

MEMORANDUM

May 18, 2000

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Page 1 of 3

TechMIS Subscribers

FROM: Charles Blaschke

SUBJECT: Washington Update and TechMIS Index

This issue includes the Washington Update, a compilation of per-pupil expenditures by state for hardware, software and services, and an index of TechMIS issues over the last several months.

Compared to any other year in which the reauthorization of ESEA was scheduled, there are more differing proposals being made this year by various groups, all of which are likely to be vetoed by the President. Most of the factions within the Republican and Democratic parties are making such proposals for political “posturing” as who to blame when ESEA is not reauthorized as scheduled. It appears that the only possibility for legislation being passed and signed by the President would be the House version for ESEA Title I, which could be endorsed by the Senate in deference to Chairman Bill Goodling, who has announced his retirement.

On the E-rate front the FCC has extended the deadline for using Year 2 funds for reoccurring costs (i.e., wiring) through September 30, 2000, which is similar to the deadline extension also made by the FCC for Year 1 funding. This would allow many districts to conduct last-minute internal connections during this summer under approved E-rate discounts. The SLD also announced that over \$430 million in Year 2 has not been actually reimbursed to recipients thus far because they have not filed their Year 2 Form 486 or BEAR Form 472. For Year 1 of the \$1.7 billion committed to applications, almost \$450 million will not be reimbursed because applicants did not file Forms 486 and Forms 472. The net effect will be a reduction of the E-rate generated “savings” by several hundred million dollars; these refunds could have been used for purchasing non-eligible items. This could also raise questions about how much E-rate funding is really needed by schools, which offer support to E-rate political opposition.

The Washington Update includes the following items:

- Results of a new study which suggest that high-level computer-using students should be provided reasonable accommodation by being able to use computers when taking NAEP and other assessments;
- An update of a previous survey conducted by NIL of distant learning in adult basic education programs;
- Several trends suggesting that remedial instruction will expand even more in two year colleges in the immediate future;
- A report on the recent NAFEP Conference where many attendees were very anxious about the future of Title I and ESEA;
- Development of second five-year USED National Technology Plan which will attempt to increase Federal government influence over software development;
- Findings and recommendations from the Congressionally mandated National Reading Panel, which calls for more research on the use of computers to teach reading;
- New NCTM math standards which incorporate more basic skills emphasis and new “technology education” standards by ITEA which are not likely to have much impact;
- Administration and urban mayors seeking supplemental funding for summer youth training and education programs;
- New standards-based reform initiatives being reconsidered;
- New report indicating a marked contrast in two-year college student population suggesting expanding opportunities for education software publishers;
- White House “new markets initiatives” to bridge the digital divide which will likely result in market uncertainties;
- GAO report recommendations for continued reimbursement for related services under Medicaid but under a more streamlined application process;

- A new report which predicts a healthy future for the education industry; however, discussions with investors suggest not only some redirections, but also continued naiveté about the K-12 market.

State Profiles Update will be included in the next TechMIS mailing. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me directly.