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MEMORANDUM

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TechMIS Subscribers

FROM: Charles Blaschke

SUBJECT: Special Report on Responses to Proposed USED Title I Regulations, Washington Update Items

Enclosed is a Special Report on responses by various groups to the August 6 proposed Title I regulations which suggests that a number of the proposed regulations will be withdrawn or modified to better reflect the statute and the intent of the new law. It appears that USED is attempting to use the regulatory process to modify the law to coincide more closely with the Administration's priorities. Certain changes which will appear in the final regulations will benefit many TechMIS subscribers, particularly those that provide Title I-related professional development.

The Washington Update in this issue includes:

- A new IRA position paper on evidence-based reading instruction which many reading specialists and teachers will rely upon, more than on official USED guidance in determining which reading products and programs are based on "scientifically-based" research; publishers of such programs should assess the degree to which their programs and products meet/assist in meeting the "best practices" identified by the IRA in positioning products as such.

- During the AAP reading summit, Federal, state, and local Reading First officials provided advice to publishers that should increase the probability that their products will be purchased for use in Reading First programs and implemented effectively.
- USED officials are planning to rely heavily on the NAEP to ensure that states do not use “easy to pass” state assessments; however, recent policies by the NAEP National Assessment Governing Board suggest numerous major problems may surface a year from now.
- New report from Center for Education Policy identifies trends in state-administered exit exams and cautions policymakers to phase in requirements for students to achieve cutoffs as prerequisites for receiving high school diplomas.
- New National Center on Educational Outcome reports on trends in accommodation policies among states for special education students on state assessments.
- New USED Guidance on ESEA Title V Part A, Innovative Programs gives LEAs sole discretion of allocating funds among 27 authorized uses. SEAs may allocate 50 percent of its 15 percent set-aside for school improvement to Title I targeted schools.
- Increased cost of war preparation and pressures by conservatives to reduce other spending suggest a bleak picture for large increases in FY 2003 appropriations, although special education programs are likely to receive another significant increase under a new Administration ploy.
- New USED reorganization and creation of two new offices is likely designed not only to improve efficiency, but most importantly, to propagate the Administration’s parent choice, charter school, supplemental services and related policies.
- Some school districts, particularly those in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Northern California, will receive large increases in Department of Agriculture funds under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, which can provide opportunities for vendors of telecommunications, infrastructure, and distance learning.
- New survey confirms wide variation among states in implementing certain key provisions in the No Child Left Behind ESEA legislation, particularly those relating to choice and supplemental services.
- National Center for Education Statistics reports on the first national survey of public alternative schools for at-risk students, which can provide good sales opportunities in the future as market growth is expected.

The FY 2003 appropriations battle is underway which undoubtedly is creating even more uncertainty among school districts, suggesting that further postponement of purchases of products as continuing resolutions are planned for each of the next several weeks; depending upon election results, FY 2003 budget battles could continue through January- February 2003. Please feel free to call me on budget updates and on any other questions about news items and updates on Reading First state initiatives.