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Memorandum

January 17, 2000

TO: TechMIS Subscribers

FROM: Charles Blaschke

SUBJECT: Washington Update and State Profiles

This TechMIS mailing includes State Profile Updates, some of which were developed in November but which required follow-up. Most of the topics covered in these state profiles include descriptions of current state assessment systems which we excerpted, with permission from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), from its most recent report (cited in the November TechMIS mailing). Also included are updates on funding for the current school year, and on legislative action after the November TechMIS mailing.

The Washington Update includes items on:

- Draft guidance related to assessment and accountability as reflected in Ed-Flex Peer-Review Guidance, which will likely be used to determine which existing state assessment and accountability procedures can be approved for Ed-Flex eligibility; the bottom line is whether the USED will indeed stand behind its rather strong position;
- The results of a GAO report confirming that Title I school-wide programs should be targeted by producers of products and services for LEP students;
- Expanded efforts by USED to make more Federally-developed Internet databases and websites available, including the new Gateway to Education Materials (GEM) initiative;

- Revised priorities for the new round of 21st Century Learning Center applications, which focuses on improving subject matter instruction, especially for LD and special education students;
- An E-Rate update, which summarizes commitments during the second round and highlights the new E-Rate eligibility list, including new wireless and satellite services;
- A new research and assessment design which could drive the Head Start market for new technology-based products;
- Expanding controversies over various approaches to teaching mathematics, which indicates that it will be an issue in ESEA reauthorization;
- An NCES report, which finds a significant increase in the number of youth receiving GEDs versus high school diplomas;
- Several indicators suggesting a higher priority will be placed upon high school reform in the upcoming ESEA reauthorization;
- A new initiative by the Department of Army to use college degrees and GEDs obtained while in military duty as incentives to increase enlistments, an approach which was tried almost three decades ago without much success;
- Several initiatives which suggest that disability advocacy groups are going to be using the courts to ensure greater access to technology and Internet for students with disabilities.

The next TechMIS mailing will include an analysis of the President's proposed budget for FY2001. From all indications, it appears that the Administration will not fight Congress to reinstate Goals 2000, but rather will provide some additional funds for Goals 2000 purposes under the consolidated Title II and Title VI. A late breaking story in the Washington Post suggests that the Administration is going to attempt to cut most of the "pork" that was in the FY2000 budget as a primary focus of budget-cutting to achieve the .38% overall cost reduction. This is likely to create pressure on key Senators -- such as Senator Lott, among others -- because the amount of "pork" for Mississippi throughout the entire budget is almost \$.5 billion. Since the last budget analysis, the Department has also interpreted that "advanced-funding" will apply not only to special education but also to Title VI. Districts will receive only 15% of their FY2000 Title VI funds in the Summer, with the remainder as late as October-November 2000. Depending on subsequent interpretations, other programs may be categorized as "advanced-funding" creating even more uncertainty beginning this May, which will affect purchasing cycles.

If you have any questions on these or any other items, please call me directly.