the number increased to fifteen last year.

The Commission also is critical of proposed Federal policies stating, “We do not believe the results of a single test should ever be used to make significant decisions that affect schools or students. The tests we recommend will, however, provide one important source of evidence for key instructional decision makers.” Another proposed requirement by the Commission is that states must allow test developers a minimum of three years to produce statewide tests that satisfy the standards for educational and psychological testing and similar test quality guidelines.

If states follow these guidelines to a moderate or higher level, then some demand could be created for the following types of products or services:

- mastery item assessments embedded in software content which can be quickly and easily aligned with state assessments and also used as alternative assessments;
- technology products which can easily facilitate the provision of reasonable accommodation for some students with disabilities, as well as those with limited English proficiency, including using computers to take such exams and online assessments;
- technology-based instructional programs containing modules aligned with core subject and content area standards that are similar across states and which can be expanded upon or reduced, depending upon the priority each state places upon such standards;
- instructional programs and materials which have a scope and sequence by age or grade level and are available in a block-by-block, year-to-year or grade-to-grade level hierarchy which can easily be aligned to each state's standards and assessments by level;
- products and services which will facilitate the creation of "instructionally supportive assessment systems" as proposed by the Commission, such as: (a) technology-based instructional programs which quickly adjust to reading levels of individual students based upon assessments; (b) diagnostic/prescriptive products; and (c) online assessment systems which provide immediate feedback for students and teachers.

The primary intended audience for this report and its recommended requirements are state legislators and other policymakers. As the five-association coalition stated, "Teachers, principals and district superintendents will readily embrace accountability measures, if they are tied to effective assessment systems designed and implemented to improve classroom instruction. Our hope is that policymakers will too."

The Commission also included a separate report, entitled "Illustrative Language for an RFP to Build Tests to Support Instruction and Accountability," which it suggests should

be used by state departments of education in developing RFPs for a variety of procurements related to development and implementation of each of the nine requirements. For example, in implementing the requirement to provide accommodations and alternative methods of assessment for students who need them, the suggested RFP language relates to "universally-designed assessments." The Commission states that such language will not eliminate the need for reasonable accommodations (e.g., having a teacher read the test questions to a blind student), but they can "significantly reduce the need for them."

As one reviews the recommended RFP language, it is clear that the Commission saw opportunities for individual groups as well as test manufacturers who have very specific knowledge and experience to conduct portions of an overall state assessment development effort. For a copy of the report and the suggested language for RFPs, go to [www.aasa.org/News\\_Room/2001/October/102301](http://www.aasa.org/News_Room/2001/October/102301).

### **National Education Goals Panel New Report Recommends Public School Improvement Should Follow Procedures and Practices Established in DoD State and Overseas Schools Which Are Effective in Reducing Achievement Gaps in Eighth Grade Reading and Writing**

The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) recently released a report of a study of 15 DoD schools within and outside the United States. This report found that on the 1998 NAEP reading and writing assessments for the eighth grade, an average of 36 percent of DoD students scored at the level of proficient or higher. The national average was less than 30%. Only Connecticut and Maine showed higher proficiency rates. On the Terra Nova tests administered to all DoD students in grades 3-11, only 7-8 percent score in the lowest quartile of the nation as a whole. The study, commissioned by the NEGP, was conducted by the Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University to identify practices and procedures which help DoD schools perform much higher than the

national average of public schools on a number of the NEGP goals, particularly Goal Three -- student achievement. Dr. James Guthrie, a member of the study team, served as a consultant to Secretary Paige when the Secretary was superintendent in Houston.

As important as the comparison between DoD students generally and the nation as a whole at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, achievement gaps among whites, African-Americans, and Hispanic students were significantly less than for the nation as a whole. For example, African-American and Hispanic students in DoD schools were performing in the first or second quartiles in the nation as a whole in eighth grade reading and writing. Based on NAEP average eighth grade writing scores, achievement gaps were much less than the nation as a whole. The gap between white and Hispanic students averaged about 11 scale points in DoD schools compared to 27 points for the nation as a whole. For white vs. black comparisons, the DoD's achievement gap was approximately 15 points compared to 26 points for the nation as a whole.

In an attempt to explain what practices and procedures could have contributed to this higher performance level, the study team reviewed student background and other records and found that, on the average, minority students account for 40 percent of DoD's school enrollment -- a ratio similar to New York State -- and about 50 percent of all students qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The transient rate for DoD schools is about 35 percent, similar to that of inner city schools. In some respects, there were significant differences. Single-parent households account for about six percent of all military families compared to a national rate of 27 percent, which could explain one of the findings related to effective practices (as noted below). In 1999, DoD schools spent about \$9,000 per pupil which is about \$1,500 higher than the national average. While DoD schools received no additional Federal funds from IDEA or Title I, they do, however, have to meet the mandates of IDEA and bear the additional costs.



The study did identify several procedures and practices which are more prevalent in DoD schools than in the nation's public schools. One important practice is strategic planning; DoD's 1995-2000 plan was built around the eight national education goals, particularly Goal 2 on accountability and organization structure. The study team described the management as "mission, money, measurement from the top, and methods from the bottom." Each school develops a school improvement plan that fits into a larger strategic plan.

Another important factor was systemic measurement in which curriculum standards are specified by grade level and subject area and every school receives detailed results from various assessments. Test results are analyzed in several ways, including performance by grade, level, gender, and race. Another factor was the "rich but various methods" that are used. While there is no mandated type of instruction, high-quality professional development and accountability provide incentives for teachers to develop high expectations for all students. Moreover, special education and lower achieving students receive instruction in regular classes with extra teacher support. After-school homework programs, tutorial periods, and block scheduling are also used to provide strong student support. For example, over 80 percent of DoD students felt their teacher's expectations were very positive compared to 58 percent in the national sample; for African-Americans and Hispanics, teacher expectations were reported very positive by 85 percent and 93 percent respectively; this compares to 52 and 53 percent respectively in the national sample.

The writing course of instruction follows the National Writing Project, spans all curriculum areas, and is supplemented by a rich literacy environment in the middle grades.

The practice of aligning standards with assessments with instructional materials is similar to another recent report using NAEP scores which found that the achievement gap

between low- and high-achieving students was reduced in reading when teachers perceived a close alignment of the content, standards, and assessment and when they actually covered the aligned content in their classroom. The Peabody College study team did not focus on the teacher coverage issue identified in the September 2001 Washington Update. A discussion with the Executive Director of the NEGP indicated that the study team was not tasked to look at the extensive use of instructional technology in the DoD schools.

According to a new report by the Government Accounting Office, the DoD school system obligated about \$356 per student for education technology in fiscal year 2000 compared to \$113 per student in public K-12 schools during the same time frame (according to QED). Not surprisingly, the number of schools per instructional computer in DoD schools is 3.7 compared to 5 in public schools, and the number of students per instructional computer with Internet access is 4.8 compared to 7. The percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access in DoD schools is almost 90 percent compared to 77 percent in public schools in 2000. The GAO survey also found that almost 60 percent of computers in DoD schools are three years old or older.

In light of the fact that DoD's accountability system has much stronger "teeth" than those in most state accountability systems, one might logically assume that these teachers are more likely to have higher rates of coverage of material than Dr. Andrew Porter found in his survey last year. Based on teacher interviews in ten states, Dr. Porter found that the highest rate of coverage was only 45 percent in one state and as low as five percent in several states.

If a vendor has technology applications that can facilitate the expanded and more intense use of some of DoD's practices or can create an environment which provides incentives for these practices associated with higher student performance, then there is a research basis which can be used in positioning such programs and applications. In response to

our request to be given the names of the schools in the DoD sample, we were told that the DoD school system agreed to participate only if the schools could remain anonymous. A number of TechMIS subscribers have large implementations of their technology-based systems in both in-country and out-of-country DoD schools; and they should check with their current customers to determine if any of their schools were included in the study. Indeed, as long ago as the mid-1960s, Secretary Robert McNamara and his team attempted to use the DoD schools as “demonstration sites” to refine the use of instructional technology into cost-effective configurations as part of the 1967 DoD technology transfer policy from DoD to civilian applications.

If anyone has any questions about the DoD schools, please give me a call directly. For a copy of several summaries of the report, go to [www.negp.gov](http://www.negp.gov) for the report entitled “March Toward Excellence: School Success and Minority Student Achievement in DoDs Schools.”

### **Online Education Consortium of States Announced to Initially Facilitate State’s Sharing Test Questions Linked to State Objectives**

The new US Open e-Learning Consortium, currently consisting of 14 states, hopes to create a model online system that facilitates sharing of test questions linked to standards for students and teachers. Headed by the Northwest Education Technology Consortium located in Portland (Oregon), the initial states include Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and South Carolina.

As reported in Education Week (November 7), Philip Geiger, Executive Director of Arizona School Facilities Board, noted that the consortium will allow states to “parlay their expertise and experience to create new opportunities educationally.” Geiger’s organization has been very active in negotiating contracts with technology vendors over

the last three years to the tune of almost of \$200 million. Arizona also has the “Students First” online service which allows students and teachers to access over 250 software titles which have been licensed by the State. Teachers can also access an additional 7,000 software titles which they can purchase at a negotiated price.

The Director of the e-Learning consortium is Greg Nadeau, formerly Chief Technology Officer for the Massachusetts Department of Education. In a speech before the CCSSO State Technology Coordinators Conference last February, he strongly pitched the need for a consortium which could allow teachers to develop learning resources, lesson plans, etc., that can be shared with other teachers thereby minimizing the need to purchase services and software titles from commercial firms. The program in Massachusetts which he directed, is a Virtual Education Space, which now provides an online tutorial for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students to help them prepare for state math and English state assessments (see Massachusetts State Update).

The concept of such a consortium is not new. During the mid-1980s the Software Communication Service was created as a loosely-knit group of about 30 states and four Canadian provinces. Actual group buys of software were to have been facilitated by the National Information Utility, which was never fully developed for the intended purpose; the SCS problem was compounded by turf battles and personality clashes. Although contracts were negotiated with over fifty education software publishers to license and distribute their products through the NIU, the heightened expectations among states quickly vanished as did the SCS.

The implications for software publishers and vendors of online subscriptions and services could be positive if the consortium can aggregate purchases from the private sector thereby reducing cost of sales. On the other hand, if the eventual goal is to facilitate the development and distribution of “free software” developed by teachers or even by the state, then accusations of “unfair competition” with the private sector would be justified.

Such criticisms have been directed at USED's Federal Resource for Excellence in Education website (FREE), which provides students and teachers access to over 800 content databases and instructional programs developed by Federal agencies or nonprofit groups such as Reading is Fundamental. Ironically, the USED has issued an RFP for a vendor that can maintain support and upgrade the Gateway to Education Materials (GEMs) of which FREE is a part.

### **Principals' Involvement in Decision-Making Relating to Technology-Based Instructional Product Selection and Purchasing Likely to Increase**

Involvement of principals in decision-making related to the selection of education products and services is likely to increase in the future -- particularly technology-based products. As reported in the October Washington Update, principals' direct involvement in designing and implementing After School Programs (ASPs) has already increased dramatically beginning about three years ago. Two recent reports should foster even greater involvement which should be taken into account in any direct sales campaign.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) recently published a guide which calls for principals to serve in the role of "chief learning officers:" "Principals can no longer simply be administrators and managers, they must be leaders in improving instruction and in student achievement." Some of the six standards for principals include:

- targeting classroom instruction to help students achieve high academic standards, including keeping track of curriculum connections to standards and ensuring that instructional materials, including technology, are up to date;
- using data from multiple sources to monitor student progress and improve instruction, including identifying problems that need improvement and comparing student performance with similarly situated schools;

- encouraging staff to participate in lifetime learning opportunities for high-quality professional development which allows teachers time to reflect on their progress.

Also during the NSBA Technology and Learning Conference (November 8-10, 2001), a press conference held by ISTE released Technology Standards for Administrators, which it has been developing over the last 18 months. These standards call for role modeling in the use of technology and technology leadership, particularly at the principal level. These standards parallel the widely used ISTE standards for assessing teacher competencies. They have been adopted or adapted by virtually all states. Over the last several years, the Gates Foundation has provided millions of dollars to states to design and implement technology training for administrators. Virtually all states have now received some funding under this initiative which has usually been matched by state funds. A copy of the NAESP report on the standards, "What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do," is available at [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org).

### **USED Office of Chief Information Officer Initiates Outreach Effort for Education Technology Vendors**

The Chief Information Office of USED, in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers, is initiating an effort to develop an institutional relationship with the education technology industry which includes the development of an online industry registry for all vendors who market software, hardware, networking, consulting, and services. A series of meetings with technology vendors are being held in November and December.

On November 9, a half-day meeting was held to discuss activities conducted by the USED to promote the collection of better education data from schools districts and state agencies. Patrick Sherrill, ED's Associate Chief Information Officer, presented an

overview of the Department's focus on improving education information. He specifically cited ED's new Blueprint for Management Excellence which calls for 140 changes in Department operations, including 73 for which the Chief Information Officer has full or partial responsibility. At the heart of these changes is expected to be strong efforts to:

- monitor effectiveness without excessive paperwork;
- establish partnerships with key players including appropriate associations and vendors;
- eliminate useless and duplicative activities;
- reduce reporting burdens; and
- increase public access to complete, timely, and valid information.

Glynn Ligon from Evaluation Software Publishing, Inc. (and former MIS Director for the Austin school system) outlined characteristics and success criteria for effective Decision Support Systems in education. In particular, he indicated the need for standards, automated data collection, and quick access to information and cited Massachusetts and Washington as states who have advanced the farthest in this area.

Barbara Clements, also from Education Software Publishing, Inc. introduced the website -- [www.educationadvisor.com](http://www.educationadvisor.com) -- which makes available information on OCIO activities. She also highlighted the desire of ED to form partnerships with standards groups including associations and vendors.

Attending the meeting, which was one of a series of 11 such meetings, were 41 participants representing more than 30 firms.

During that meeting, the Education Software and Technology Industry Registry (ESTIR) was reviewed by the Associate Chief Information Officer. The ESTIR has been designed for easy search and provides information in a variety of formats to potential clients

ranging from state education agencies to school districts. The ESTIR is hosted by Evaluation Software Publishing, Inc. For more information about how to register, please send an e-mail to [estirinfo@evalsof.com](mailto:estirinfo@evalsof.com). Another meeting will be held in December with groups that are developing education information standards. Following this meeting, an online directory of education information standards and various groups who develop them will be established. Also in December, a meeting will be held with representatives of education associations and other groups with the purpose of providing information on OCIO activities and discussing ways in which the OCIO can be helpful. Another online directory of membership organizations will be created.

And finally, a book which will provide guidance on education data quality will be developed in an easy-to-use format for educators who are seeking to improve the quality of their data. For more information, contact Patrick Sherrill, OCIO, 202/708-8196.

### **New Adult Education Technology Laboratory to Identify and Evaluate Technology Effectiveness**

The National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania has received a \$2.4 million grant from USED to evaluate and facilitate the use of technology in adult education. The NCAL press release states that this grant “represents a new direction in the Federal government’s approach to education technology use for adult education by creating a one-stop research, training, and evaluation laboratory that will assist and support adult education program directors, practitioners and state-level policy makers.” The project named TECH.21 will combine a state-of-the-art laboratory, test beds, and a clearinghouse to develop, evaluate, and disseminate cost-effective, high-quality and user-friendly models and practices using technology for adult learning.

TECH.21 could be important to TechMIS subscribers who have products and services for the adult education and literacy niche markets. The NCAL has a good track record in



conducting research and evaluation in this field and its guidance to adult literacy service providers is well-respected. In addition to its own dissemination capabilities, partners include PBS and a PBS station (KLRN-TV adult learning) in San Antonio, Texas. Moreover, some of the test sites have been recognized for stellar efforts in using technology. For example, the Arlington Employment and Education Program (Project REEP) in Arlington, Virginia Public Schools was the recipient of the Secretary of Education's Outstanding Adult Literacy Project in 1992 and has been involved in national demonstrations using various technology products with limited-English-proficient youth and adults who also have one or more disabilities. NCAL also has close contacts with the National Institute for Literacy which has implemented its LINC telecommunications network over the last year to disseminate information on best practices. Firms with appropriate products or services should actively support the Center and provide them with opportunities to evaluate their products and services for potential dissemination. The contact is Dr. Dan Wagner, Director of NCAL, at 215-746-6736 or go to [www.literacy.org](http://www.literacy.org).

### **New National Center for Education Accountability Promoted as “The Country’s Most Influential Center Working on Education Accountability”**

The National Center for Education Accountability at the University of Texas, Austin, has been heralded by UT President Larry Faulkner, as “the country’s most influential center working on education accountability.” The collaborative effort between Just for Kids, a Texas-based group which collects and disseminates accountability data, and the Education Commission of the States which received a USED grant to create/participate in the Center, is designed to improve learning through effective use of student data and the identification of best practices. Tom Luce, the founder of Just for Kids and Chairman of the Board for the new Center, noted that the Center will rely upon the Internet-based school information system to drive school improvement used by Just for Kids noting that

“the keystone for the program’s efforts is academic performance data - facts about student performance that provide the only effective way to identify areas of improvement and low performance.”

The foci of the Center’s work, according to its website, are: using academic performance data to identify best practices in SEA and LEA accountability systems; developing research on best practices in high-performing schools and districts; and translating best practices research into cutting-edge resources and policy models available to state leaders for implementation. One of the components of accountability models will be the use of technology.

At a November 8 press conference, Secretary of Education Paige stated “The sooner we show states how to process and interpret test data so they can hold their schools accountable for ensuring that every child learns, the sooner we will help promote best practices. Comparisons among similar schools not only show which schools are succeeding, but also which methods work.”

Whether the Center will become “the country’s most influential center working on education accountability,” as UT President Faulkner claims, will depend upon the quality and objectivity of its works. The approach combining data analysis with classroom observation and interaction, appears to be very similar to a successful effort of identifying best practices in Title I schools used by Dr. Joe Johnson (now national Title I Director at USED) when he was with the Dana Center, University of Texas. Perhaps more important are the individuals and organizations involved in this collaborative effort. Tom Luce, Chairman, was a key advisor to Ross Perot, who was the major force in the accountability movement in Texas during the 1980s and 1990s. In addition to the six CEOs from major corporations that are board members, also included are two former governors and former Secretary of Education Richard Riley.

The announcement of this new Center comes a day after an article in Education Week (November 7) entitled “Whole School Projects Show Mixed Results” summarizing a report by the Rand Corporation which found that the so-called model programs under the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program produced positive change in only about half the schools that are using models such as *Success for All*, *Direct Instruction*, and *Accelerated Schools*. It will be interesting to see if the new Center at the University of Texas avoids some of these political and other “potholes” and “mine fields” which occurred during the early implementation of the CSRD. For more information go to [www.measuretolearn.org](http://www.measuretolearn.org).

### **Many Title I Eligible, But Currently Not Served Schools, to Benefit From Likely Change in Title I Formula**

Since ESEA Title I reauthorization in 1994, the “targeted funds” portion of the Title I formula grant has existed but has never been funded by Congress. Now the “targeted” portion of the formula has proposed funding in the House version and the President’s proposal for FY 2002. In early November, the Senate, for the first time, approved by a vote of 81 to 19, an amendment that would appropriate \$1 billion under the “targeted” Title I formula. If this amendment survives in the House/Senate Appropriations Conference Committee, about 20 percent of schools with between 50 and 75 percent poverty enrollments would be served under Title I and receive funding for the first time, a good group of schools to target.

The amendment would transfer Title I funds from the “basic” grants, which all Title I districts receive and “concentration” funds which districts receive once the percentage of students from low-income families exceeds 15 percent. When changes in the Title I formula occur, significant opportunities for firms that sell into the Title I market niche will become available. For example, as reported in the June TechMIS Special Report, as the result of a new formula which basically rescinded the “hold harmless” clause (which

has been part of the Title I formula since 1995), slightly over 130 districts are receiving large increases of 40 percent or higher in “concentration funds” beginning in October. However, due to the dual uncertainties related to the reauthorization of Title I and the lack of an FY 2002 budget, most of these districts are allocating more Title I “concentration” funds to existing schools, thereby increasing the amount of Title funds per pupil in those schools. Under the proposed change which would fund “targeted” grants for the first time, the \$1 billion would be allocated to schools with high rates of poverty which are currently not being served by Title I, and because the proposed funding level for Title I would increase \$2-\$3 billion, this reallocation will not likely reduce any Title I funding to current Title I schools next year.

### **New Report Finds Number of Schoolwide Programs Continue to Increase**

Based on annual reports from SEAs, USED recently released findings indicating that, in 1998-99, the number of schoolwide programs increased to slightly more than 19,000 of the 46,650 participating Title I schools; this is slightly over 2,000 more than existed in 1997-98. Conversely, the number of “targeted assistance” schools dropped from almost 30,000 to slightly over 27,000. During the same period, the number of Title I students increased seven percent to slightly over 13 million, largely as the result of all students in Title I schoolwide programs being counted. In “targeted assistance” schools, only those eligible Title I students who are served are reported. In “targeted assistance” programs, the percent of students receiving reading related instruction increased from 81 percent to 89 percent, while the percent receiving mathematics instruction decreased slightly.

Approximately 20 percent of schools participating in the Title I program in 1998-99 were “targeted for improvement,” which represents a 17 percent increase over 1997-98. The percentage of schoolwide programs “targeted for improvement” increased from 23 to 27 percent. The number of schools targeted for improvement according to Title I Report

(November 2001) was 8,755 compared to 7,414 the prior year. However, data was not available from Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Missouri.

As reported in Title I Report (November 2001), the states with 70 percent or more of their Title I schools designated as schoolwide programs include Washington (D.C.), Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia. The states in which the percentage of schoolwide programs that have been “targeted for improvement” is 50 percent or higher are South Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Maine, Kentucky, Illinois, Hawaii, Georgia, Washington (D.C.), and Arizona. As reported in the June TechMIS Special Report on Title I funding, there are approximately 4,200 schoolwide programs in the 650 districts which we estimate will be receiving between 85 and 90 percent of the overall increase in Title I funds this year. Please contact Charles Blaschke directly if you have any questions about targeting your direct sales campaigns.

### **New GAO Report Suggests Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Schools is a Growth Market for Software, Professional Development, and Technology Support**

Based upon a survey conducted in November 2000, GAO found that slightly over \$400 per student had been expended on hardware, software, and technology support in BIA schools compared to \$113 per student in public schools during the same time frame as reported by QED. It also found that the number of students per instructional computer was 3.5 compared with 5 in public schools; that the number of students per instructional computer with Internet was 4.3 compared to 7 in public schools; the percentage of schools connected to the Internet was 100 percent compared to 98 percent in public schools; and the percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access was 81 percent compared to 77 percent. On the other hand, compared with public schools, a smaller portion of BIA schools have paid vs. volunteer technology support staff. For example, 25

percent of BIA schools do not have paid technical support and about one-third do not have paid staff to help teachers use computers for instruction. One of the reasons for the lack of technology coordinators and other support staff is that once they are trained they leave the BIA schools for higher paid positions.

In the instructional area, BIA school computers are used primarily for drill-and-practice and learning subject matter, with 40 percent and 52 percent, respectively, reporting that a majority of teachers assign students to computer or Internet work at least once a week for these purposes. Only 17 percent of the BIA schools reported the use of computers for teaching problem-solving skills or data analysis. The need for improving academic achievement of BIA students is clear as their performance is far below that of students in public schools based on standardized tests and other measures, including college admissions tests.

The \$400 plus per student expended on technology and related support is surprising in that a large amount of infrastructure has been donated to BIA schools by hardware vendors and through an initiative by then Vice President Gore which subsidized groups such as Net Day and others to provide wiring and infrastructure connectivity. The fact that 25 percent of homes located on reservations do not have telephones did provide an opportunity for BIA schools to “leap frog” into wireless technology several years ago. While the major opportunities appear to be in the professional development and infrastructure support area, 46 percent of computers in BIA schools are three years old or older, suggesting opportunities for upgrades or replacements. For a copy of the report entitled BIA and DOD Schools: Student Achievement and Other Characteristics Often Differ From Public Schools, September 2001, go to [www.gao.gov/new.items/d01934.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d01934.pdf).