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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: October 5, 2005
TO: TechMIS Subscribers
FROM: Charles Blaschke
SUBJ: Hurricane Relief, Opportunities, and State Profile Updates

During September, we e-mailed you three Special Reports/Funding Alerts, which are attached for your convenience:

- Secretary Spellings Issues First Waivers Providing Greater Flexibility in District Implementation of SES Provisions Which Could Create Greater Opportunities for Firms Wishing to Partner With Districts
- Emerging Federal Policy Changes Will Affect Education in States Impacted Directly or Indirectly By Katrina
- Opportunities for Online Solutions To Meet District Challenges Created by Katrina and Rita Appear to be High, Although Subtle Policy Changes Could Have Direct Impact

Both the Administration and Congress are focusing upon hurricane relief to states and districts in the Gulf area which include a third supplemental appropriation of between \$2.6 billion (proposed by USED) and about \$3.0 billion (proposed by the Senate). One potential source of funding will be reduction and/or elimination of certain programs in the proposed House and Senate FY 2006 budget which will be redirected to the relief effort. In the meantime, with the current fiscal year ending September 30, Congress has passed and the President has signed a Continuing Resolution which will be in effect through November 18 allowing the Federal Government to continue functioning. However, the new Continuing Resolution states that the level of funding of programs would be the lesser amounts of the House passed FY 2006 appropriations bill, or the Senate FY 2005 level. This provision could make the "mark" for the E²T² Title II D Technology Grant Program at the House level of \$300 million, which is significantly less

than the \$496 million proposed for FY 2005. While the impact will not be immediate, if there is another Continuing Resolution for the remaining FY 2006 period, the impact would be an overall 40 percent reduction in funding for Title II D.

Another casualty of the hurricane relief effort has been the postponement of additional policy statements on newly-found flexibilities related to supplemental educational services, especially for rural, small, isolated districts and for large urban districts which have been identified for improvement, but wish to continue operating their own SES programs, such as Los Angeles (see California Update). Nor has any official USED guidance been provided to states regarding the “interim policy” regarding modified assessments and proficiency levels for special education “gap students” (i.e., the so-called 2 percent interim rule). Many questions still exist as to the research teams and/or Reading First centers that will provide guidance and assistance to states and districts receiving large increases in displaced students due Katrina and Rita, and/or guidance to states on modifying alternative assessments and selecting interventions.

The Washington Update includes several new items, including:

- An announcement by Secretary Spellings that hurricane-impacted states and districts would be provided options and waivers in calculating adequate yearly progress and school improvement sanctions; also guidance and technical assistance will be provided to districts receiving increased enrollments of displaced students by the Center on Special Education Research and a team of “researchers,” perhaps some who were involved in Reading First activities;
- New research priorities for the Institute for Education Sciences reflect some subtle policy changes which could have mostly positive implications for software and supplemental publishers;
- A new Teacher Talk Tech survey conducted by Quality Education Data has found that teachers perceive technology as having an increasing role in their own activities, particularly those related to administrative functions, and also identifies additional needs for professional development for teachers in the area of assessments;
- During the recent Committee for Education Funding Gala, several hundred lobbyists for education associations expressed education appropriation anxieties and confusion over hurricane relief policies, especially those affecting Federal support for education technology.

This TechMIS issue also includes State Profile Updates which focus on state K-12 funding, state AYP determinations of schools being identified for improvement for one or more consecutive years, and information on identifying districts in certain states which must allocate the 15 percent of IDEA funding for intervening services because of significant “disproportionality.”

Please call Charles Blaschke directly if you have any questions.