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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: June 30, 2004
TO: TechMIS Subscribers
FROM: Charles Blaschke
SUBJ: Washington Update Items and State Profile Updates

Included in this month's TechMIS issue is a Special Report on E-Rate funding commitments for appeals that were found to be meritorious or for other reasons going back to 2000. If districts which had filed appeals purchased the disputed item, at the pre-discount price and completed the BEAR form, then such funds can be received in the form of a check rather than a credit which can be used to purchase software, training and other non-eligible items. The second report provides highlights on NCLB developments that have occurred in June which could have implications for most TechMIS subscribers. USED and Congressional supporters of NCLB continue to claim billions of dollars of unspent money which can be used to implement NCLB. One implication from a statement made by Secretary Paige is that it is very unlikely that there will be a waiver similar to the one last August that provided districts the opportunity to carry over more than 15 percent of unspent Title I funds. As Secretary Paige noted, if they don't obligate such funds they will have to return approximately \$2.1-2.7 billion to Washington. Many districts will heed his threat and encumber such funds before September 30. Senator Kennedy and Congressman Miller, who initially sponsored NCLB, have submitted bills which would make many of the recent USED regulatory changes retroactive in order to reduce significantly the number of schools failing AYP and/or identified for improvement. Passage is very iffy. And last, USED is slowly approving or disapproving proposed changes in accountability and assessment plans from over 40 states. Most of the requested changes are designed to reduce unintended consequences and/or the number of schools failing to meet AYP.

The Washington Update includes the following items:

- Findings from a survey conducted by the Afterschool Alliance which suggests a large pent-up demand for afterschool programs which should receive increased Federal and state funding next year;

- A new USED publication which provides guidance on creating strong supplemental education services through best practices, which includes SES provided by teacher unions in two of the five model sites;
- A survey of district and school officials involved in reading programs finds that the impact of scientifically-based research criteria on materials selection is increasing along with increased district-level (vs. school-level) decision-making re reading products;
- Selected schools in at least ten states could benefit from the Microsoft antitrust settlement if consumers failed to claim their portion of the \$1.1 billion in software vouchers;
- A new report from the National Council on Disabilities summarizes widely-held perceived impacts, both positive and negative, of NCLB on special education programs and students which should be taken into account by sales staff when approaching district Title I and special education officials;
- The June ISTE symposia on assessment and technology held during NECC in June suggests a probable scenario on how online assessment and instruction will evolve over the next few years; and
- A COSN report that finds school district decision-makers feel that current benefits of administrative applications are much greater than instructional applications although these same decision-makers feel there is much greater opportunity for classroom use in the future.

Also included in this issue are State Profile Updates for most states. The information was gathered from a variety of reports and services, media articles, and discussions with state and district technology officials prior to, during, and subsequent to the NECC mid-June conference in New Orleans. As always, if you have any questions please contact me directly.