

(703) 536-2310
FAX (703) 536-3225

Education **TURNKEY** Systems, Inc.

256 North Washington Street
Falls Church, Virginia 22046-4549

MEMORANDUM

November 16, 2001
: Page 1 of 3

TechMIS Subscribers

FROM: Charles Blaschke

SUBJECT: Section 508 Update, Washington Update, and State Profiles

Included in this mailing is a Special Report which provides an update on what appears to be happening in various quarters related to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which now requires that any multimedia or other technology-based education product purchased by any Federal agency be accessible for individuals with sight or hearing disabilities. The real question here is when will states and local districts which receive Federal funds be held accountable for purchasing products which meet Section 508 or related universal design principles, and what types of incentives might be provided to software publishers to ensure that their products meet the technology accessibility standards.

The Washington Update includes:

- An announcement by AASA that it opposes the HR 1 ESEA reauthorization as it currently stands; as more and more national education groups express their

opposition and bipartisan support dissipates, the real question is what type of a compromise will evolve;

- A report prepared for a consortium of five national education associations which makes recommendations that states need to follow in developing or selecting state assessments, and the opportunities which may be created for some TechMIS subscribers if state policymakers adopt these mandates;
- National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) recommendations that public schools should adopt procedures and practices identified in a recent study of Department of Defense schools which have been very effective in reducing achievement gaps in reading and writing;
- The creation of an online education consortium of states which initially will facilitate sharing of test items that are linked to state standards and objectives; this association could be helpful in aggregating demand through volume discount purchasing or it could be the beginning of “unfair competition” with the private sector from states;
- Principals’ involvement in decision-making related to technology-based instructional product selection and purchasing is likely to increase as a result of recent developments;
- USED’s Office of Chief Information is implementing a major outreach effort to education technology vendors which includes an online industry registry;
- A newly created adult education technology laboratory located at the University of Pennsylvania will be involved in identifying and evaluating technology effectiveness in adult education, thus creating a one-stop research, training, and evaluation laboratory at the University and in partner projects located across the country;
- A new National Center for Education Accountability at the University of Texas is promoted as “the country’s most influential center working on education accountability”;
- Many Title I eligible schools which are not now being served are likely to benefit from major change in the Title I formula, which in turn will create high-priority prospects in Title I next year;
- A new report summarized in [Title I Reports](#) which finds the number of schoolwide programs continues to increase and provides good sales opportunities for technology publishers and vendors; and

- A new report from the Government Accounting Office which suggests that BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) schools could be a growth market for software, professional development, and technology support services.

After the last regular TechMIS mailing in mid-October, toward the end of October you received a State Funding/Budget Cut alert. Some of the most current information on certain states (such as Florida), is addressed in the State Updates. However, at the end of this month, we plan to send out another update on state budget cuts that have actually been passed by State legislatures; 15-20 states have convened special sessions this month or will likely do so before the end of November. Projected budget shortfalls from declining revenue, as well as actions to reduce budgets or increase taxes, presents a “moving target” changing dramatically, often on a weekly basis. We believe it is best to wait until some action has been taken either by the governor or the legislature and signed by the governor. However, do not hesitate to give me a call if you have some questions about any of the states. If and when there are further developments in the ESEA reauthorization and/or the FY 2002 budget appropriations, we will also send out special alerts by e-mail. As always, if you have any questions please give me a call.