

(703) 536-2310  
Fax (703) 536-3225

**Education TURNKEY Electronic Distribution, Inc.**

**256 North Washington Street  
Falls Church, Virginia 22046-4549**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

O July 7, 2000  
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TechMIS Subscribers

**FROM:** Charles Blaschke  
**SUBJECT:** Washington Update and State Profiles  
Special Report on Purchasing Cycles

The enclosed TechMIS mailing includes several Washington Update items that should be of high interest, updated profiles on a number of states.

Included in the Washington Update are the following:

- a recent study directed by Dr. Andrew Porter which confirms that state assessment instruments in most states are not correlated with the content teachers cover, a topic which we have addressed in previous TechMIS mailings;
- the status of the FY 2001 budget battle at the end of June which suggests a Presidential veto to be followed by another budget proposal which is likely to be moderately positive;
- an update on the American Indian education niche market which suggests rapid growth in technology purchases;

- findings from a recent NCES survey on teacher use of the Internet, differentiating Title I teachers use from non-Title I teachers use, which have implications for positioning products;
- Congressional pressures to include provisions limiting Federal purchases only to products which are research-based and have been proven to be effective which could stifle innovative use of technology;
- USED's Annual Report to the Congress on Technology Literacy Grant programs, indicating the measures which USED feels are important in assessing the impact of technology on student learning;
- Additions of education resources to the USED/FREE website, which are in direct competition with commercial publishers in many cases, and which could provide opportunities for others;

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- a recent survey of New York's bilingual programs which identifies the types of software that are being used with native and non-native speaking limited-English-proficient students;
- two recent surveys by the Annenberg Public Policy Center which strongly suggest different perceptions between children and their parents on what information to provide online; this remains a major issue and perhaps a barrier to expanded use of the Internet for education purposes;
- recently proposed legislation which would increase student involvement in high-level math and science courses -- a sleeper bill that could be passed.

At this writing the reauthorization of ESEA was completely stalled with little likelihood of passage this year, in which case Federal programs would operate under current law for an additional year.

District notification of E-Rate discount approvals continues, with several reports on how E-Rate funding is being used is scheduled for release in mid-July. During Year-Three, it is highly likely that about \$8 billion will be requested in the form of checks under the BEAR process which is definitely good news and may offset the loss of \$283 million under the BEAR process for Year-One. This money was returned to collection agencies because districts who had approved E-Rate discounts did not apply for the actual reimbursement.

Also included in this issue is a special report on changes in funds allocation and purchasing cycles. The next strong purchasing cycle will be from October to the Spring due to late actual allocation of funds for certain Federal programs initiation of the BEAR process for Year-Two and Year-Three.

This mailing also includes State Profile Updates on selected states addressing such topics as: a) the final K-12 budget and funding for technology-related initiatives and programs; b) new and re-directed state assessments policies; c) several critical lawsuits which could generate a demand for

technology products; and d) miscellaneous items which have implications for technology purchases in years.

On a final note, if any TechMIS subscribers are planning direct mail campaigns, or sales campaigns in the next few months please contact me if you are interested in learning about a new mail list being compiled for us by Mailings Clearinghouse. It will be similar to the current list, but will add to select: a) inclusion of recently funded 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Centers franchisees; and b) Title I school-wide programs on our current list with also districts located in Empowerment Zones. We expect about 3,500 to 5,000 schools to be contained in this list.

As always, give me a call if you have any questions.

## **Purchasing Cycles Over Next Twelve Months to Differ From Traditional Ones**

*A Technology Monitoring and Information Service (TechMIS)*  
**SPECIAL REPORT**

*Prepared by:*  
**Education TURNKEY Systems, Inc.**  
*256 North Washington Street*  
*Falls Church, Virginia 22046-4549*  
*(703) 536-2310 / (703) 536-3225 FAX*

*June 27, 2000*

The purchasing cycles for technology-related products over the next 12 months will differ significantly from the traditional cycles for many products, which have been in the spring to early summer and August-September. The reason for these changes are related to Federal funding and policy changes including: a) increased “advanced funding” in Federal programs; b) changes in the amount and schedule for E-Rate refunds and c) changes in Federal funding allocations amounts and timing.

### **a. Advanced Funding**

Advanced funding is a gimmick which initially Congress used and subsequently has been bought by the Administration for representing budgets in one fiscal year when in fact a significant portion of that budget will be coming from the following year’s budget. Under the concept of “forward funding”, which began in 1982, Congress adopted a budget process for education programs whereby schools and districts knew approximately eight to ten months before they received the funds how much money they were going to be getting for the next school year to assist them in planning. Under advanced funding, only a percentage of the Federal funds for the next school year will be allocated in July-August before school opens with the remainder not being allocated until October-December. Hence, with varying degrees of funding uncertainty, many states and districts have decided not to purchase products until they receive all of the funds.

For this 1999-2000 school year (FY 1999), Title I programs received only 20% of their allocation in July 1999, with the remainder 80% being allocated between the end of November 1999. However, for this coming school year, the schedule and percentages advance funded in several major programs which support technology purchases are being communicated to districts only now, which is creating anxieties and uncertainties. The specific Federal programs, and the percent of funds to be allocated in July with the remainder in October through December, includes: a) Title I (60%), the IDEA/Special Education (60%), Title VI/formally Chapter II (15%), among others. These three programs alone represent almost a billion dollars of technology purchases annually. The likelihood that the remaining funds will be allocated in October-December are highest for IDEA/special

education because of the litigious nature of the special education community; moderately high for Title I, because of its magnitude; and least likely for Title VI as it might be converted to a block grant. Hence, advance funding is going to result in school officials holding back on purchases to be used this coming school year until October-December allocations are made.

The largest Federal allocation is for Title I; last year USED notified districts directly, rather than going through the SEAs. The preliminary allocations for school year 99-00 were made in April 1999; but because of a large number of mistakes and opposition from the SEAs, because notification had been a traditional SEA role allowing it to make adjustments, final notification of allocations was made in June, 1999. The process for this year has changed somewhat and is less uniform. For planning purposes, districts were notified of an estimated allocation in January-February 2000; however, the final allocations provided to the districts and the SEAs concurrently were not made until the end of May. The use of the most recent census data has resulted in some variation from year to year for a district's allocations. Other factors affecting such allocations include cost factors, year-end adjustments, etc. And for the year 2000, the Title I LEA grant increase was only approximately \$75 million. In addition, a "hold harmless" provision was included. The opportunities to target includes two types of districts: a) those with moderate increases in total Title I funding (e.g., mostly large districts in N.Y., California, Massachusetts, Texas, North Carolina and Florida) or those with greater than a 15% increase (e.g., 30 LEAs in smaller states) and b) those districts with level funding but with a significantly reduced number of students level funding because of "hold harmless" which will result in an increase in the per-pupil allocations. Another opportunity is in those districts which were told by the SEA or the local board to "carry over the maximum 15%" under the assumption they might receive a cut in Title I funding because the use of new Census Data; however, when they find out the budget will actually increase, then some of the "carry over funds" will likely be spent shortly thereafter. Spending of "would have been carry over funds" is most likely in those states which the SEA discourages any carry over of any Federal funds from one year to the next.

b. Changes in E-Rate Refunds TechMIS Timing and Amounts

In most of the TechMIS E-Rate Updates beginning in August, 1998, we had emphasized the opportunities that are created in those districts which use the Billed Entity Application Reimbursement (BEAR) Form 472 to request in the form of check (rather than a credit) refunds from service providers who have been paid the pre-discount price for products and services. During the Year One, because of the extremely lengthy notification process for approving E-Rate discounts, approximately \$1.3 billion of the 1.7 billion total E-Rate budget was eligible under the BEAR process for refunds. Because of the novelty of the E-Rate initiative, the Schools and Library Division were extremely flexible in allowing districts to file the BEAR Form for Year One through December 15, 1999 with even some later exceptions approved. However, in April, 2000 the SLD announced that it had previously approved \$483 million for E-Rate discounts for the applicant's school districts and libraries, but, for a variety of reasons, it had not received the Form 486 nor the BEAR Form 472 indicating such approved work had been actually conducted and completed. As a result, in late April they made a decision, not to disburse approximately \$483 million for Year One.

The BEAR process was approved for use in Year Two funding and has resulted in approximately \$600 million of refunds being generated. At the end of May, the SLD announced during a service provider conference call, that FCC had approved the use of the BEAR Form for Year Three; however, for Year Three if the service provider and district agree to use the BEAR process during the first month, they must continue using the process through the next 11 months. While the SLD has attempted to notify many districts of approved E-Rate discounts prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>, some have estimated that almost \$1 billion of the \$2.25 billion for Year Three will not be notified to districts until after July, which represents a potential \$1.0 billion of refunds to districts during Year Three.

The net effect of these changes has been to reduce the amount of refunds that could have been used between October 1999 and November 2000 ; one can anticipate a large portion of the \$1.0-1.5 billion potential BEAR refund pot to become available to districts beginning in October through next September,2001. The availability of E-Rate discounts refunds from October 1999 through the Fall of 2001, is likely to have the effect of providing some funding for software, staff development, and hardware purchases that would have been otherwise negatively impacted because of advanced funding and funding uncertainty.

The net effect of the above changes should result in a much stronger purchasing cycle than in the past beginning in October through March - April 2001 as E-Rate work is completed and districts complete the BEAR Forms requesting check refunds. While this will hold true, generally, there are specific changes that could affect certain programs such as Title I and special education. If anyone wishes additional information, or has questions about purchasing cycles for the next year, please contact Charles Blaschke directly.

# **Title I: Update on Implementations of New Policies and Legislation and Recent Funding Allocations for The 2000-2001 School Year**

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## **Approval of State Title I Assessment Plans**

In the 1994 Title I reauthorization, states were given a deadline of June 30, 2000 for coming up with an accountability and assessment system that met the criteria for standards-based reform. By the end of May, many states had submitted their proposed accountability and assessment systems. A peer review process has been created, and uses the following primary criteria for approval: (a) the state has adopted content standards regarding what is to be taught that are comprehensive and rigorous; (b) it has included challenging performance standards with expectations of what students should master at different grade levels; and (c) it uses an assessment system that is rigorous and is aligned with standards. In addition, each state must come up with an acceptable criterion for assessing “adequate yearly progress.”

The first two states to receive conditional approval were Kentucky and Wyoming. One of the conditions Kentucky has to meet is to administer state assessments to limited English proficient students at the end of one year in the program, in lieu of the proposed two years. The law allows reasonable accommodations for LEP and students with disabilities. Kentucky is one of two states that currently has a valid alternative assessment instrument, which could be used to assess severely impaired special education students. Wyoming proposed a policy to assess all LEP students in English after two years in the program. However, reasonable accommodations are provided in the

initial evaluation where English ability is particularly low.

Plans from two additional states, North Carolina and Illinois, have also been reviewed. In three of the four states, “reasonable accommodations” for students with disabilities was identified as a condition which must be met for final approval. In North Carolina and Kentucky, assessment systems have been in place for quite some time, while the current assessment system is new for Wyoming. Wyoming administers the Terra Nova norm-referenced test and its own standards-based exam; both tests are used for Title I accountability and reporting purposes. Unlike North Carolina, where passage of state assessment is considered “high stakes” testing, there are no incentives nor sanctions in Wyoming.

Other states, which have submitted their plans by the end of May included: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

As reported in the Title I Report (May), Title I coordinators during the IRA conference in Indianapolis expressed concerns that there are likely to be a large number of conditional approvals with some states having to make fundamental changes to meet the Federal mandate and the criteria used by the reviewers. Most of the areas in which conditional approvals occurred for the above four states are likely to be repeated in almost all of the other states (except perhaps Maryland), especially those related to providing reasonable accommodation for special education students. Confusion is also likely to arise when and if USED approves, for accountability purposes, a state’s Title I assessment plans and state courts subsequently rule the state assessment plans illegal, as could happen as a result of recent lawsuits in Indiana (See Indiana Update). And, to add to the confusion, both presidential candidates have their own view of accountability and “high stakes” testing which could result in another review of state assessments a year from now. Even if a state’s assessments system is approved, the state’s criteria for “adequate yearly progress” is likely to be the most serious “bone of contention” between USED and individual states. Only in a limited number of states, where cut-off points and criterion levels are to be used (versus absolute levels), are approvals likely

to occur at least initially.

#### New Choice Mandate

In September, for the first time districts who have the “capacity” to provide choice to students in schools which have been “targeted for improvement” will be implementing this new initiative. The SEA has the responsibility for establishing criteria to determine whether or not a district has or “lacks” the capacity to provide a choice. During the annual IRA meeting, state officials asked a host of questions which clearly indicated that they anticipated the disruptive nature of implementing this mandate in Title I programs. Questions raised included: (a) is it allowable to pass over schools that have received CSRD funding when allocating additional school improvement funding under this initiative; (b) can students be assigned to another school for multiple years to prevent students being bounced from school to school; and (c) can Title I funds be used to pay parents for transporting students? USED officials stated that in the near future, they would be posting on the USED website information related to such questions.

#### Funds Allocations

The preliminary fund allocations process which began in January, is now “final”, indicating how much Title I funds have been allocated under the LEA grant program to districts. According to Title I Reports (May) of the 13,000 LEAs, about 3,500 will get the same amount while 5,500 will experience a very minor cut. About 80 districts will get increases of more than 10% with only 35 districts getting more a 15% increase. Because of the “hold harmless” provision about 1,600 districts are receiving concentration grants even though they no longer qualify for them. Seventeen of these districts will receive more than \$400,000, the largest being Hamilton County, Tennessee which receives \$1 million that it would otherwise have lost. The net effect is that the per-pupil allocation in these districts is increasing. While many of the smallest states would experience slight increases the largest percentage increases were for California (3.4%) and North Carolina (3.3%). Districts with the largest absolute increases are noted in Exhibit 1; and those with the largest percent increases are shown in Exhibit 2.

Although districts have been notified of their “model allocation,” SEAs in approximately 11 states will be making adjustments based on use of alternative data, allocations to Title I entities which are not “LEAs” (e.g., in California), and other factors which have been approved by USED. Hence, the actual allocation of funds will likely occur later in these states including: Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma, California and Arizona. The amount of funds allocated in July by USED will likely be about 60% of the total which is up from 20% allocated in July 1999. The remainder of the funds will be available in October-November. The net effect of these changes will be to postpone purchases in a number of states until October-November. States in which this is likely to occur include North Carolina, Michigan, Indiana and other states where the SEA does not encourage districts to carry over any funds from one year to the next. For additional information on Title I allocations for 2000-01, and related Title I information contact Jolie Miller, Title I Report at [www.titleI.com](http://www.titleI.com).

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## **New Study Confirms State Assessments/Teaching Content Alignment Are Worse Off Than Previously Thought.**

A recent study by the Center for Education Research University of Wisconsin Madison found that in ten states, similar content is covered by teachers; however, the fourth and eighth grade instruments used to assess performance are widely varied, suggesting that alignment between state instruments and content covered is even worse than we have argued in the past. Among the ten states, the highest level of overlap between teaching content and the test was 46% in the fourth grade in one state. The lowest level was 5% for instruction in one state at the eighth grade level in math. The states participating in this study were Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and West Virginia. More than 600 teachers across these states were surveyed and asked about the content they teach and the types of instruction and modes of thinking that was involved in their instruction. The report strongly urged states to provide information to teachers related to the content which will be covered on the state assessments.

As a result, it argues, teachers will teach to the content area, because they feel this is more important from an accountability perspective than teaching to performance standards. A subsequent study will be conducted by the Center on the alignment of assessment tests to state performance standards.

## **FY 2001 Budget Battle Heating Up**

With the ESEA reauthorization stalemated and passage unlikely this year, the major focus of attention over the next several months will be the FY 2001 budget. Not only are the numbers important, but also the extent to which Congress expands the use of gimmicks such as “advanced funding,” as endless last minute provisions (which would normally be in authorizing legislation). It is quite likely that any compromise arrived at between the House and Senate versions of the current proposed appropriations will be vetoed by the President.

Both House and Senate appropriations committees have passed proposed levels on a partisan vote. In general, the Senate proposal is slightly higher than the FY 99 budget by increasing the education budget by \$4.7 billion compared to an increase of \$1.6 billion in the House. On various line items that support technology purchases, the two bodies also differ. The Senate Bill would level-fund TLCF, but cut by 30% the Technology Innovation Challenge Grants, while at the same time, increasing Community Technology Centers by 100%. The House on the other hand, will increase both programs, particularly Innovation Challenge Grants, while level-funding the Community Technology Centers. In both bills, special education is a winner with a recently-passed resolution that increases funding next year by \$2.0 billion; both would increase Title I, 1% to 3% -- much less than the President's proposal. As with last year's increase in Technology Innovation Grants, most of the proposed increases would be earmarked for "pet projects," particularly in rural districts serving high rates of poverty and with strong community interest. Twenty to thirty different projects are identified and recommended for funding in the House's Committee Report.

Most of the "bones of contention" between the two Congressional bodies and the Administration, are with Class Size Reduction Construction. Both the Senate and the House have proposed more discretion to school districts on deciding how they wish to spend the \$1.3 billion proposed for the third year of Class Size Reduction (e.g., for staff development vs. hiring new teachers). Thus far, the President has been promising a veto if his Class Size Reduction Act (which is supported by NEA and AFT) is not funded in its current form. One area in which there appears to be more room for compromise relates to providing a limited amount of funds (\$1.0 to \$1.5 billion) for school modernization and construction in the form of tax credits and related incentives. Such funding could be used to expand the QZAB initiative currently funded at \$400 million; however, as noted in previous TechMIS mailings, many states have yet to allocate any QZAB funds to districts. This fund can be used not only to renovate schools, but also to purchase new curricula, hardware, and software.

After a likely veto, before the August recess, Congress is likely to come up a new budget which will include the following:

- A \$1 to \$2 billion increase in IDEA special Education funding and a 2% to 4% increase in Title I funding;
- A moderate to large increase among the several programs that fund staff development efforts, which appear to be a moderate priority among all parties;
- A slight increase in overall technology funding with most of the increase allocated for “pork barrel” projects, thereby, reducing the amount available for competitive grants;
- A moderate increase in TRIO and related college programs for disadvantaged students;
- Relatively large increases in discretionary grants programs, such as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers and Computer Technology Centers, which target Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

While the Class Size Reduction initiative will continue to be a separate entity, the Administration is likely to provide increased flexibility for funds allocation, such as allowing 35% of funds to be used for staff development during this year. With the exception of some discretionary programs, Congress is likely to “advance fund” more programs than it did this year.

### **Native American Niche Market for Technology Products Likely to Experience Rapid Growth.**

The demand for software, CD-ROMs and digitally-delivered education programs is likely to grow in the immediate future in tribal schools representing a target of opportunity for software publishers and other technology vendors. A number of initiatives related to the digital divide suggest that funding, hardware, and infrastructure will be in place in a number of tribal education programs across the country in the near future.

In early June, the FCC announced several initiatives which will contribute to the availability of telecommunication networks. For example, approximately \$20 million will be provided in the form of subsidies for Native Americans living on tribal land, whereby the service cost for basic local telephone services would be as low as \$1 per month. The FCC also approved a plan which will

provide incentives to companies to purchase spectrums of airways in upcoming Federal auctions, if they are willing to provide wireless service to tribal reservations. Currently, only 44% of tribal households have telephones compared to over 95% of the households nationally.

President Clinton recently announced a \$1 million grant to AmeriCorp to renovate tribal schools by providing the necessary wiring connectivity. IBM, The Kellogg Foundation, and The University of Michigan have agreed to provide \$1 million to start a virtual library for tribal colleges.

Last year, Vice President Gore announced an initiative funded in part by the US Department of Education, for a major wiring program in approximately 20 reservations. Several of the leaders of the NetDay movement (e.g., Mike Kaufman) of the mid-1990s are involved in infrastructure development on these reservations.

Tribal reservations will be one of several targets of hardware and training donations announced widely in the press from such foundations headed by, or associated with, leaders in the high tech community including Steven Case, Bill Gates, The Gateway Foundation, and Barksdale Foundation. Congress is also likely to pass the Millennium Classroom Act, which will provide companies with a 50% of fair market value tax credit for computers donated to schools in Empowerment Zones; a growing number of Native American reservations have been so designated. Tribes in the Dakotas recently were awarded Community Technology Center grants which favor high-poverty Empowerment Zones.

Just as state lotteries have become an important funding source for schools to purchase technology, revenue raised through gaming on reservation casinos has also become an important funding source for tribal schools to use to purchase technology, particularly high-ticket items. Following the precedents of tribes in Connecticut, Minnesota and Mississippi several years ago, the number of reservations with casinos and other gaming facilities has increased substantially.

It would appear that the combination of donated hardware, subsidized phone service, funding for

infrastructure development, and increased portions of gaming revenues allocated for education, bodes well for a healthy Indian education niche market. The major challenge, however, is identifying who the primary customers are, and how to reach them. One key player is the Bureau of Indian Affairs (under the Department of the Interior) and its several regional offices which place varied priorities on technology use. The process of selling to, or even getting endorsement from, regional BIA offices is a very lengthy and costly process. Most of these purchases eventually, will be made by tribal schools or government structures over them.

The approach that appears to work best for most types of technology-based solutions is to rely on a seasoned sales veteran with experience in selling to tribal schools, or selling indirectly through a dealer or independent sales rep who has had recent in-depth experience in selling to specific tribal purchasing agents. Most such offices rely on vendors to complete a multitude of forms and related paperwork as a prerequisite for making sales. Experience and knowledge about such procurement procedures is critical.

### **Teachers in Title I High-Poverty Schools Use Computers and the Internet Less Than Wealthy Schools, Even Though They Perceive Themselves as Being “Relatively Well Prepared”**

NCES/USED has released some of the data collected in the Spring of 1999 to assess the use of computers and the Internet by teachers. Although teachers in high-poverty Title I schools thought they were equally prepared in using computers and the Internet as those teachers in low-poverty schools (e.g., less than 11% free lunch), the percentage of teachers in Title I schools using computers or the Internet “a lot” for various activities was substantially less. For example, teachers in wealthy schools used Internet “a lot” to create instruction material (52%), for administrative record keeping (43%), communicate with colleagues (31%) compared to teachers in schools with 50% to 70% poverty where the percentages were, respectively, 35%, 30% and 15%. Ironically in Title I where the use of “best practices” for teaching and “parent communication” are specific mandates and priorities, only 5% of the teachers reported using computers “a lot” for these functions in the high poverty

schools compared to almost 10% in the wealthier, low-poverty schools. On the other hand, teachers in Title I high-poverty schools were more likely to assign to students computer based activities which could be considered “drill and practice” and “problem solving” than were teachers in high-wealth schools. On the other hand, high wealth school teachers are much more likely to assign students “computer applications exercises” than high poverty school teachers, (55% versus 33%) and to assign student research projects (39% versus 25%), and, assign students demonstrations and simulation exercises (22% versus 13%).

These findings strongly suggest that drill and practice continues to be an important use of computers in Title I programs as one might expect; however, the large percentage of Title I teachers assigning computer-based activity related to “problem solving or analyzing data,” indicates that this priority included in 1994 ESEA reorganization, is beginning to be realized. However, Title I teachers are only half as likely to use the Internet to do research on or identify “best practices” and “communicate with colleagues,” or to “access model lesson plans.” The April NCES Report, entitled “Teacher Use of Computers and the Internet in Public Schools” should be considered preliminary as a more detailed report is expected to be published shortly. For a copy of the summary, go to <http://www.nces.ed.gov>.

### **Research-Based, Proven Methods “Mentality” in Congress would Stifle Innovative Use of Technology**

Within Congress, there is a growing “mindset” that Federal funds should be used to purchase only products that have been proven to be effective and/or are based upon research findings. Within most of current, proposed legislation -- supported by Republicans, the Administration, and Democratic leaders alike -- are provisions following such a mandate in the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program in the 1997 Appropriations Act. There is also a serious attempt to enforce the so-called “principles of effectiveness” in the Title IV/Drug Free and Safe Communities Act and include the “principles” in most other titles under the proposed ESEA reauthorization legislation.

Within the education research community there are different schools of thought on the feasibility of conducting the necessary research to identify such proven practices and approaches. One school of thought calls for random assignments based on experimental/control designs comparing different approaches. In special education, this model would generally be illegal and draw lawsuits from parents who logically would want their children prescribed materials based upon assessments, as reflected in IEPs, not through random assignment. Another research group calls for longitudinal studies of planned variations of treatments similar to studies conducted in the 1970s as part of the first National Evaluation of Follow Through programs. As debates over the issue continue, along with attempts to develop models and apply them, the research community certainly benefits; however, such research be at the expense of technology vendors and software publishers.

Congressional staff persons are seriously proposing the creation of a national software evaluation and dissemination clearinghouse (similar to the existing California Clearinghouse -- see related item -- which has been strongly opposed by groups such as SIIA, among others) which would identify products that have been proven effective. Clearinghouses will also require software to be correlated to state standards; some publishers only correlate lessons to assessment domains which in many cases are not aligned with specific frameworks.

Most of the traditional measures, such as scores or national norm-referenced tests, are not appropriate for assessing many technology-based intervention and products. This is why the USED, in its report to Congress, mentioned a number of measures which should be used in addition to standardized tests scores (see related story). Moreover, as reported in the last TechMIS mailing, many technology-using students are not allowed to use technology while taking the assessment. For basic skills products for which norm-referenced tests have greater validity and reliability, the cost and time for long-term studies is prohibitive; moreover, the volatility of the industry with so many acquisitions and mergers have a tendency to erode research designs over a long time period. Rapid advances in technology often result in product changes which then raise questions about the integrity of treatments in experimental designs. Perhaps, the greatest threat is the stifling of innovative and creative uses of technology by teachers and students when such products are introduced without

“proven track records.”

Texas is taking an interesting approach by conducting a study of different technological configurations used in different settings, in an attempt to determine under what conditions the different technological interventions work best with what types of students. The last time USED funded such an evaluation addressing computer-based instruction was in 1975 in Los Angeles Public Schools; the CCC integrated learning system was evaluated by an independent group headed by Dean Jamison. A more reasonable approach for Congress to follow would be to fund a large-scale evaluation of different types of interventions in specific areas, such as the five-year longitudinal evaluation, conducted by IMPAC Learning in late 1980s and early 1990s, of stand-alone, computer-assisted instruction, and computer-managed instruction interventions in math and reading. Carefully identifying the key “features” and “conditions” under which an approach proves to be successful is important to software developers who can then develop products with such features. As an alternative, the study could help firms identify the products among their product lines that incorporate specific features that have been “demonstrated” to be effective.

Software publishers and vendors of programs that have been negatively affected by not being included on “lists” of effective programs maintained by the Northwest Regional Education Lab or the Education Commission of the States, need to join the debate within the research community. They should be willing to share their thoughts on the negative implications of the current Congressional mentality that could bar Federal funds from being used to purchase anything other than research-based, proven-effective products. The only groups thus far willing to react to the Congressional attempt to include these provisions in the reauthorization have been SIIA and NCTET. While there may not be any reauthorization of the ESEA this year, as with the creation of Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program, Congress could try to attach such a mandate to other programs in the FY 2001 Appropriations Act.

For more information contact me directly.

## **USED Submits Annual Report on Technology Literacy Challenge Funds to Congress**

As mandated in a 1993 Government Reporting and Performance Act, USED -- along with other agencies -- must submit an annual report on progress being made in major programs. Recently, USED submitted its report to Congress on the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund and the Technology Innovation Challenge Grant initiatives. One of the major facts related to Technology Literacy is the impact on student learning, and whether Congress is getting the expected “bang for the buck”. Below are some findings reported to Congress, using a variety of NCES survey data. While one can question some of the “targets” and “supporting data,” it is important to be aware of what the official USED report is telling Congress, as well as what is not included in the report.

In the Fall of 1999 high-poverty schools had a student/computer ratio of 16:1 compared to low-poverty schools of 7:1; the target by the Fall of 2001 has the ratio 5:1 in high-poverty schools. The targeted percentage of classrooms with Internet access in high-poverty schools in the Fall of 2000 is 100%, however, only 39% had such access in the Fall of 1999. By September 1998, 27 states reported that approximately two thirds of its TLCF funds were allocated to high-poverty districts. Not included in this report is the NCES finding that last year for every computer bought by a low-poverty school, 2.5 computers were purchased by high-poverty schools, and that 25% of funding came from Title I.

The report also states “computer use is fairly ubiquitous in writing, as computers become more available and knowledge about how to integrate computers into instruction increases; computer use in mathematics also likely will increase.” This finding is somewhat inconsistent with Hank Becker’s surveys over the last two years in which he found that the subject area teachers are most likely not to want to use computers for instruction, is math.

No data regarding the impact of technology on student learning were available or included in the report. However, for the first time, USED has indicated the type of measures which should be used in assessing the impact of technology on students as follows: “For the purposes of its assessment,

student achievement may include improved attendance and discipline, acquisition of technology and telecommunications skills, problem-solving skills, portfolio assessments, state assessment tools and standardized test.” The USED recognizes the limitations of relying only on NAEP tests as we have reported over the last year in several TechMIS mailings. Part of the reason could be the finding that students who use computers extensively in the area of writing, but do not use computers in doing the essay component of the NAEP writing assessment, did worse than students who did not use computers on the 1994-98 NAEP writing test (see February TechMIS Washington Update).

And last, the report states that in 1997-98, thirty eight states had technology graduation requirements. The number has likely increased significantly since the ISTE competency and standards related to technology literacy were published in late 1998. Most states have adopted the ISTE standards. The report can be found on the USED website at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

### **New Education Resources Added to USED’s FREE Website in Direct Competition with Commercial Publishing**

Over two years ago, through an Executive Order, over 40 Federal agencies began to digitize visual and other databases and make them available via the Internet to teachers and students for instructional use. Many of these resources, developed by grantees and contractors for NASA, NSF, and PBS among others, were very costly to develop and the quality of the resources are generally very high. Virtually none of the initial set of databases included lesson plans or assessment items to help teachers use the materials directly for instruction. Small grants were awarded two years ago by USED for teachers to attempt to develop such lesson plans and other value-added components. As noted in previous TechMIS reports, over the last two years, we have strongly urged software publishers to review these FREE resources and identify those which complement their product lines, and then develop value added components such as lesson plans, assessment items, teachers guides, etc. We assume the Federal government will continue to promote the FREE websites materials; hence, this approach would “drag” commercial value-added components into sales.

An increasing number of recent contributions to the FREE websites are much closer to being complete education products, which can compete directly with commercial product lines. These include:

- “Take this Hand”, a conflict-resolution program that helps teenagers to see alternatives to violence; it includes a video, CD-ROM, lesson plans, and student activity workbooks;
- “EnviroHelp Link”, a comprehensive program to help middle school science and health teachers incorporate environmental health science topics into classroom lessons, and a list of Internet resources;
- “New York High School Regents Exam Prep Center”, which helps high school students meet the New York State Regents requirements in math, science, and social studies, and includes practice exams, study strategies, and teacher resources in six areas.

Other resources, which have become available on the FREE website include PBS MathLine which is designed for math teachers to train themselves to implement the new NCTM standards. It has several components, including teacher chat rooms with master teachers, videotapes, and instructional guides. PBS will be distributing its MathLine staff development packages to a limited number of high-poverty schools this summer at no cost. Another resource, made available by the IRS, is a program for high school students on how to start a business which includes a primer on the variety of taxes which business pay. A new resource from the FTC is entitled “Kids Privacy”, designed to help website operators understand provisions of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, which became effective April 21<sup>st</sup>, and how it can affect them.

Some of the FREE resources such as “Kids Privacy”, are similar to a Public Service Announcements and/or guidelines for implementing new Federal regulations, which is a very appropriate type of product to be made available by the Federal government. However, many of the new resources are in

direct competition with private sector initiatives; not only do they establish expectations on the part of teachers and school staff that all software or Internet-delivered material should be “free,” they also reduce incentives for the private sector to invest private funds in the development of quality digital content. The CEO Forum is supposed to publish a report with recommendations to insure the quality of digital content, and the Web-Based Education Commission headed by Bob Kerrey certainly needs to address the issue of unfair competition and the lack of incentives for the private sector to deliver quality content. To review the above and other resources, go to [www.ed.gov/free](http://www.ed.gov/free).

### **New Survey Addresses What Types of Software are Being Used With ESL Programs in New York State**

A new report from the National Research Center of English Learning and Achievement, entitled Technology’s Use with ESL Learners in New York State, provides objective evidence on the types of software being used with native English-speaking and non-native English-speaking students. It suggests the types of products which should sell well in ESL programs. Almost 50% of school surveys reported using technology for ESL students with the most widely-used types of products being tool applications (54%) followed by writing (37%) and presentation and reference material (18%); 41% of the respondents use computer-assisted instruction for teaching content to native speakers with reading and language arts content mentioned more often than other content areas. About 5% of software products were being used to teach non-native speakers of English.

By far the most popular software provides language-specific practice by helping students to use pictures that represent words or sentences, read text that accompanies the picture, and hear the word or sentence spoken. Students essentially match visual, aural, and textual elements. Drill-and-practice programs are used to a lesser extent. With non-native speakers, respondents indicating that Spanish and other non-English language software was used even less frequently. As the report notes, “native speakers’ products tend to be rich in content and use real-world problem-solving strategies and accompanying discourse ---- the products are designed for learners to be acting on and thinking about relevant content using English.”

Follow-up interviews with a subset of responding teachers found that virtually all teachers like using computer programs because of their motivational value in providing instant feedback and allowing users to progress at their own rate. Technology-using ESL teachers fall into two categories: a) those who regard computer-based instruction as a supplement to regular classroom activity where software to practice skills are the reward for successful work; and b) teachers who attempt to integrate software use into the curriculum to stimulate students' thinking as content is being addressed. The latter group of teachers use software to develop literacy skills by teaching alphabet and spelling; through stories; through general personal writing; through the development of problem solving skills using interactive games and simulations; and through telecommunications with other students.

Interviews uncovered some important features of software that is used at different levels. For example, at the elementary level, basic skills and language arts software which provides instant feedback, including speech, is used for teaching letter recognition, spelling and vocabulary. At the middle school level, "process" software is used frequently, especially that which has good graphics support, along with software that requires decision-making and stimulates thinking, prediction and problem-solving (e.g. simulation software where students construct a design). At the high school level, software that allows students greater opportunity to work individually on projects through the use of reference software is used extensively. The survey found that only a limited number of programs available on the Internet have been used. The National Geographic series was being used by several teachers, whereby students use e-mail to communicate with other students performing similar experiments in other locations. Websites used most extensively by students, are those which relate to their own cultures and those that have direct relevance to the students such as the movies they watch, etc.

The report concludes "these trends in software selection and use also suggest that most teachers perceive the computer less as a delivery system and more as a tool with which language skills can be developed." For a copy of the report go to: <http://www.cela.albmy.edu/meskmoos/index.html>.

## **Current Parent-Child Divide on Internet Issues is Large and Could Have Implications for Content Providers**

Two recent surveys by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, has found major differences between parent and child perspectives on Internet use and ethics. One survey targeted families that have computers at home and Internet access. Between December 1998 and January-February 2000, the percentage of parents who thought the Internet would help their child discover fascinating and useful things increased from 70% to 85%; however, the percentage of parents concerned that their child might give out personal information or view sexual explicit images on the Internet dropped over the same timeframe, from 75% to 74%. The recent study included interviews with children and found:

- Children are more likely to divulge personal family information as the value of free gifts offered them increases, from 30% willing to divulge such information for a \$25 free gift, to 45% for a free gift valued at \$100;
- The percentage of parents willing to divulge information increased from 18% to 29% when the value of gifts increased from \$25 to \$100;
- Teenagers are much more likely to divulge personal information than younger children (39% of teens versus 16% of children aged 10 to 12).
- Boys are more likely than girls to provide personal information for free gifts.

While almost 80% of teenagers felt they should share personal information only with their parents' permission, many children admitted sharing information without such parental permission. While over half of the parents and children indicated that discussions had been held related to Internet usage and privacy issues, in depth probing with parents and children in the same family indicated this had not occurred much. The recent study also found that slightly over 40% of parents and about 35% of youngsters are experiencing tension at home over child release of information on the web. Almost half of parents surveyed were not aware that websites can collect information on users without their

knowledge and that they use sophisticated tracking tools. One of the study's authors, Joseph Turow, concluded "Parents need to better understand the web's ability to track information, and kids need to be engaged in serious discussions with their parents about privacy and sharing information."

Other interesting findings from the two surveys includes:

- 71% of households with children aged 8 to 17 have home computers, and 48% are connected to the Internet (1999);
- 32% homes with online access have protective software that restricts children's access to sites.

As noted in the last TechMIS mailing, the Child's Online Privacy Protection Act went into effect in April, and legislation is currently pending in both the House and the Senate which would protect children aged 18 or younger from online information collection processes and websites which do not obtain parental permission; and it also protects children from extensive advertising while in school.

In one form or another, such legislation is likely to pass in this critical year. Information privacy is one of several "non-technical" issues, along with child protection and fair use, which have to be addressed by publishers and providers of digitally delivered information, if the potential of the Internet in education is to be realized. However, in the case of information privacy, the Annenberg Report (1999) concludes with the following questions which suggest that, while legislation may be a necessary condition, but it certainly is not sufficient: "Do children's web surfing habits reflect their parents values? Are other tactics and marketers or other web forces diverting parent's values, leading kids into areas that challenge and even try to change the basic precepts that parents hope their children will have?" For more information on the Annenberg Report, go to [www.appcpenn.org](http://www.appcpenn.org).

## **Proposed Legislation Would Increase Student Participation In Math And Science**

The proposed National Science Education Act of 2000 (NSEA) would attract more students to the areas of science, math, engineering, information technology and improve their performance in such courses. It would also expand and improve the quality of professional development for math, science and technology teachers through peer-reviewed summer professional development institutes, and the hiring of math teachers. Primary responsibility for staff development would be with the National Science Foundation through grants which could be used to provide distance learning to rural areas so that all students will have access to quality science and math programs. Grants could also be available to schools and students to develop educational software. Private firms will be provided tax incentives to donate hardware and time for the development of such software.

The sponsors of the bill are Representative Vernon Ehlers (R-Michigan) and Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas). A companion bill currently has not been submitted in the Senate. Chances of passage of such a bill this late in the session would normally be limited. However, if Congress cannot get together on ESEA re-authorization, this is the sort of legislation which could receive last-minute support and passage; allowing politicians to point to something that was passed during this session. The immediate positive impact of such a bill in its present form would be minimal, and could be negative for software publishers if funds are made available to schools and students to develop math and science content to be delivered via the Internet, as typically happens in NSF grants.

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June 19th

### **Charter Schools**

As with other items of interest to TechMIS subscribers, such as E-Rate, we plan to provide periodic updates on activities related to the Charter School movement, largely as a result of their growth, but more importantly the recently expanded use of computers in Charter schools.

A report from the Center for Education Reform which monitors charter schools, the charter school movement, found that 44% increase in the number of charter schools between 1998 and 1999. As the movement has grown to 1,689 charter schools, only 64 charter schools have been closed or shut down since 1992. In 28 of 34 states local school boards have authority over about half of the charter schools while the remainder under state board of education and other agencies. Ten states allow for alternatives chartering agencies such as universities.

As previously reported in TechMIS mailings, studies of charter schools in states such as Michigan, have found that charter schools generally serve a smaller percentage of special education and other minority students and limited English proficiency students that are enrolled in nearby public schools. In May USED issued a non-regulatory guidance memorandum to chief state school officers on students with disabilities to observe in private schools. If a public school places a special education student in a private school or a charter school, then a pre-appropriate public education must be provided with appropriate levels of IDEA and other funding following the child or an equal level of services must be provided by the public school. If a parent places a child with disabilities in a private or charter school, because they feel that public school has failed to provide adequate services and a hearing officer has so determined; that been the case, then similar obligations are placed upon the public school to ensure adequate services are provided. About the same time, the USED Office of Civil Rights provided guidance to charter schools regarding the civil rights of special education and students with disabilities and non-English proficiency students. Thus, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act apply equally to charter schools as it did to public schools with respect to non-discriminatory admission policies and providing reasonable accommodations regarding instruction and facilities to ensure students with disabilities have equal education opportunities. Interestingly, the guidance provides different requirements for buildings that were built after 1997 which are more stringent than those built in 1977 and earlier in terms of physical access to classes. The document also reiterates that like public schools, private charter schools must identify LEP students and provide them education services so that they can learn English language skills and apply the \_\_\_\_\_ skills in academic content areas that all students are required to know. The method of instruction must be based upon sound education theory adequately

supported by qualified staff and adequate resources. The program has a reasonable chance for success. It also encourages those charter school operators to be proactive in seeking appropriate levels of Federal funding which should follow the child. Such as IDEA, Title I, Title VII/Bilingual and Title VI (formally Title II). Two years ago, a study of charter schools found that many operators were not aware of the availability of such funding and therefore, did not seek to obtain such funds. The average amount of IDEA funding for special education students is \$830 while the average amount of Title I funding per child is \$690. Question without doubt one of the Clinton's administration flagship initiatives has been Federal funding to support the charter schools movement as an alternative to non-public schools vouchers and related child's programs. Presidential candidate George W. Bush who is an outspoken opponent of charter schools during six of them during the campaign thus far. Vice President Gore has been less vocal in his support of charter schools, partly because they are not closely enamored by the AFT and NEA who are probably among the strongest Gore supporters. Not only Bush is in favor of a Doctor's program, a Doctor's charter program for parents of children enrolled in low performing schools, Bush has proposed a \$3 million for volume loan program which could be used to pay for the acquisition lease or renovation cost involving establishing charter schools. Gore, on the other hand, has supported school modernization for all public schools including charter schools.

Advocates with different perspectives on charter schools view their success differently. Those who support the movement as providing choice and point to the numbers ....growth in Federal expenditures up to \$250 million total and almost 1,700 charter schools. Those who view charter schools as providing competition to the public school by using innovated approaches, including technology and thereby forcing schools to \_\_\_\_\_ as little point to. A new study of charter schools indicates that they have not in the past serve as many at-risk students as the public schools, and have not created innovated approaches rather, because of the need to have their students perform well on state assessment, and on the additional materials and approach used in Public Schools continue to be used in any charter school. While charter schools to the teacher are likely to receive more Federal funding under follow-the-child provisions, Title I and Special Education will also be more accountable results under Title I and state laws in fact, given the possibility that greater possibilities

that charter schools have than many other districts, they are likely to be focus of serious accountability before such attention focuses on schools. Until that time, competition within the private sector to operate charter schools will continue to grow. For a copy of a directory of almost 2,000 current, or planned charter schools call 800-521-2118, or e-mail the Center for Education Reform at [www.CER@edreform.com](mailto:www.CER@edreform.com) the cost is \$30.

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June 16th

### **Publishers Comments**

Publisher's comments solicited on evaluation criteria to be used by state's clearinghouse

The Director of the California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, Bridget Foster, is soliciting comments by publisher on proposed criteria to be used to identify and evaluate electronic running resources or online resources for recommended purchases by districts and their states. The clearinghouse which will be operated out of the Stanislaus County Office of Education is designed to:

- Identify and evaluate learning resources such as software, video and online resources aligned to the state academic-content standard;
- Identify learning units or lessons aligned to resources and the state academic-content standards.

The proposed criteria should be of concern to many TechMIS who wish to sell products in the state.

First, the primary emphasis is upon correlating materials and lessons to state standards rather than to state assessment instruments such as the SAT-9. Most publishers design material to increase probability that students will at the least cover content which is to be assessed on the instrument. In California the degree of the SAT-9 item remains were not highly correlated to the states standards and frameworks. Groups such as AIIA feel that the criterium under due process is very subjective in

nature and has no objective measures against which a reviewer can test and make informed decisions. He also criticized the criteria because they go beyond, they focus on correlation to state standards rather, seeking information on making judgments on quality and effectiveness of the material, which purposely includes new innovative programs in the Internet delivered content. SIIA most critical the review process arguing that it would take too much time to identify reviewers at the time they actually reviewed the process thereby creating backlogs. They also question a concern about a sample copies to be provided by publishers and what types of copyright they thought are in place.

Comments were due by June 10<sup>th</sup> as SRIA has a deadline of receiving comments by interested parties by July 5<sup>th</sup>. TechMIS members should contact me or SRIA with their comments before the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. To review the proposed criteria go to [www.clrn.org/criteria](http://www.clrn.org/criteria) the contact SIIA is Melinda George ([mgeorge@SIIA.net](mailto:mgeorge@SIIA.net)).

June 12th  
**State Proposal**

There will be one item in the state proposal made earlier this year by Secretary Riley that fewer language instruction should replace bilingual instruction. The powerful Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) made a similar proposal in the state Board of Education and the legislator approved such a proposal. The dual language initiative will require that all instruction materials be available in both English and Spanish. The Hispanic student enrollment in the state is projected to double from 12% to 25% between 1990-2005.

# **Title I: Update on Implementations of New Policies and Legislation and Recent Funding Allocations for The 2000-2001 School Year**

*A Technology Monitoring and Information Service (TechMIS)*  
**SPECIAL REPORT**

*Prepared by:*  
*Education TURNKEY Systems, Inc.*  
*256 North Washington Street*  
*Falls Church, Virginia 22046-4549*  
*(703) 536-2310 / (703) 536-3225 FAX*

June 27, 2015

## Approval of State Title I Assessment Plans

In the 1994 Title I reauthorization, states were given a deadline June 30, 2000 for coming up with an accountability and assessment system that met the criteria for standards-based reform. By the end of May, thirteen states had submitted their proposed accountability and assessment systems. A peer review process has been created, and uses the following primary criteria for approval: (a) it had adopted content standards regarding what is to be taught that are comprehensive and rigorous; (b) it has included challenging performance standards with expectations of what students should master at different grade levels; and (c) it uses an assessment system that is rigorous and is aligned with standards. In addition, each state must come up with an acceptable criterion for assessing “adequate yearly progress.”

The first two states to receive conditional approval were Kentucky and Wyoming. One of the conditions Kentucky has to meet is to administer state assessments to limited English proficient students at the end of one year in the program in lieu of the proposed two years. The law allows reasonable accommodations for LEP and students with disabilities. Kentucky is one two states that currently has a valid alternative assessment instrument, which could be used to assess severely impaired special education students. Wyoming proposed a policy to assess all LEP students in English after two years in the program. However, reasonable accommodations are provided in the

initial evaluation where English ability is particularly low.

Plans from two additional states, North Carolina and Illinois, have also been reviewed. In three of the four states, “reasonable accommodations” for students with disabilities was identified as a condition which must be met for final approval. In North Carolina and Kentucky, assessment systems have been in place for quite some time while the current assessment system is new for Wyoming. Wyoming administers the Terra Nova norm reference test and its own standards-based exam; both tests are used for Title I accountability and reporting purposes. Unlike North Carolina, where passage of state assessment is considered “high stakes” testing, there are no incentives nor sanctions in Wyoming.

Other states, which have submitted their plans by the end of May included: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

As reported in the Title I Report (May), Title I coordinators during the IRA conference in Indianapolis expressed concerns that there are likely to be a large number of conditional approvals with some states having to make fundamental changes to meet the Federal mandate and the criteria used by the reviewers. Most of the areas in which conditional approvals occurred for the above four states are likely to be repeated in most of the other states, if not all of them, (except perhaps Maryland), especially those related to providing reasonable accommodation to special education students. Confusion is also likely to arise when and if USED approves for accountability purposes a states Title I assessment plans and states courts rule the state assessment plans illegal as could happen as a result of recent lawsuits in Indiana (See Indiana Update). And, to add to the confusion, both presidential candidates have their own view of accountability and “high stakes” testing which could result in another review of states assessments a year from now. And, even if the states assessments system is approved, the states criteria for “adequate yearly progress” is likely to be the most serious “bone of contention” between USED and individual states. Only in a limited number of states where relative cut off points and criterion levels are to be used (versus absolute levels) are

approvals likely to occur at least initially.

### **New Choice Mandate**

For the first time, in September districts who have the “capacity” to provide choice to students in schools which have been “targeted for improvement” will be implementing this new initiative. The SEA has the responsibility for establishing criteria to determine whether or not a district has or “lacks” the capacity to provide a choice. During the IRA annual meeting, state officials asked a host of questions which clearly indicated anticipated disruptive nature of implementing this mandate in Title I programs. Questions raised included: a) is it allowable to pass over schools that have received CSRD funding when allocating additional school improvement funding under this initiative; b) can students be assigned to another school for multiple years to prevent students being bounced from school to school c) can Title I funds be used to pay parents for transporting students? USED officials stated that they would be posting on its website information related to such questions in the near future.

### **Funds Allocations**

The preliminary fund allocations process which began in January, is now “final” indicating how much Title I funds have been allocated under the LEA grant program to districts. According to Title I Reports (May) of the 13,000 LEAs, about 3,500 will get the same amount while 5,500 will experience a very minor cut. About 80 districts will get increases of more than 10% with only 35 districts getting more a 15% increase. Because of the “hold harmless” provision about 1,600 districts are receiving concentration grants even though they no longer qualify for them. Seventeen of these districts will receive more than \$400,000 the largest being Hamilton County, Tennessee which receives \$1 million that it would otherwise have lost. The net effect is that the pupil allocation in these districts is increasing. While many of the smallest states would experience slight increases the largest percentage increases were for California (3.4%) and North Carolina (3.3%). Districts with the largest absolute increases were noted in Exhibit 1, all those with the largest percent increases are on Exhibit 2.

Even though districts have been notified of their “model allocation” SEAs, in approximately 11 states will be making adjustments based upon use of alternative data, allocations to Title I entities which are not “LEAs” (e.g., in California) and other factors which have been approved by USED. Hence, the actual allocation of funds will likely occur later in these states including: Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma, California and Arizona. The amount of funds allocated in July by USED will likely be about 60% which is up from 20% allocated in July 1999. The remainder of the funds will be available in October-November. The net effect of these changes will be postpone purchases in a number of states until October-November. States in which this is likely to occur include North Carolina, Michigan, Indiana and other states where the SEA does not encourage districts to carry over any funds from one year to the next. For additional information on Title I allocations for 2000-01, and related Title I information contact Judy Miller Title I Report at [www.TitleI.com](http://www.TitleI.com).

## Alabama Update – June 2000

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The State legislature has passed a teacher pay increase bill which the Governor is expected to sign; it locks in increases in salary and benefits which would consume over half of the increased gross revenues for State funding in K-12. While this bill is supported by teacher groups, associations representing school boards and administrators have expressed some concern that such increases in teachers salaries will be at the expense of other expenditures such as technology purchases designed to benefit students directly. The funding comes from the education trust fund, in which 2% of annual increases would be allocated for teachers salaries until the average State teacher salary meets the National average. Annual growth in the trust fund currently, about \$4.3 billion, has been 4% or 5%.

In May, the legislature passed a bill which would provide almost \$200 million in bonding over the next ten years to be used for construction, maintenance and facilities upgrades for districts across the State. Governor Knowles, on the other hand, feels that the legislature-proposed initiative does not go far enough and discriminates against Native American students by not addressing inadequacies among schools with large minority enrollments. Governor Knowles estimated that \$550 million would be required to do an adequate job.

Anchorage Public Schools is likely to have to cut \$11 million from its budget unless the State is able to come up with State funds to bail it out. Currently, the State has \$34 million in surplus funds. Most likely cuts will be in middle school alternative programs, lease purchases of computers, textbook purchases, and school extra-curricular activities, including sports.

In an attempt to resolve the State's finance system, the Governor has proposed to increase the sales tax from 5.0% to 5.6%, which will generate an additional \$450 million of which 85% would go to K-12. Part of the funding would be used to allow the State to issue \$800 million in bonds of which more than \$110 million will be used for renovation and increased teacher pay. Most of the remainder will be used for class size reduction, to extend the school year, and to implement accountability systems based on student's performance. The legislature has proposed several alternatives to the Governor's proposal, including using a portion of the \$400 million tobacco settlement for education reducing the amount of increased sales tax and would allow parent choice/vouchers for children enrolled in low performing schools to allow them to attend private and religious schools.

For the second year of the biennium budget, education funding will increase \$80 million to \$2.8 billion with a planned mid-year adjustment.

The Schools Facilities Board recently agreed to dedicate \$50 million for school districts to purchase computers with the goal of achieving a 1 to 8 computer/student ratio which would represent a 300% increase over the current ratio. As part of this effort, 50,000 multi-media and network computers are to be purchased by October and delivered to public schools early next year. Hardware will be pre-loaded with software; purchases will be under volume discounts through State contract entities.

The State Board of Education has decided not to allow the public to have any access to its State assessment instruments while waiting for an appeal of a local judge's order for the State to release the exam. Parts of the ruling have to do with public viewing only if individuals sign a statement not to reveal the State content. The Arizona Republic, a local newspaper, sought to publish the test.

An initiative created by English for the Children in Arizona has reported that by July 6<sup>th</sup>, it expects to

receive more than 100,000 signatures required to have the proposition placed on the ballot in November; it should be similar to Proposition 227 which passed last year in California. Under the proposal, waivers would not be allowed for students unless they already know English and are over 10 years old.

The State's Attorney General, Janet Napolitano, has ruled that a school district is not obligated to provide special education services or cover the cost of special education services to "home school" children. This ruling will likely be challenged from school groups at the national level.

## California Update - June 2000

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Governor Gray Davis in his May revision to the State budget is requesting an additional \$1.25 billion for the 1999-2000 school year, and \$2.5 billion more for 2000-2001 school year, which includes one-time funding for such programs as the reading initiative, professional development, and education technology. Under the Governor's Connecting California Schools Initiative, which is designed to improve access to computers and technology training, the revised budget would total \$784 million for technology -- which is two to three times more than originally proposed. Approximately \$500 million would be allocated for purchasing computer hardware; \$50 million for teacher training to be conducted by California State University; an additional \$24 million on top of the \$158 million for the Digital High School, which could result in the final year of that program being fully funded; and \$50 million going to infrastructure expansion.

The Governor's proposal will be negotiated with the budget conference committee in closed sessions; however, the whole the technology initiative is likely to be passed.

The California Smaller Classes, Safer Schools, and Financial Accountability Act is being considered for the November ballot. This legislation would result in greater flexibility to expand local bonds for infrastructure development, to reduce class size, and to provide students with greater access to computers. The lobby group pushing this effort is the Taxpayers for Accountability and Better Schools Coalition (go to [www.betterschoolsforca.org](http://www.betterschoolsforca.org)).

After the defeat of Proposition 26 during a state-wide election on March 7<sup>th</sup>, Silicon Valley Executives were working with Governor Davis to get one million signatures by May 7<sup>th</sup>, which would support another referendum to reduce the percentage of votes required to pass local bonds from 66% to 55%. The group supporting the Governor is the California Business for Education Excellence whose Executive Director is Burt McChesney. Major opposition is coming from the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, who referred to Proposition 26 as "the Gray Davis tax increase."

Recently the Commission on States Mandates recently unanimously mandated the State to allocate award \$1 billion for reimbursement to districts who have provided unfunded mandated services for special education students over the last few years. Certain State mandates went beyond Federal mandates for which the State did not provide additional funding. By mid-August, the State Controller's Office has to provide forms to districts to file invoices, after which time districts have 120 days to file their claims. A similar lawsuit referred to as the "Durant Case" in Michigan was settled two years ago with over \$1.5 billion allocated to districts throughout the State. One of the two conditions on the use of such funds that at least 50% has to be used for non-reoccurring cost items, such as technology purchases. The Durant case has been a major funding source for technology in the State over the last two years.

A recent study conducted by the University of California at Santa Barbara has concluded that Proposition 227 implementation during the last year has resulted in less uniform instruction in the area of bilingual education ESOL. Over the last year, the number of LEP students enrolled in bilingual education programs has dropped from almost 30% to 12%. The report concluded that Proposition 227 has contributed to "massive inconsistency in instruction for children."

A class action lawsuit has been filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Mexican American-Legal Defense, among other groups, for not providing a minimum funding level below which no California school should fall in terms of acceptable classrooms, safe facilities, and student access to trained teachers. This lawsuit, which claims California should guarantee a minimum funding level for all schools and students, is different from past lawsuits which have claimed inequities in terms of funding and other input factors. Recognized national education policy researchers such as Dr. Mike Kirst, state that the approach is unique in describing an "appalling" situation which could have a credible impact on public opinion.



## Colorado Update - June 2000

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Colorado organizers are seeking 60,000 signatures in order to place an “English Only” proposition on the November ballot. The initiative would provide English immersion classes to LEP children permitting bilingual programs only through a waiver process. As with the Arizona group, leading the movement in Colorado is “One Nation Indivisible” headed by Linda Chavez who served as a Special Assistant to the President in the Reagan White House and prior to that time was an official for the American Federation of Teachers.

Governor Owens recently announced \$1 million in grants to be used to support 25 innovative high school summer programs designed to develop technology skills for students and teachers. For more information go to [www.coloradoit.org](http://www.coloradoit.org).

The State’s college scholarship initiative has been redirected. Approximately \$14 million will be provided to students, who maintain a ‘B’ average, in the form of merit scholarships. About \$35 million will be allocated to students in “greatest need”, which is a new component. Most of these funds will go to students with families with incomes below \$45,000.

The legislature also has approved \$190 million for facilities improvement over an 11-year period. Such funds would be allocated to districts with the greatest need for facilities improvement.

Although the State Board of Education mandated two years ago that most special education students should be mainstreamed, a recent survey found that the percentage of special education students in the State has dropped from 13.9% to 12.8% in the last four years. The amount of State funds per-pupil for special education students are five times greater than other students. Many districts have shown a tendency to take local funds from other programs to pay for the additional costs of implementing the new IDEA assessment and related provisions this year.

Delaware is one of the first States to enact legislation that allows teachers to be rewarded for improved achievement in their schools. Under a law recently signed by Governor Carper, a teacher's job performance would be linked to student test scores. Under the plan, a Professional Standards Board would develop an evaluation system that would make students' scores on State and local assessments account for 20% of the teachers' and administrators' performance reviews. Factors such as level of poverty and absentee rate would also be taken into account. The plan would also set up a tiered system of licensure and certification, which would have to be renewed every five years.

Because of a backlash against high-stakes testing within the State, the student accountability component would defer new testing requirements in math and reading for two years. Under this system, graduation or promotion to the next grade level would be dependent upon passage of specific tests at grade levels. Also, only students who pass the eighth-grade assessment in math or language arts would receive an academic diploma. Those who meet the course content, but do not pass the exam, would receive a standard diploma. Special Education students who were unable to meet either of the above two requirements, could receive another type of certificate.

## Florida Update – June 2000

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The Governor's K-12 budget proposal, which reflects an overall 2% increase to \$9.4 billion, would double funding for rewards to schools whose students earn an 'A', improve, or move from a lower level to a higher one. The total amount of funding for this program would be \$60 million up from \$30 million. Another \$55 million (up 7% from last year) would be given to districts to extend the school year, reduce class size, or provide mentoring and tutoring programs that are directed toward improving at-risk students' achievement.

Governor Bush is likely to sign legislation that would allow students with disabilities to enroll in private schools when public schools fail to meet their needs; payments would be provided through vouchers. Last year, the State Supreme Court held that larger State voucher program being tested in four districts was a violation of the State constitution. The State voucher program for special education students who are not adequately served by districts, is in line with Federal requirements under the 1997 IDEA regulations which require that students who are transferred from public schools to private schools must have a proportional share of IDEA funding "follow the child." During the first year of implementation, up to 5% of the total special education enrollment in a district could be transferred under the voucher program. This percentage increases to 20% in 2004 with no cap thereafter. In some States, the "purchase of care" for special education students in private institutions represents 10 to 20% of the total special education population, particularly for severely handicapped.

Several bills are currently being debated in the State legislature to clarify the role of the local school districts versus local community colleges in providing adult basic education for about 900,000 adults annually, for cost of over \$200 million. The bill would force districts and local community colleges to arrive at a division of responsibilities among themselves. In other States over the last decade, responsibility for adult education has gravitated towards community colleges at the expense of local districts.

The Florida High School has been expanded to take in students from across the entire State. Currently FHS is operated by the Orange County School Board serving students in that county (Orlando) and a neighboring county. In 1997-1998, 170 students participated, projected enrollment in September 2000 will be 5,000 students.

## Georgia Update – June 2000

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Under the State Comprehensive School Improvement and Accountability Act, almost \$3 million will be used to set up an office under the Governor, not the SEA. Overall, the K-12 budget will increase 9% to \$2.54 billion representing almost \$37.00 per student increase. A portion of the tobacco settlement is being allocated to districts to hire school nurses.

After a number of compromises, the legislature gave Governor Roy Barnes pretty much what he requested regarding a class size reduction program and an early childhood program that could be phased in over a four-year period beginning next school year. Districts will also have to file audits with the State office indicating that they are using new funds appropriations in spite of the compromises of the State Superintendent Linda Shrenko, who continues to criticize the Governor's plan even with the legislative compromises.

## Idaho Update – June 2000

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The K-12 budget will be \$1.2 billion reflecting a 5% increase over the previous year. A new law will provide scholarships worth \$1,000 each to high school students whose grades are high enough to meet predetermined standards to attend Idaho colleges and universities. This scholarship will not be available until next fiscal year. Ten million dollars have been appropriated to create the Revolving Loan Program to provide districts loans for school repairs. Some of the funding increase will be used for a limited number of projects that were planned under the Albertson Foundation Initiative but had to be canceled because of a cut-off of Albertson's funding.

The legislature has enacted a new law which would provide three years of mentoring by experienced teachers if new teachers are willing to give up employment protection and tenure during the first couple of years. New teacher salary could also be increased.

## Illinois Update – June 2000

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The final K-12 budget represents a 6.4% increase up to \$6.1/6 billion representing a \$100 per pupil increase. An additional \$10 million has been included in the biennium budget for FY 2001 primarily to primarily provide summer and after school instruction for at-risk students in the area of reading. Additional funding has been provided for the State Early Childhood program, which now totals \$180 million.

The legislature has failed to appropriate between \$10 and \$12 million that would be used to provide financial aid to private parochial schools. As a result, the Chicago Catholic Archdiocese may be in a position to close one or more of its schools.

Revised to here.

Governor O'Bannon will shortly be appointing an advisory group to make recommendations on assessment, accountability, standards and related issues; \$1.1 million has been appropriated to fund the advisory group. Almost \$4 million has been set aside to pay for new diagnostic assessments to detect reading problems at early grade levels.

Overall, the K-12 budget increases to \$4.2 billion for FY 2001, a 5.7% increase, and includes slightly over \$33 million for technology, which goes into the Indiana Technology Fund, now in its last year of operation. The initial districts which received approximately \$100 per pupil for technology purchases and professional development were low wealth districts. Fifty-one high-wealth districts will be recipients of such funding this year

Districts are being encouraged to complete an online survey from which school technology profiles would be available on the 2,000 schools in the State. The survey is designed to assess the degree to which technology is being implemented in the schools.

An Indiana judge has denied an injunction which would have allowed senior high schoolers with disabilities not to have to pass the high school exit exam to receive a regular high school diploma. The State Superintendent is pleased that the current requirement that special education students must pass the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) before receiving their high school diplomas will continue in place. The judge indicated that the students with disabilities had ample opportunity to take advantage of remediation programs offered by the State and school districts over the last few years in order to be prepared to take the test. It is not clear whether this ruling will be appealed; if the appeal is turned down, it would ensure Indiana is in compliance with the IDEA provisions taking effect in July 2000 regarding assessment.

As a result of high stakes testing, and assessment controversies which occurred over the last year in Indiana, the State Superintendent, Sue Allen Reed, has been instrumental in expanding remedial and

other interventions programs throughout the State. One program provides funds to districts to remediate students who have failed assessments in grades three, six, eight or ten, costing approximately \$20 million a year. Some of the remedial programs have been criticized because of the lack of teacher involvement and an over-reliance on computer-based test preparation and drill—and-practice. Another program, funded at \$5 million, provides remediation to seniors who are not likely to pass exit exams, or to receive diplomas without additional remediation.

## Kentucky Update – June 2000

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The overall K-12 budget will increase to almost \$3 billion representing a 3% increase. Over \$55 million of the State's tobacco settlement fund will be allocated over two years to a pre-K improvement program serving several thousand children under age 6. The legislature also mandated school boards to develop policies related to authorized use of cellular phones by students. Although the legislature appropriated less than the Governor requested, slightly over \$20 million will be targeted for teacher improvement and to retrain middle school teachers in subject matter areas.

The Kentucky Virtual High School, launched in January, allows students in the 1,400 public high schools to take online courses not normally available in individual schools; KVHS is led by Linda Pittinger, who was the chief Kentucky official on the E-Rate program. For every \$1 of E-Rate discounts school districts generated, the program leveraged an additional \$1 for technology from other sources. The KVHS is working with e-college.com which provides software, website design support, and help desk.

The legislature passed, and the Governor has signed, a bill designed to create a system for evaluating teacher colleges. Governor Patton heads a new national commission to address problems of youth who make the transition from high school to post-secondary education or work.

## Louisiana Update – June 2000

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Based on test scores of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students this spring, the State will be either providing intensive summer instruction allowing students to retake the tests in July, or will keep students at their current grade level if they fail the spring test. Approximately 38,000 students failed the new test. Over 7,000 special education students who took the exam will be exempt next year from taking the test; 44,000 students failed the test last year. Groups such as Achieve Incorporated, have noted that other States are moving in the same direction as Louisiana, including Delaware, Ohio and South Carolina. Students receive an “unsatisfactory” designation if they fail at least 40% of the questions on the State assessment; in Orleans Parish 55% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 63% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders received that designation in math. The State recently funded a K-3 reading and math initiative at \$20 million, and has provided \$30 million for other accountability initiatives for schools with high percentages of failing students. It is not clear whether the legislation will approve a budget for the accountability program next year; \$30 million will be allocated for remediation programs this summer.

The Louisiana Virtual Classroom is currently being planned and will provide 13 web-based courses for groups of 20 students per course.

The Legislature has appropriated almost \$14 million for the Technology in Maryland Schools (TIMS) program, which is a multiple-year effort to increase technology access and support professional development; to date, \$52 million of the \$112 million projected over five years have been spent. Under this initiative, the ratio of students to high capacity computers will be 5 to 1. Internet access would be available in all instructional areas. Eventually all teachers will be able to carry out basic Internet routines and integrate technology applications into educational programs. Currently, about 60% of teachers are at the “intermediate level” of technology competency while student/computer ratio is 8 to 1.

The Maryland Department of Education has decided to extend the effective date by which students must pass course exams in order to receive diplomas from 2005 to 2007. By extending this deadline, the Governor has been able to reduce, from approximately \$50 million to \$15 million, the amount of funds that had been allocated to the K-12 intervention initiative which would provide tutoring and summer school for students who are behind in reading and math.

The Legislature has passed, and the Governor will likely sign a bill, which allows \$6 million to be provided to students attending religious and non-public schools for purchases of textbooks and instructional materials. Funding will come from the multi-state tobacco manufacturers’ settlement. Private school students whose tuition is greater than the average per-pupil expenditure (approximately \$7,400) in the State’s public schools, would not be eligible for aid. Approximately three quarters of the private schools would be eligible. Title I-eligible students could receive \$90 per pupil in aid. In addition to Maryland, 16 other States have similar laws in place.

After 16 years of a class action lawsuit, both parties have arrived at a preliminary settlement relating to services provided to 17,000 special education students in the Baltimore City Public Schools. The new agreement sets specific performance outcomes such as school assessment scores and graduation rates for all students with disabilities. While not settling the lawsuit, it does suggest the nature of the

actual settlement. In terms of student achievement, significant progress for special education students would be a 10% increase over the 1998-1999 scores on the State assessments and an increase from 31% to 32% in graduation grades for students with disabilities. It will also limit the number of special education students placed in vocational education programs.

The Baltimore Teachers Union has filed a lawsuit to block Edison Schools Incorporated from operating three low-performing schools next year. This current contract calls for Edison to receive \$10 million a year for five years. The basis of the lawsuit is the argument that the Baltimore City schools is delegating its governance responsibility to Edison and that specifically, Edison should not be allowed to set staffing levels, and to hire, and evaluate teachers who are on their payroll. The position of the Maryland Department of Education is that the teachers' contract was null and void when the State took over the three schools. The same teachers' union filed a similar lawsuit in 1993 when Education Alternatives was given a contract to operate nine schools. The lawsuit was withdrawn in 1996 when the district terminated its agreement with Education Alternatives.

## Massachusetts Update – June 2000

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Governor Cellucci is proposing a 4% increase in K-12 funding which includes: \$11 million to lower class size in 46 high-priority districts; \$54 million to construct 40 new schools; the creation of an Education Funding Accountability Office for monitoring school performance; and \$20 million for a basic skills tutoring program to prepare students to take the 10<sup>th</sup> grade exit exam next year.

As part of the growing backlash against standardized testing, Massachusetts has been in the limelight. In April, many high school students and lesser number of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students boycotted the State's Comprehensive Assessment System Exams which are required at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. In Cambridge public schools, 100 students refused to take the exam and were suspended. In other districts high school students were given grades of '0', which could result in them not been able to get a high school diploma.

As a result of high-stakes testing, students are increasingly becoming a very powerful force nationally. Some district officials are providing incentives for students to do their best on official exams by allowing those who successfully pass State assessments not have to take end of course exam. In a related event, Massachusetts principals were initially told by the State Board of Education they must sign the "Test Administrators Security and Ethics Agreement", which was sent to them with the Manual for administering the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Exam. As a result of protests from principals, the Commissioner withdrew the requirement.

The State Board of Education unanimously passed a mandate to require secondary school mathematics teachers to take recertification exams if 30% or more of regular education students in their schools fail the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System exam. In 1999, over 50% of tenth graders, and 40% of eighth graders failed the math portion of the MCAS. The graduating class of 2003 must pass the English and math tests next spring in order to earn a diploma. The lawyers representing the State's teachers groups are likely to file a lawsuit injuncting the State from forcing

teachers to take such tests.

Massachusetts has a requirement that school districts provide their technology plans online and update them at least twice a year. Such plans constitute a database which is used to formulate the State's priorities related to technology. Through the State's website and purchasing cooperatives (referred to as etis), over \$50 million of last year's information technology products were purchased, savings approximately \$7 million through volume discounts. Vendors are qualified through a competitive process and must agree to cost disclosure. Consequently, consumer satisfaction is taken into account in leveraging relationships with schools.

Under the USED Technology Literacy initiative, selected 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in information technology training, and then support use of technology in their districts as paid summer interns. Massachusetts Education Network provides unlimited Internet access for all students and citizens in the State for \$25 a year; it is the fastest growing ISP in the State. An effort through MCET is to provide cost-free Internet connections between all school libraries and municipal offices. This is being funded by an additional \$9 million in the State supplemental capital budget. The so-called Massachusetts Community Network is scheduled to be launched on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Michigan Update – June 2000

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Under its TLCF program, the Michigan Department of Education is currently in the second year of its educator-on-loan program, whereby selected individuals from a limited number of districts work with other districts in adopting technology and ensuring its effective use. Some of the activities conducted with teachers thus far include creation of websites and showing teachers how to organize student research strategies. The next round of identifying individuals to serve on the educator-on-loan program began in March. Four grants will be provided to support the program. For more information, go to the State's website [www.mi.us/school/eol/](http://www.mi.us/school/eol/). Lucian Parshall (517)373-4333, is the primary technology contact. A former technology contact is Jamie Fitzpatrick, who is now president of the Michigan Virtual University which, among other things, is developing relationships with firms that have Internet-based courses, including Advanced Placement courses.

## Minnesota Update – June 2000

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As with a growing number of States, the Minnesota legislation has provided more local discretion to districts by reducing the graduation requirement related to the Profiles of Learning (i.e., the required number of academic tests, currently at 24, that students must complete could be reduced at the district's discretion); requirements related to advanced testing have also been relaxed.

Findings from a recent evaluation of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (the State's welfare reform initiative) indicate a positive effect of improving children education performance by improving the well-being of mothers who reported that their children did better in school and completed more homework. Last year for the first time significant changes were made in the Federal Welfare-To-Work program allowing welfare recipients to count as "work hours" enrollment in remedial education programs. Most studies have shown that students' education attainment levels are directly correlated to those of their parents, particularly their mothers.

## Mississippi Update – June 2000

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Under Mississippi's third TLECF funding round, \$6.5 million was allocated to over 60 projects which brings the total amount for the first three rounds to \$16 million covering 125 districts. Each school district in the third round is allowed to select one teacher to participate in TECHNET at which they receive training on technology integration and then go back to their district to train other teachers. Teachers can also participate in Connected University, which is designed to help teachers throughout the State integrate the Internet into their curriculum. The West Bolivar school district is participating in Next Day, which is designed to establish a model way to reduce the digital divide.

The State Department recently added a television production capability through a studio and editing suite located at Central High School in Jackson. During the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Mississippi Ed Tech 2000 Conference, over 140 vendors and 2,000 other attendees were present to see demonstrations of emerging technology and learn how to integrate technology in the classroom. The Mississippi DOE website, at <http://www.nde.k12.ms.us>, has updated information daily.

Mississippi has four Cisco Academies and plans to have more this summer. Two high school students have completed the Cisco Certified Network Associate tests; the number will grow quickly as students finish their fourth semester. The State Student Information System (SIS), which operates on the State's telecommunication backbone, should be fully operational in September. As a result of \$54 million in E-rate discounts over the first two years, all the districts have upgraded their State backbone connections with T-1 lines and all districts have updated technology plans. The DOE has developed an interactive CD-ROM entitled "Success Mississippi Style", which includes the best practices as well as lesson plans, curriculum frameworks, and other resources. The State relies on the North Central Regional Educational Lab in identifying successful new practices. The primary contact is Helen Soule, Director of Technology, (601)359-3954.

## Missouri Update – June 2000

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The Department of Education has re-allocated some of the State-level E-rate refunds during the first year to expanding a program which identifies 50 districts in which two teachers (grades three to five) will participate in intensive training. This project, referred to as e-Math, focuses on technology tools including multimedia work stations, laptop computers, projectors, video conferencing, digital cameras and other equipment. Applications for participation in e-Math were distributed to districts in late April. The projects should be funded by the summer. Districts have begun updating their technology plans. The Missouri Department of Education has conducted its 2000 census of technology in April-May; results will be available shortly online.

Overall, the State's K-12 budget increased 8.5% to \$3.5 billion. Funding for the A-Plus school initiative increased from \$15 million to \$18 million. Funds will be used to provide awards and bonuses to schools, if performance increases significantly, and to provide approximately 5,000 scholarships for selected students.

## Nebraska Update – June 2000

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Governor Mike Johanns has signed a law which mandates districts to administer State-developed writing tests for all students in three grades, beginning next spring. The plan calls for phasing in locally developed tests in reading, math, science and history/social studies each year until 2003; \$1.4 million has been appropriated to develop these writing tests.

The Nebraska Schools Comprehensive Technology Profile Project will be up this spring. State funds are intended to encourage schools to meet benchmarks in the areas of planning and the infusion of technology into the learning and teaching environment.

The legislature is also considering extending the life of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission which would have responsibilities for overseeing overall policies and priorities related to infrastructure implementation and would distribute information on technology funding. If this occurs, new funds would have to be appropriated. The contact is Dean Bergman, (402)471-5023.

## Nevada Update – June 2000

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During the second year of the two-year budget the legislature has approved an additional \$3.3 million for remedial services for students from schools in which 40% of students scored in the bottom quartile on nationally tests at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Funds can be used to purchase any of 28 State-approved programs, which includes Success For All.

Forty million dollars of the tobacco settlement funds will be used to provide scholarships up to \$2,500 to high school students who maintain 'B' averages. A half million dollar appropriation will be provided for 8 alternative programs schools. Following the steps by many other States, \$3.4 million have been appropriated each year to create four regional professional development centers.

The Governor's proposed FY 2000-2001 budget requests \$56 million for the State's Distance Learning Network at an entitlement of \$43 per pupil. The DLN is available to all school districts with approved updated technology plans and has multiple networks with voice, video and data services to connect all State/local government agencies. The Governor's proposed budget also includes \$8 million (or \$40 per student) to use for technology in non-public schools; \$4 million was appropriated last year as a new initiative. Public school districts administer technology funding for students attending non-public schools. Allowable expenditures are on the department's website at [www.nj.us/njbed.techno.techno/nttech.htm](http://www.nj.us/njbed.techno.techno/nttech.htm).

The State Education Department and Cisco Systems have signed an agreement which will establish eventually up to 200 Cisco Academies throughout the State. Currently, 25 independent Cisco Academies are operating and are supported by the Regional Training Centers. Cisco Academies now operate in all 50 States and the firm has allegedly invested over \$20 million in teacher training and provided web-based curriculum licenses at no cost to local academies.

Bell Atlantic has continued its commitment to provide, over a number of years, several hundred million dollars in savings for New Jersey's schools and libraries under Access New Jersey. As of December, 1999, over 800 contracts were in place serving 1,300 K-12 schools, 130 non-public schools and 360 library sites. In her State of the State address, Governor Whitman proposed the creation of a Virtual Academy that would teach school teachers topics such as interactive workshops, online training State assessment programs, and curriculum alignment. About \$500,000 would be used to create the Virtual Academy. The contact continues to be Julia Stapleton, (609)984-1644.

A recent study of the Newark Public Schools has found that moderate gains in student performance have occurred since the State took over the district in 1995. The report found the most serious problems were the lack of accountability procedures that allow schools to monitor trends in

individual students' performance and recommended that districts develop such a system. The report entitled "Myth and Realities" is available from the Community Training and Assistance Center at (617)423-1444.

A study conducted by Rutgers University has found that the New Jersey academic standards and framework (which is now four years old) is beginning to influence content covered in math and science classes at the fourth grade level.

As reported in Education Week in April, voters approved 88% of the local school budgets, the highest percentage passage rate ever. SEA officials suggested that the high passage rate could be attributed to a strong economy and increased confidence in public schools.

## New Mexico Update – June 2000

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The Legislature has passed a bill that would provide \$60 million a year for capital outlays each year for the next ten years. Revenues would come from taxes paid by mining companies; State subsidies would be provided to poor districts. Much of the new funding would be used for infra-structure development, construction, and innovation. The new law would triple the amount of State funds available for such purposes. While somewhat hesitant, Governor Johnson signed this bill into law earlier this year.

After several vetoes, the Governor finally signed a budget which will increase K-12 funding by over \$90 million to \$1.7 billion for FY 2001. Full day kindergarten will receive \$8.5 million for the next ten years; the State will issue \$6 million in funding authority for school facility improvement bonds. The legislature also increased to 50% (up from 40% previously) the portion of the State's lottery proceeds for education; approximately \$20 million is for college scholarships for students attending State universities. The Governor's private school voucher program was once again vetoed.

Governor Johnson has signed legislation which would create a minimum funding amount for school districts receiving education technology funding based upon an equity factor. The total amount budgeted this year is \$5 million which would be distributed according to this equity-based formula to districts on a per-pupil basis, which will this year be \$3.75. Proposal for the latest round of TLCF funding (\$3.4 million) were due in April with final announcements to be made in June. Results will be on the SEA website [www.sbe.nm.us](http://www.sbe.nm.us)

The SEA has merged "curriculum and instruction" with "technology" into one unit, which should be positive for education software publishers and instructional technology vendors.

A recent survey by the UFT suggests that over 100,000 teacher vacancies will have to be filled over the next five years because of teacher retirement. Previously, they had estimated that only 70,000 to 100,000 openings would have to be filled over the next decade.

The New York City Board of Education has adopted a proposal from the district's Education Technology Task Force, which would eventually provide laptop computers to all students in exchange for advertising and sponsorship space on the district's website. Major hardware participants will be Cisco Systems and Toshiba America. An increasing number of districts are planning to establish websites and provide e-commerce opportunities in exchange for a revenue stream as parents, teachers and others purchase products from sponsors on the district website. The initiative will begin in 2001, initially providing over 80,000 laptops to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who can continue to use them as they progress grade to grade (a similar proposal has been made by Governor King of Maine, however, a State-wide poll in Maine found that 58% of residents were not in favor, It did not pass in the legislature.

The number of special education students passing the State's Regents Exam has doubled over the last three years to over 12,000, with 60% passing it. However, only 50% of special education students passed English and only about 52% passed the Regents Math. Over the last four years, the State has placed a priority on early intervention and mainstreaming. Special education students must pass the Regents Exam if they are to receive regular high school diplomas. If they score below 55 on the test, they can be tested once again or take another competency test called for in their IEP, and if they pass it, they receive a "local diploma."

In order to receive a high school diploma, students must pass the Regents English exam. For those students who are not likely to pass the exam, districts are required to provide extra help. While the State has not in the past provided any additional State funding specifically for remediation for seniors, over the last four years, the State's general funding for K-12 has increased almost 100% and

much of the State aid is used for remedial and intervention strategy.

A plan for using test scores to rate schools across the State will be in place eventually; the rating will take into account ethnic enrollment such that scores will be reported by sub-groups of students. Currently, this is a requirement under Federal Title I legislation. For special education and limited-English-proficient students, data will be collected however; how such student scores within these sub-groups will be reported is unclear. In some regards, New York is following in the foot steps of Texas and California which are currently providing similar ratings taking into account of sub-groups of ethnic students. Serious problems were associated with the first release of the California data by sub-groups, requiring that the ratings be revised to take into account other factors, as noted in the California update.

Governor Pataki's \$25 million "teachers of tomorrow" proposal, now before the legislature, would provide college scholarships for teachers who agree to teach in subject areas in which are shortages.

Under new State legislation, districts within the State will have to comply with a 1995 law which provided waivers for limiting class-size for special education students. Under previous waivers, the larger districts in the State argued that absentee rates were higher for special education students; hence, they wanted waivers. By requiring districts to meet the class size limitations, more special education funding will be used to hire teachers rather than to purchase products and services such as instructional technology.

## North Carolina Update – June 2000

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State Superintendent Ward has proposed a plan which would attempt to reduce the achievement gaps between blacks/Hispanic students and white students. This is part of the State's \$100 million proposal related to accountability which was initiated three years ago. The State Board has also adopted recommendations to establish a pilot program that would reward schools based on whether test scores were improving for every ethnic and socio economic group. In addition to State funds, approximately \$4 million of Federal funds will also be used to support this initiative.

The legislature has appropriated an additional \$10 million for the Technology Trust Fund, which is used by many districts to pay for E-rate eligible items until they are notified of approved discounts. Additional funds are allocated to the Trust Fund from specialized license plates funds. The legislature also appropriated \$50 million last year to be used to implement North Carolina Windows to Information for Student Education (NCWISE) which replaces the State Information Management System. NCWISE will be tested this year in 18 schools, regional offices, and the Department of Public Instruction; implementation is to begin in February 2001. The State has also launched NCWISEOWL, which is a website of online resources available to teachers and parents with Internet access. Reference material from Gale Research and Grolier have been licensed. A two-year evaluation of the service is under way. The SREB Evalutech Database of software and supplemental materials will once again be available this year to all States. The North Carolina SEA has trained representatives from approximate 16 other States in the software evaluation process. This database may be accessed at <http://www.evalutech.sred.org>.

## Ohio Update – June 2000

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As previously reported, after two years of field testing, it appears that the Cincinnati Public Schools will be implementing the district's first pay-for-performance teacher contracts since the early 1920s. The plan would create a five-tier system that will be correlated with 16 new teacher standards. The local AFT is likely to support this plan in which teachers would be designated based on their performance on a scale ranging from "novice," to "accomplished level." Pay would be increased as teachers move up the performance scale.

The final K-12 budget represents a 5% increase to \$7.05 billion, including \$30 million to continue Ohio Reads which expands reading programs among districts and support approximately 20,000 volunteer reading tutors. Depending upon pending decisions by the State Supreme Court regarding the State's education finance system, other increases may be passed by the legislature over the next few months.

The legislature has appropriated an additional \$53 million to continue the SchoolNet Plus Initiative (bringing total funds provided to more than \$480 million since 1996) for districts to purchase computers. The most recent appropriation will pay for almost 30,000 interactive multimedia computers.

The State Supreme Court recently ruled that the current State-financed financial aid system for K-12 education is illegal. By a 4-3 vote, the current system was neither "thorough nor efficient" in providing equal education opportunities regardless of school wealth. The legislature has until June 2001 to remedy the situation.

In March, the State Board of Education approved a proposal that would allow school districts to review IEPs once a year rather than every six months as is now the case. LEAs would also be allowed to place children of all ages in the same class rather than placing students within three years of each other in a class. New changes which can simplify their special education process must be approved by the legislature and the State's Attorney General before they go into effect.

Approximately \$5.2 million will be allocated to over 130 secondary and post-secondary schools to support programs that are intended to develop information technology and Internet skills. The Information Technology Workforce Development grant will support summer camps for high school students, as well as internships with the FCC. This initiative is part of the multi-year Link-to-Learn program for which almost \$100 million has been allocated during the last four years to develop a State backbone and Internet network.

The final K-12 budget reflects an increase of almost 5% up to \$6.13 billion under which State formula aid will increase slightly over \$110 million or 3%. As noted previously, \$25 million has been approved for an initiative to raise student achievement including the use of contractors, especially in low-performing schools where the risk of being taken over by the State is high. Eleven districts, including Philadelphia, are in this type of situation. Recently, Superintendent David Hornbeck resigned from the Philadelphia Public Schools. Approximately \$34 million will be provided in the form of rewards to schools whose students' test scores and attendance increase.

The new Education Empowerment Act signed by Governor Ridge in May provides greater flexibility for districts, encouraging them to institute privatization initiatives to fend off potential take-over. The other ten districts must submit improvement plans to the SEA this summer. (Twenty-two other States allow similar take-overs of low-performing schools). Philadelphia is considering expanding the number of Charter Schools from the current 25 to a significantly larger number. While Philadelphia receives about \$15 million for improvements, it currently has a budget deficit over \$200

million. Other large districts on the list include Harrisburg , Lancaster and York school districts.

Special Education spending will increase almost 9% to \$783 million with low income districts receiving almost 30% of the increases to special education funding

The FY 2001 K-12 budget is \$11.6 billion reflecting a 2% increase; additional funding for the second year of the biennium budget will expand kindergarten and provide professional development to teachers of at-risk students.

The new TEA Commissioner of Education, Jim Nelson, has decided officially to leave the Council of Chief State School Officers and join the ultra-conservative Education Leaders Council. The ELC also includes State school officers from Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia and now Texas.

The Texas Center for Educational Research recently evaluated 89 Charter Schools in the State, and found that almost 80% of students enrolled in Charter Schools are non-whites, compared to 55% non-white enrollments in regular public schools. The report argues that this high proportion of minority students exists because most of the Charter Schools focus on at-risk populations. It also found that over 50% of the teachers of Charter Schools were uncertified, compared to about 5% in regular public schools. A copy of the report is available at [www.tasp](http://www.tasp). or [tcer](http://tcer).

Beginning in 2003 under current plans, the Standards of Learning test would be available. Cost estimates for the computerized SOL are between \$10 and 20 million annually. Governor Gilmore has vetoed a proposal that would earmark about 50% of all of the estimated \$250 million in Lottery revenues to school districts next year for non-reoccurring costs, which would include hardware and software purchases. Districts may still have the option of purchasing hardware and software using Lottery funds, but they are not required to purchase up to a certain amount.

**The Nottaway Correctional Center in Burkeville, Virginia, has been conducting a technology repair program since the mid-1980s. Recently, it has selected, and began to use, a computer-based training and simulation program. Some of the advantages of using computer simulation, rather than actual equipment included: a) reduced staff theft, as inmates would otherwise steal spare parts; b) minimal requirements to keep a large inventory of parts; and c) the development of computer skills on the part of inmates, as they learn to use a computer while they are learning to do the repairs. Contact at the correctional center is Wade Good (804)767-5543**

New teachers must take a teacher exam which essentially is a basic skills exam before enrolling in teacher training programs and a subject matter test before receiving a license. A new Professional Standard Board will select the specific tests to be used.

The Charter School movement recently received a big boost, which could make Washington the 37<sup>th</sup> State to allow publicly-funded Charter Schools, when Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, lent his financial support to promote a State referendum supporting Charter Schools. In 1996, a Charter Schools proposal was defeated by 2-1 margin. Allen's financial group recently invested \$30 million in Edison Schools Incorporated, which operates a number of Charter Schools and recently announced its intention to explore the feasibility of providing teacher and administrator training. The Vulcan Group has also invested in NetSchools, Apex Learning and a number of other firms selling different technology-based solutions to schools.

A 4.8% budget increase has been proposed for the second year of the biennium. Approximately \$60 million will be used for class size reduction and professional development; a portion of the State's \$140 million surplus will be allocated to education construction; \$35 million will be used to build new schools this year; \$5 million will also be used to provide raises for substitute teachers, many of whom will be used to cover classes while regular teachers receive professional development.

## **Wisconsin Update – June 2000**

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Governor Thompson will be signing appropriations that increases the K-12 budget 5.3% to \$7.4 billion for FY2001; \$61 million will be used for class size reduction in grades K-3 in an effort to reduce the student-teacher ratio to 15:1. Last year, approximately \$20 million was provided for class size reduction; \$4 million will be used to develop the high school graduation test, the passage of which will be one of four alternative ways for students to receive diplomas. Exams will be given in grades 11 and 12, starting in 2003-04 school year. Slightly over \$100 million is earmarked for numerous programs supporting technology integration, which is approximately \$25 million above last years allocations for wiring, connectivity, professional development and other initiatives under TEACH WISCONSIN.