

## Alabama Update – September 2001

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Under pressure from the USED (which did not approve the State's proposed use of national norm-referenced tests for its Title I accountability system), Alabama now is forced to develop its own standards-based test. Alabama has been under harsh criticism by groups such as the Citizen's Commission on Civil Rights for the lack of accountability "teeth" in its current assessment system.

The State combined its last Goals 2000 allocation of \$6.4 million with \$6.6 million from the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund to provide grants to districts for technology integration. During the first wave of Year Four E-Rate funding, districts received over \$8 million which was approximately 10 percent of the total amount received during the last three years. About \$1.5 million in PT<sup>3</sup> funding has been awarded to the State to improve technology training in 30 teacher colleges and to develop teacher and administrative technology standards.

The Alabama Education Technology Conference was held in June with almost 1,800 registrants including 262 administrators and 150 media specialists. The latest inventory of technology used for instructional purposes, based upon the latest survey, is available on the State website at [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu). The primary contact continues to be Melinda Maddox, 334/242-9594.

## Arizona Update – September 2001

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A U.S. District Judge has ruled that the amount of current funding of \$150 per limited-English-proficient student must be increased beginning January 31. The SEA has been ordered to commission a study to determine how much it costs to educate LEP students and to seek ways to increase funding through legislation, if need be, at a special session before January.

The SEA has received over \$2.5 million from the Gates Foundation to provide administrators with equipment and training. The focus of the training will be the use of technology to manage schools and districts better.

The Arizona School Facilities Board has awarded a \$30 million Internet application service provider (ASP) contract to Cox Business Services and three subcontractors -- Learning Station.com, KTMG Consulting, and ENSYNCH, a local technology service provider. Numerous other publishers and technology vendors are participating as partners, including Apple Computer, Cisco Academies, Admin.com, NCS Pearson, NETSchools, and Princeton Review. The Schools Facilities Board, over the last two years, has provided approximately \$100 million for purchasing computers and providing Internet connectivity for schools. The first group of districts are supposed to be able to access the ASP by the end of September. A key contact is Dr. Philip Geiger, Executive Director, School Facilities Board, 602/542-6143.

The Arizona Board of Education has once again delayed the effective date of a requirement that high school students must pass the statewide exit exam in order to graduate. The decision delayed the effective date to 2006 which is four years later than previously scheduled. Only 12 percent of the tenth graders who took the AIMS statewide assessment in spring of 1999 passed the math section. The State board also postponed from 2002 to 2004 the promotion requirement that students must pass the Algebra and Geometry assessment.

## California Update - September 2001

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During the last three consecutive years, California elementary school students' scores have increased on the statewide tests, which include the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR), a new test based on academic standards, and the SAT Stanford 9 norm-referenced test. Over the last four years, class size at the elementary level has been reduced significantly, which some officials feel has contributed most to these gains. Middle and high school student gains have not increased at a rate near that of elementary students.

To address the issue of "unfunded State mandates," Governor Gray Davis has signed into law a bill which requires the California Department of Education to pay local school districts \$1.5 billion over the next decade beginning with an initial payment of \$270 million this year. The point of contention on the part of districts is a class action lawsuit filed by the Riverside County Board of Education 20 years ago, claiming that the State required "unfunded mandates" in its State special education program. These funds represents a 3% increase in State special education funding and can be used for a variety of instructional products and services or even to hire teacher aides. A similar agreement was passed by the Michigan legislature several years ago which resulted in approximately \$1.5 billion being provided to districts that were part of a class action lawsuit also for mandating special education services without providing state funds to cover costs. Most of the so-called Durant case settlement was used by districts to purchase technology and other products. Such funds could be used only for non-reoccurring cost items which precluded the use of funds to pay salaries of teachers or aides.

Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn has announced an expansion of the LA BEST afterschool program from 78 schools last year to 101 schools eventually. Approximately \$11 million will be raised from public and private sources to pay for the expansion of BEST, which has been recognized nationally as one of the more effective afterschool programs.

In July, after Governor Davis cut \$126 million from the State's community college budget, a bipartisan bill was proposed to reinstate almost \$100 million of the cut. These funds, drawn from the state's budget reserve, will be used for maintenance and purchase of instructional equipment at community college campuses.

The California Commission on Technology in Learning is developing a Statewide master plan which will be submitted to the State and public for comments. The master plan is intended to help districts develop technology plans which will be required in order to receive any technology funding from the State as of January 2002. The Education Technology Planning Guide for school districts is now available on the SEA website. A portion of the State's TLCF funds are also being set aside to provide grants to districts for developing plans. Most of the remaining TLCF funds this year will be used to purchase multi-media computers and provide staff development.

The California Learning Resource Network has already identified a number of products which are aligned with State standards. This site is available at <http://www.clrn.org> or contact Bridget Foster at 209/525-4979.

The California Technology Assistance Project Technology Assessment Profile (CTAP<sup>2</sup>), which allows teachers to assess their levels of technology proficiency, is aligned with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing "Factors to Consider" which constitutes the technology standards for a Preliminary Teacher Credential. It is available at [CTAP2.iassessment.org](http://CTAP2.iassessment.org).

Approximately \$20 million of the \$175 million State technology grant program will be provided to high schools to purchase an additional 100,000 computers by next year.

## Colorado Update - September 2001

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The State Department of Education is updating the State Educational Technology and Information Literacy Plan with the intent of focusing technology use to improve student achievement using a standards-based curriculum. The Colorado Online School Consortium (COSC) provides online courses via the Internet and is partially funded through a TLCF grant. The State's Data Mining Project is providing district teachers and administrators tools to interpret student achievement results on the CSAP and other state assessments. The State's Distance Learning Task Force is likely to meet shortly to develop standards and guidelines for e-Learning in the State. The legislature has created a Science and Technology Education Center Grant Program to establish two centers which will focus on space exploration, among other topics. Approximately \$500,000 was provided to the Colorado Institute for Technology to provide summer training for teachers and students in the area of math, science and technology and to generate interest in technology careers. Colorado Online will encourage "the best teachers" in the State to develop web-based core and elective courses.

## Connecticut Update - September 2001

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After a ten-year battle, the State has negotiated an agreement with parents of disabled students under a Federal lawsuit which will allow many of the 4,000 students diagnosed as mentally retarded to be “mainstreamed” into regular education classes. The identification process that in the past has resulted in much higher than projected minority participation in special education programs will be revised. About \$3 million will be provided by the State to train teachers in the classrooms in which these students will be enrolled.

New computer literacy standards for students and teachers are now in effect and available on the State’s website ([state.ct.us/sde](http://state.ct.us/sde)). The teacher standards are for primarily for mid-career teachers to be used as a self-evaluation. Student computer literacy standards began at the pre-school level where pre-K-4 graders should be able to perform simple key word searches and should use interactive software and CD-ROM encyclopedias.

## Florida Update - September 2001

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For this coming school year, more than \$90 million has been earmarked for education technology. A \$62.4 million technology funding pot will be allocated to districts on a formula basis. Some of the larger districts have stated their intention to use their funds -- plus matching funds from the district -- to upgrade or replace obsolete computers and for staff development. An additional \$10 million, referred to as the Technology Initiative for Performance Improvement, includes a number of potential projects for which lobbyists generated support in the legislature. The remaining \$20 million will be the Florida TLCF grant.

Almost one-third of Florida students taking the high school exit exam did not meet the minimum passage level in mathematics and reading. They will have to take the F-CAT again in October. Students can take the test up to six times in order to graduate.

## Georgia Update – September 2001

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Funding for vocational education will increase 10 percent next year to \$270 million, including 14 percent for a “historic program” which provides employee training in new and expanding industries.

The Georgia Department of Education has issued a contract to NCS/Pearson for \$26 million over five years during which NCS will develop and administer web-based State assessments in eight subject areas. The initial web-based testing will begin in Spring 2003. Earlier this year, NCS also won a contract to develop web-based assessments related to the SOL state assessment in Virginia; it had less than three months to implement the system in demonstration sites. The schedule for the Georgia initiative, which has been justified because of quick delivery of test results for diagnosis and placement, is much more reasonable.

The new Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program has attracted almost three times the expected number of individuals who wanted to become certified to teach; 763 individuals completed the program. These completors will enter a two-year “induction” program which includes university course-work while they continue to teach. Approximately 10,000 vacancies are projected in Georgia this school year. Part of the completion requirements was passage of Praxis I which is a standardized exam of basic skills. Enrollees had to have a grade point average of 2.5 out of 4 to be admitted. The contact in the Georgia Department of Education is Fran Watkins.



## Indiana Update – September 2001

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Based upon a lengthy interview reported in the Heller Report (July 2001), the Buddy System Project in Indiana is changing direction and associated projects are receiving additional funding designed to expand the educational use of Internet. The Buddy System Project was designed to help families, particularly those with low incomes, obtain technology targeting eligible fourth and fifth grade students. More than 800 families in 70 schools have been reported receiving about \$1.5 million in State funds each year since it began in the early 1990s. The project's new direction is intended to address Indiana academic standards in order to prepare students for state assessments. The first project in this new direction will support the development of writing skills and data-driven learning environments. In an attempt to make it more statewide, Buddy<sup>2</sup> has become more involved in professional development, having developed a web-based self-assessment tool which is related to technology knowledge and competencies on the part of teachers. The Center for Educational Telecommunications which operates the Buddy Project provides the content for [iassessment.org](http://iassessment.org) whose online self-assessment is being used in Indiana schools; it also recently was licensed by the State of Arizona for teacher self-assessment there. The CET also manages Project Athena which has been receiving funding from Ameritech and State sources to complete the development of the State's education infrastructure. In February, Project Athena received more than \$15 million to carry them through the year 2005. The contact is Marvin Bailey, president of CET at 317/231-6581.

Technology-related professional development for teachers and administrators has become the highest priority in the state. Some of the more important training activities include:

- publishing an online and CD "toolkit" for school improvement teams as they prepare to meet the new State accountability legislation (Public Law 221);
- earmarking at least 30% of TLCF and State technology planning grant programs for professional development;
- providing training for more than 400 administrators under the IndianaNEXT Gates grant;
- providing three-day summer institutes for more than 400 teachers; and

- awarding 39 Information Literacy Skill Grants to teams of media specialists.

In addition to staff development, the State is implementing a customized version of the NCREL enGauge planning tool to help schools use technology more effectively. It has also developed a tool called My Target with iassessment.

## Kentucky Update – September 2001

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The Kentucky State Board has adopted new goals for the State's assessment program. Students are to be ranked by four levels of performance and, by 2014, each student is expected to be at the proficient level in every subject.

A new law places greater emphasis on academic and problem-solving skills in vocational education. Moreover, the State will be developing a comprehensive plan to ensure vocational education in all districts and to report to the SEA on the achievement of vocational education students.

The State was one of the first to initiate a major program through which students provide technology support, and even training, to teachers. The Student Technology Leadership Program, which provides about \$200,000 per year to districts, allows students to assist with the e-mail systems, network management, website creation and management, and a software help desk and hands-on assistance to teachers and other students.

The State "Internet Caching" system is a device that will enable teachers to build and use an electronic library which guarantees availability to a website even if the district's data line is down. It also allows teachers to restrict students to websites that are not instructional or work-related.

More than 400 library media specialists attended a July 2001 professional development workshop which addressed a number of issues including copyright, school safety, and reading programs, among others. The State's MarcoPolo staff development project is now underway. All of the training has been aligned with Kentucky's Core Content, Program of Studies and Academic Expectations. The State has promulgated a rule whereby State funds can be used to purchase software only if it is documented on at least three software review sites as being effective in improving student achievement. The more commonly-used websites which have software evaluations are [Evalutech.sreb.org](http://Evalutech.sreb.org) and state clearinghouses such as those in California, Ohio, and Florida.

## Louisiana Update – September 2001

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Orleans Parish is planning to allocate more than \$5 million to 11 middle schools which have been identified as being academically unacceptable. New principals and other staff who are newly certified will be creating “learning academies” in these schools; \$2,500 will be allocated for each staff for professional development and academy principals could receive bonuses of \$8,000 based upon student performance. In addition, each school will receive approximately \$500,000 in Title I funds.

The Louisiana Virtual Classroom will be piloted this Fall with eleven teachers and one university professor delivering online courses in Latin, Spanish, Algebra I, Environmental Issues, Computer Science, World History, English, and Physics. Each participating school will allow up to 20 students to register for these courses.

The State has partnered with ThinkQuest ([www.thinkquest.org](http://www.thinkquest.org)) to teach students and teachers to assimilate, organize, and share knowledge with others worldwide as they build content-rich websites.

In partnership with the Louisiana Corporate Recycling Council, the State’s Computers for Louisiana’s Kids (CLK) program continues to expand. It is designed to provide students with multiple job skills and to refurbish old computers for schools to use. The State’s new K-12 Online Database provides schools with Internet access to information resources. The State’s \$5 million appropriation for computer-based technology grants funded these online statewide subscriptions with World Book and Gale Group. The new contact and director of the Louisiana Center for Education Technology is Sheila Talamo at 225/763-5575.

## Massachusetts Update – September 2001

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As reported in Education Daily (August 2), under the leadership of Ron Unz, a campaign for a ballot initiative to end bilingual education has begun. Unz and his supporters were successful over the last several years in California and Arizona when voters voted to change, if not end, bilingual education in these two states. To get on the ballot, at least 57,000 signatures must be obtained.

Approximately 30,000 of the 80,000 K-12 school staff in the State are now registered for using MassEd.Net making it one of the fastest growing Internet service-providers in the State. About 130 school districts received funding totaling \$7.3 million under the TLCF earlier this year and Massachusetts applicants received discounts of approximately \$35 million under the E-Rate program. Most TLCF grants over the last four years have been used to fund Lighthouse Projects where effective models of teaching with technology have been developed and then demonstrated during State conferences. The TLCF has also been used to fund 115 districts to adopt “best technology practices and programs,” and to integrate them into the districts’ curricula which are aligned with the State curriculum framework. The TLCF have also been used to support 13 collaboratives in 40 schools to provide access to education opportunities for students with disabilities. The most recent round of TLCF grants have also been used to fund 25 youth “technology entrepreneur programs” for students who are certified in the areas of project management, customer service, and entrepreneurial skills. Part of the State’s five-year Technology Innovation Challenge Grant program was used to conduct institutes to help teachers integrate online instructional technology into standards-based curriculum. Among the topics addressed are the “principles of universal design” and assistive technology.

## Missouri Update – September 2001

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The Missouri Education Technology Conference will be held on October 7-9, 2001 in Osage Beach ([www.more.net/events/fall2001](http://www.more.net/events/fall2001)). Approximately 1,500 educators will attend. The Missouri Distance Learning Association (MDLA) has adopted guidelines for conducting a distance learning training needs survey and is planning to establish a “best practice” resource guide over the next few years. The guidelines are organized around benchmarks for courses, for curriculum and instruction, for student support, for instructor support, and for assessment and evaluation.

The Cisco Academies program will add 16 local academies throughout the State bringing the total number to over 40. Proposals for placing filters on the State’s backbone are currently being evaluated. The Governor proposed additional funds to expand the eMINTS professional development program. However, because of the disappearance of the budget surplus in the State, core technology funding was cut and all funds are subject to a withholding by the Governor of approximately 15%. Missouri is one of the few states that is actively participating in Internet2 for school districts.

A new initiative planned for implementation in October will link teachers in 10-15 rural districts with teacher colleges in order to reinvent new teacher education models using technology. The Rural School and Community Trust, a national not-for-profit organization, is in the process of raising funds for this five-seven year initiative.

The Missouri Technology Leadership Academy funded by the Gates Foundation is currently staffing up with SuccessLink of MDLA as the fiscal agent. Ten technology leadership workshops will train 370 people in Year One and almost 700 in Year Two with similar amount in Year Three. They will receive training and a free laptop for their school. The primary contact continues to be Deborah Sutton, 573/751-8247.

## Nebraska Update – September 2001

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The K-12 budget for the next fiscal year will increase 10% to \$821 million. Three million has been approved to expand early childhood programs which last year were budgeted at only \$500,000. The new State funds will be coordinated with Federal funds. The Governor has also promised to create a 36-member blue ribbon panel which would include the Commissioners of Education and the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. It will be making its recommendations next year.

During a recent CCSSO conference on assessments, as reported in Title I Reports (July 2001), Doug Christian, State Superintendent, stated that he would not allow the development of a State test but will continue to rely upon districts to develop their own assessment instruments and criteria. He also indicated he would not report student results by subgroups of ethnicities, but rather by levels of poverty. He indicated that he would be willing to forgo \$32 million in Title I funding rather than change the current system.

According to an SEA report to SIIA, the State is developing plans for non-Federal alternative funding for its technology initiatives because there exists too much uncertainty in Federal programs associated with technology. A strategy meeting will be held in October and recommendations will be made as to what technology products would be funded by State resources.

Following a needs assessment study of the Nebraska technology infrastructure, an RFP was issued in late April for a contractor to build an infrastructure to accommodate the Statewide delivery needs of all education, State and local governments and health services. Discussions are underway as to how technology can be used to reduce the cost of the anticipated significant increase in testing under the Bush proposal.

## New Jersey Update – September 2001

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USED has notified the New Jersey Department of Education officials that the State's special education program was no longer considered a "high risk." If the State had not improved its monitoring and enforcement process related to IDEA implementation, it could have lost more than \$200 million in Federal funding. In the last five years, the number of parent complaints against New Jersey school districts has more than doubled to over 250.

For FY 2001, almost \$60 million -- the same as last year -- has been appropriated to be distributed to school districts at the rate of \$44 per student. Slightly over \$8 million has been appropriated for nonpublic schools at the rate of \$40 per pupil -- also the same as last year. The funds are to be administered by the public school of the student who is enrolled in a nonpublic school; funds must meet the specific technology needs of students and instructional staff and can be used to purchase equipment, software, staff development, etc.

The State's Technology Literacy Challenge Fund provided \$2.5 million for Technology Fellowships which will be awarded to 20 teachers. These teachers will model the use of technology and staff development in instruction in the 21 ETTCs which are responsible for training teachers. Fifty percent of the Technology Fellows' time must be targeted on economically disadvantaged districts. During their release time, Technology Fellows will develop web-based projects on exemplary practices and activities.



## New Mexico Update – September 2001

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Governor Johnson vetoed a major education reform and funding initiative negotiated by numerous groups with the legislature over the last two years. K-12 funding, however, will increase by 9 percent, up to \$1.8 billion; most of the increase will be used to increase teacher salaries by 8 percent; \$22 million will be provided to expand all-day kindergarten and provide mentors for beginning teachers; \$400 million will be provided in order to meet a court order for building repair, renovation, or modernization, which will include infrastructure, wiring, cabling, etc.

The legislature appropriated \$6 million for the Educational Technology Fund for school year 2001-02, a \$1 million increase from the prior year. Districts will receive approximately \$20 per student or a minimum of \$4,500. The money is to be used to implement the district's technology plan which was approved in early May. Nine sites will participate in a project to provide Native American students with course preparation for taking Advanced Placement courses. The State recently provided \$5.4 million to 52 grantees as part of the State's TLCF initiative, now in its fifth year. The MathStar project, now in its third year, uses advanced technology to improve middle school mathematics teaching and learning. New Mexico is part of the MathStar consortium with Colorado, Los Angeles County and Monterey Bay (CA). New Mexico State University is the fiscal agent.

The State has created Regional Educational Technology Assistance centers which provide train-the-trainer programs for teachers and administrators. The Native Educational Technology Consortium on the Navajo reservation has three initiatives underway, including professional development in technology integration, thematic learning and curriculum development. The contact in the New Mexico Department of Education is Michelle Lewis at 505/827-8070.

## New York Update – September 2001

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In August, the State legislature passed a K-12 budget increase of \$380 million or approximately 2.8 percent in State aid. However, there is likely to be an attempt to call a special session to supplement the past budget with additional funds.

A consortium of New York City 28 schools, called the New York Performance Standards Consortia, has sued the State so they can be exempted from the Regent's exam, a request which the State recently rejected. They argue that their performance-based approach, which consists of portfolios, etc., has been very successful. When they were initially given waivers in 1995, the State agreed to conduct an evaluation, which it has failed to do. They claim their program is more successful than the State as a whole because 91 percent of their students go to college eventually, compared to 60 percent in other high schools in New York City. In April, Commissioner Mills withdrew the waiver thereby requiring students in these 28 schools to take the Regent's exam as well.

The New York City Board of Education, under a corrective mandate from the State Department of Education, has been successful in reducing by approximately 24 percent the number of students referred for evaluation to determine whether or not they should be placed in special education. Over the last three years, the number of students graduating out of special education has increased 31 percent. As reported in Education Daily (August 24), "under the new system, promoting prevention and early intervention will be two keys to reducing special education placements."

An effort is underway to develop a revision of the State's technology framework which should be in place by 2002. Using State and TLCF funding, a number of projects are developing web-based resources ranging from online professional development to web-based Regents Exam preparation courses. Eventually resources will be available Statewide anytime, anywhere.

The New York State Technology Academy has been created with the goal of developing a coordinated approach to information technology training. Drawing upon existing resources, the Academy's goal is to inculcate information technology skills in all State employees and teachers.

Later this year, e-learning courses will be available. College credit will eventually be made available. For more information go to [academy@oft.state.ny.us](mailto:academy@oft.state.ny.us). A relatively new director within the SEA is The-yuan Wan, 518/486-5832.

## North Carolina Update – September 2001

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A recent survey by University of North Carolina projects a shortage of adequately credentialled speech/language pathologists (SLPs). A recent court case mandated that all such SLPs have at least master's degrees. It is estimated that, in the future, almost 15% of the workforce in the future will not meet this requirement. Some officials estimate that even more teachers who are qualified will leave public schools to go to hospitals or private practice as a result of "burnout."

In August, Governor Mike Easley proposed an increase in the State sales tax from 6% to 7% in order to make up for a portion of the overall \$800 million shortfall. The State's fiscal year begins on July 1; hence, the legislature had to pass a stopgap budget to allow schools to open on schedule. Because of the earlier-than-usual beginning of the fiscal year, North Carolina is expected to have many more districts than in other states postpone expenditures of Federal IDEA funds. They will have to wait until October-November to receive approximately 85 percent of the amount withheld because of Congressional provisions related to "advanced funding" for this coming school year.

## Ohio Update – September 2001

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The next Ohio SchoolNet State Technology Conference, which is likely to have over 5,000 attendees, will be held on February 3-6, 2002, in Columbus.

Four consortia representing 15 districts and 22 K-12 schools have been selected to be part of the Interactive Video Distance Learning program. Now in its third year, the \$1.45 million in program funds will be used to purchase necessary technology and connectivity, provide training and develop content. The ASSIST Program has provided \$300,000 to 30 districts which will be used to train and support students in grades 5-12 to provide technical support. These students will be prepared to become technical assistants within the school and for future work.

The Ohio SchoolNet Commission has purchased online training through Element K which offers more than 500 courses on information technology. As of March 2001, there were more than 700 active individual subscriptions assigned on Element K's web-based education site.

The Ohio SchoolNet Software Review Project has been evaluating science, math, social studies, and language arts software and has posted on the Ohio SchoolNet website 487 reviews by Ohio teachers who have been trained in the use of the system's protocol. The Ohio Assistive Technology Distance Learning Project, involving numerous agencies, is designed to develop awareness and understanding of assistive technology, train staff to provide assistive technology services, and implement greater inclusion of special education students in regular classrooms. Currently, it offers 20 web-based courses which provide college credit through Bowling Green State University. Over 300 teachers have earned graduate credit thus far.

Ohio SchoolNet is in the second year of staff development in the use of two literacy software programs, WriteOutLoud and Co:Writer. Training is conducted by Special Education Regional Resource Centers. All teachers who participate receive free copies of the two software programs and a training manual; they are expected to provide training for other staff members when they return to their district.

The Ohio SchoolNet Commission will be provided approximately \$44 million for each of the next two years, most of which comes from a general revenue fund. These funds may be used to offer extensive staff development and to purchase technology. Under the State's Tobacco Settlement Education Technologies Trust Fund, the following programs will be implemented next year: ONEnet Ohio, Interactive Video Distance Learning, Project JASON, and Electronic Resources Collection (INFOhio). The SchoolNet Commission must submit its budget to the Director of Budget Management, after which time additional funds beyond the Tobacco Settlement may be requested. Overall, State agencies had to reduce their budgets by 1.5%. However, the SchoolNet Commission was exempted. The contact is Sam Orth, Executive Director, Ohio SchoolNet Commission, 614/728-8324.

## Oregon Update – September 2001

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The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, providing \$3.5 million, targets the use of technology to improve student achievement in subject matter areas. Thirty percent of funds must be used for professional development. During the last round, 20 competitive grants were provided to districts totaling \$3 million and two subgrants for Projects of Statewide Significance were funded totaling \$5 million.

A Technology Advisory Committee is revising the Common Curriculum Goals for Technology. Also being revised are the Instructional Framework which serves as a model of how to organize instruction around the common curriculum goals. The State has developed a new web-based accountability reporting system which collects, validates, and reports data and will be used to develop school and district report cards. Oregon has been working with Nebraska and USED to develop an Integrated Performance and Benchmarking System that is designed to reduce data collection and reporting burdens on states and to reinforce common definitions for research and policymaking. A contact is Tom Cook, Executive Director, Oregon Public Education Network, 503/675-4065.

## Pennsylvania Update – June 2001

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The State recently announced that \$14 million in Link to Learn grants will be provided to 99 school districts, charter schools, and technical centers for use by teachers and students to meet the State academic standards. Now in its sixth year, Link to Learn initiative funds will be used to improve students' reading, writing, and math skills; to customize instruction for individual students; and to improve measurement of student progress and reporting to parents. The \$14 million set aside by the Governor is part of a \$29 million pot which also provided \$10.5 million to five districts which proposed to establish digital schools. Also, \$1.3 million has been set aside for technology leadership academies to provide intensive training to superintendents, principals, and school board members. A contact is Gretchen Toner, PDE, 717/783-9802.

In May, Lt. Gov. Mark Schweiker, announced a partnership with AOL, which will provide AOL software to all Pennsylvania schools. The free software package will provide a variety of age-appropriate educational content, communication services, and special safety tools. Twelve of the lowest-performing school districts in the State will be attempting to use technology to graduate from their current status. Included as part of the free software will be free SAT prep courses available to AOL schools from TestU.

Through the lobbying and assistance of the Philadelphia Education Fund, the Pennsylvania legislature has repealed a State law that required teachers in Philadelphia to live in the city. This will open up opportunities for qualified teachers living outside the city to seek employment in Philadelphia Public Schools. In a related activity, Governor Ridge has recently awarded a \$2.7 million contract to Edison Schools Inc. to assess the potential of a private takeover of the Philadelphia Public Schools. As reported in the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (August 19), Governor Ridge has political ties to Edison and some have criticized the contract with Edison as “being less than objective.”

The Pennsylvania Digital Grass Roots program has provided \$3 million in grants to districts to help students design websites for the districts and for other organizations; 130 school districts are



participating thus far. Approximately \$14 million in technology grants under the TLCF will be awarded to 42 school districts primarily for staff development. The new contact in the SEA is Julie Tritt Schell, Director, Office of Educational Technology, 717/705-4486.

## South Carolina Update – September 2001

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According to a recent SEA report, every K-12 school and public library (almost 1,400 sites) has Internet connectivity. A pilot program involving 30 schools is attempting to integrate telecommunications, two-way video, and broadcast technology into a seamless, accessible information source for students and teachers. The State has 13 Regional Education Technology Centers which have appropriate hardware and software and technology specialists who provide professional development and technology support around the State. South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV) has completed installing a satellite dish and three receivers in every school to receive its 32-channel satellite system. In addition, 28 distance learning centers offer shorter distance learning courses for students and teachers. The Teacher Training Institute which involves SCETV and the State Department of Education also provides staff development Statewide on the use of technology and in science.

Over the last three years, more than \$80 million has been provided by the State for establishing the Statewide telecommunication infrastructure and providing hardware, software and training for school districts. A new contact is Barbara Teusink, Director, Office of Technology, 803/734-8395.

## Tennessee Update – September 2001

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The Corrections Corporation of America located in Nashville has recently completed a pilot test of a certification program through which inmates have a chance to receive the *Microsoft Office User's Specialist Certification* status.

The Tennessee "Value Add" approach to accountability has received national recognition. On the other hand, USED has questioned in the approval process whether the use of the TerraNova norm-referenced test in the State is sufficiently aligned with State standards. The SEA has entered into an agreement to have a new system in place which ensures that the TerraNova becomes aligned with standards. The Value Add approach to accountability requires the use of some national norm-referenced standardized tests.

In a special session, the legislature over-rode Governor Sundquist's veto of an education budget that would use up four years of the Tennessee Tobacco Settlement funds. In June, the legislature passed new initiatives to create early interventions for students to establish preschool programs for all four-year-olds and three-year-olds considered at risk of failing, to hire reading specialists, and to train new teachers for reading courses. It is not likely that these programs will be implemented because of budget shortfalls this coming year. In addition, the Governor has cut State education department budgets which will require that a number of jobs be abolished and the discontinuance of several programs such as summer programs for gifted students. Tennessee is among the three worst states in terms of ever-widening deficits which place pressure on K-12 budgets. The other two states are Alabama and Michigan according to the Education Commission of the States.

## Texas Update – September 2001

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The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has awarded \$36 million in Federal Title III funds to 34 districts and consortia to integrate technology into the curriculum and to improve student performance and professional development using technology. Some of the larger districts or consortia grantees are Northside ISD, District 1 Education Service Center, and Henderson ISD. All of these projects, whose grants range from \$1.5 to \$2.5 million, will be used for some type of online delivery of instruction or staff development.

While there were a number of rejected legislative proposals related to professional development for teachers in the area of technology integration, one bill was passed by the legislature relating to master technology teacher certification and grants. The TEA Commissioner would establish the grant program. However, no appropriations were made during this legislative session. The State Board for Educator Certification is required to establish a master technology teacher certificate with the first administration of the new exam to be in 2003.

Senate Bill 975, which was passed by the legislature, would allow the TEA to provide waivers of any State requirements which have been identified by districts as impeding the implementation of virtual learning. While no additional funds will be available, districts would be able to count as part of their Average Daily Attendance those students participating in virtual courses which would result in increased TEA formula funding.

As noted in the Washington Update, Texas is one of the first states to announce the availability of Federal school repair and renovation funds. These funds can be used to implement special education programs and for wiring, hardware and software purchases, connectivity, fiberoptic cable, and other technology products. Awards will be announced in November.

Under Proclamation 2001, an invitation to bid instructional materials was released for the 2003 adoption of high school technology applications. Publishers must submit products for review in April 2003 for adoption in November of that year. Two meetings have been held with publishers of 82001, Education TURNKEY Systems, Inc.

technology applications or instructional materials. The course model provides annual payments to vendors and allows for updated content in rapidly changing subject areas. For more information go to [tea.state.tx.us/Textbooks](http://tea.state.tx.us/Textbooks).

In addition to providing funds to produce Braille versions of textbooks, technical references are also provided for those publishers who wish to meet Section 508 technology accessibility standards.

## Washington Update – September 2001

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The SEA has allocated \$4 million of its \$5.6 million in TLCF funding for learning improvement in mathematics, using the remaining funds for integrating technology into existing TLCF projects. Under the new project, students would use problem-based learning to improve math achievement through sixth and seventh grade teachers working as teams. Components of the project include providing teachers and aides with training on problem-based teaching strategies in mathematics; providing teachers and students greater access to constructivist-type products and environments; and developing and implementing assessment strategies which are sensitive to math achievement skill levels.

In March 2001, the SEA conducted a Statewide assessment to determine current technology inventory in schools. It found:

- 95 percent of classrooms are now Internet-accessible for one or more computers, up from 4 percent in 1994;
- nearly all K-12 certified staff have e-mail accounts provided by school districts;
- 3,400 K-12 students are enrolled in online courses;
- predominant use of computers by students include word processing and web-based research with a lesser emphasis on use for instruction and drill and practice;
- two-thirds of the schools have individuals who are paid to provide technology support, averaging about 3.5 hours per day.

A contact is Dennis Small, Supervisor, Educational Telecommunications, 360/664-3111.

## West Virginia Update – September 2001

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In a special session of the State legislature, approval was given to Governor Wise's initiative to tax and regulate video gambling machines which would provide a source of funding for his merit-based college scholarship program. These funds will also be used to provide for school improvement and infrastructure. The legislature also approved measures to encourage teachers to remain in a particular district through: (1) \$500 incentives; (2) implement a large-scale job data bank for teachers; and (3) allow retired teachers to return to teaching without losing their retirement benefits. Teacher salaries will increase between \$750 and \$2,000 next year.

The West Virginia Department of Education will be holding public hearings which are required for approval of a compliance agreement in which the State will have to develop a State standards-based assessment. In the past, the State changed its standards so that they could be aligned with the Terra Nova.