

*Washington Update*⁸

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New Meta-Analysis of Controlled Evaluation Studies Finds Integrated Learning Systems Increase Achievement in Mathematics and Science Confirming Previous Meta-Analysis Conducted in the Early 1990s

A new report on a meta-analysis of “controlled evaluation studies” has found that integrated learning systems have produced statistically significant and educationally meaningful gains in mathematics and science tutoring compared to control groups. As summarized in an NSF InfoBrief (NSF 03-301 November 2002), “Each of the 16 studies found that mathematics test scores were at least slightly higher in the group taught with an ILS. In nine of the studies the test-score superiority of the ILS group was large enough to be considered both statistically significant and educationally meaningful. The median ILS effect in the 16 studies was to increase math test scores by 0.38 standard deviations, or from the 50th to the 65th percentile.”

The study, conducted by Dr. James Kulik, also compare these results to a 1992 meta-analysis conducted by Dr. Hank Becker, noting “The median effect on mathematics achievement in these 11 studies (by Becker) was an increase in test scores of 0.40 standard deviations. An effect size of 0.40 is equivalent to an increase in test scores from the 50th to the 66th percentile. This median is virtually identical to the median

ILS effect on mathematics tests in recent evaluations.”

The ILS programs in the meta-analysis conducted by Professor Kulick included those from seven different vendors that were used in elementary and middle schools in the U.S. and abroad. The NSF InfoBrief also notes that achievement scores were higher in seven studies in which ILSs were used exclusively for mathematics instruction and lower in the nine studies in which ILSs were used for both math and reading instruction. He also notes that “Evaluation results might have been even better if evaluators had focused on model implementation than on typical ones.” In a typical implementation, students spent only 15-30 percent of the recommended amount of time on ILS instruction. In the area of computer tutorials and science, Kulick found that, in all but one of the six controlled evaluation cases, “the effect of computer tutoring was large enough to be considered both statistically significant and educationally meaningful...In the median case, the effect of computer tutorials was to raise student achievement scores by 0.59 standard deviations, or from the 50th to the 72nd percentile.” The NSF InfoBrief also notes that evaluations conducted in the 1970s and 1980s found computer tutorials increased test scores from the 50th to the 64th percentile. In the area of computer simulations, six controlled evaluations found mixed results. However, the median effect of computer simulations was to raise student achievement scores by 0.32 standard

deviations, or from the 50th to the 63rd percentile.

The Kulick meta-analysis also focused on the effects of word processing and computer enrichment on the development of writing skills and found that a limited number of controlled evaluations reported generally positive effects for both types of applications. In other areas, Kulick compared the evaluation results for Writing To Read in earlier studies to more recent studies and found that recent evaluations reported significantly higher gains with a median effect of boosting reading scores from the 50th to the 60th percentile. The recent Kulick meta-analysis also reviewed literature in a limited number of controlled evaluations of micro-computer-based labs and instructional management systems such as Accelerated Reader and found mixed results.

An editorial in eSchool News (February 2003) was critical about some inferences that will be drawn from the study when it is finally released, noting, “the study will find that drill-and-kill software produces better student outcomes than more sophisticated technological approaches, such as computer simulations....I don’t doubt for a moment that his (Kulick’s) findings are the proper conclusions to draw from an ‘analysis of analyses.’ It’s just that the analyses being analyzed here are years out of date. To be fair, the researcher himself points out this problem.” As reported in the same issue, Eric Hamilton, acting director for research evaluation and communication at NSF stated, “The report needs to be analyzed to see whether the technologies reviewed reflect technologies used today.....I think there will be a lot of valuable insight that comes out of this report, but there will also

be a lot that won’t be useful because it comes from obsolete technologies.” For a copy of the InfoBrief go to www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/infbrief/nsf03301.

Bush Administration Proposes to Cut \$400 Million in FY 2004 from 21st Century Community Learning Center Program Based upon a New Evaluation Using Data Collected in 2000/2001 before New Academic and Enrichment Provisions Were Required

In the proposed FY 2004 budget, the Administration is proposing to cut from \$1 billion to \$600 million the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. As stated in the budget document, “The decrease in request acknowledges that the program needs some time to address disappointing initial findings from a rigorous evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. The evaluation indicates that the centers funded in the program’s first three years are not providing substantial academic content and do not appear to have a positive impact on student behavior.” The study, released on the same day as the FY 2004 budget request, relied on data collected from 2000-2001 for second and third year grantees whose initial designs were not required to have an academic component. Rather, it was originally designed as a “safe haven” for latchkey students and for broader community purposes. So, it is not surprising that the report concludes, “At the elementary school level, reading test scores and grades in most subjects were not higher for program participants than for similar

students not attending the program...For middle school students, grades in most subjects were not different than for similar students not attending 21st Century programs.”

Although not reported in USED’s press release (February 3), the first-year evaluation conducted by Mathematica Policy Research found that grades for math were higher for 21st Century participants, although the difference was small, and that larger grade point improvements occurred for Black and Hispanic middle school students. However, the USED press release concludes, “Overall, the findings suggest that policymakers and program developers need to consider ways to increase student participation and improve the academic enrichment offered to students. The after-school program also should consider structures that would increase student attendance. And, programs should focus on students who are having difficulty in reading or math and ask them to participate a minimum number of days each week.” And, the press release states, “The 21st Century Community Learning Center program needs to be better aligned with the accountability and research principles of the No Child Left Behind Act.”

Currently, in approximately one-third of the states, the first round of funding -- under the new No Child Left Behind requirements that academic components and enrichment activities must be aligned with state standards -- have yet to be made! To say that such proposed budget cuts are supported by analyses of programs before the new academic and alignment requirement existed under the new Law is baseless. Moreover, USED did not “encourage” grantees to report on academic achievement for

participants in programs until the first year of the Mathematica study.

The new evaluation report does present some useful information regarding the 21st CCLC. The average grantee operated three or four centers whose total enrollments were approximately 700 students. Fifty-seven percent of attendees were minority students compared with 37 percent nationwide. Most centers were located in elementary or middle schools. Approximately one-third were open 20 or more hours a week. About two-thirds of schools were high-poverty compared to 17 percent nationally. The budget of a center was on the average approximately \$196,000 or about \$1,000 per enrolled student. Approximately 70 percent of budgets came from 21st Century grants.

About 90 percent of middle school centers provided for supervised homework help, with more than half providing homework help and academic support such as tutoring, state test preparation, and help sessions in reading, writing, and math. Help sessions were targeted to particular students referred by classroom teachers or those performing poorly on standardized tests. Middle school centers were open about four days a week for 2-1/2 hours each day. Students had to attend homework sessions first before they could participate in recreational or enrichment activities.

The typical elementary school center was open five days a week for 2-1/2 hours each day with about 80 students participating, usually three or four times a week. The first daily activity for third to fifth grade students is a homework session; K-2 students have “story time” after which students can participate in recreational and enrichment activities. According to the report,

recreational activities included arts and crafts, games, computers, and team sports.

As noted earlier, the first round of competitive grants administered at the SEA level for the 21st Century program are occurring this school year. In several states, two or more rounds may be competed. Funding for grantees under the previous Federal competitive program will be ending for 1999 and 2000 grantees under the three-year program. These prior grantees are likely to be among the first to apply for the new round of SEA funding in order to continue their programs.

The demand for afterschool programs is likely to increase under No Child Left Behind accountability and supplemental service provisions; parental support continues to expand for 21st CCLC, which has increased from \$40 million in 1998 to \$1 billion this year and is likely to continue near this funding level even though the President's FY 2004 proposed budget would cut it 40 percent, as noted above. As reported in Education Daily (February 5) Judy Samuelson, Executive Director of the Afterschool Alliance, stated that the methodology was flawed in terms of sample size and indicated that some of the positive findings were not reported by USED in its press release. Moreover, as she noted, "I just don't believe that Americans and ...parents are going to look at one study of this nature and reject the idea that afterschool programs are an incredibly important support for working families." Samuelson stated, "The rationale for this cut --- that afterschool programs do not improve academics or behavior --- is based on a Federal study with significant limitations, serious methodological problems, and an obvious bias. Dozens of other independent

studies, some of them going into greater depth and conducted over many years, tell us that afterschool programs keep children safe, improve learning, and help working families." One of the cited studies is a soon-to-be released multi-year report by the Policy Study Associates evaluating 96 programs run by the Afterschool Corporation in New York City. Also cited, was an independent study by UCLA of the Los Angeles BEST afterschool program.

In deference to Mathematica, one can infer that the 40 percent cut proposed by the Administration is premature as it concludes "The No Child Left Behind Act restructures the 21st Century Program and focuses more attention on the program's potential for improving academic outcomes, especially for disadvantaged students. An additional year of follow-up and the expansion of a number of elementary school programs in the study will provide another opportunity to assess whether the programs (as they are currently implemented) are likely to meet these objectives."

In a lengthy discussion, Samuelson expressed doubt that the Year 2 and Year 3 reports by Mathematica would result in different findings regarding academic achievement because of the flawed methodology and the design of the study, particularly the small sample size.

The Afterschool Alliance will be conducting Congressional briefings this month and will hold a fly-in the middle of May to present data and lobby against such cuts, according to Samuelson. Also, on June 23-24, USED is scheduled to hold a 21st Century Community Learning Center summit in Washington, D.C. For more information

about the Afterschool Alliance go to www.afterschoolalliance.org/news_events.

Widely Publicized Report by Center for Public Integrity on Fraud and Abuse in the E-rate Program, Which is Based on an FCC Audit, is “Much Ado About Nothing”

On January 9, the Center for Public Integrity (CPI) released a special report entitled “Phone Fund for Schools, Libraries Riddled with Fraud,” which was largely based upon a “new report to Congress on the [E-rate] fund by the FCC Inspector General’s office which says the program, known as the E-rate fund, is virtually out of control.” However, as one reads the October 31, 2002 Inspector General’s semi-annual report to the Chairman of the FCC, it becomes clear that the Inspector General was requesting increased funding to hire more auditors based upon “perceptions” of possible situations involving fraud and abuse. For example, the report states “In calendar year 2001, USAC contracted with a public accounting firm to conduct audits at twenty-two (22) beneficiaries. The draft report for these audits, dated May 31, 2002, indicates there may be findings that at nearly all locations including several millions of dollars in inappropriate disbursements and unsupported costs.” As it continues, “During this semi-annual reporting period, we started twenty-nine (29) audits of E-Rate beneficiaries and service providers. These audits were conducted using in-house resources and four (4) auditors that were obtained from the WCB (Wireline Competition Bureau) on a temporary detail....Unfortunately, during the course of

the audit process, some of these resources were diverted to support an ongoing criminal investigation. As a result, several of the audits that had been planned were canceled. The audits that were initiated are still in process, but preliminary results indicate potential irregularities at many locations that may result in potential fund recovery and further referrals for investigation.”

The OIG’s October report identified, as one of the alleged violations, competitive procurement processes that failed to take place and “as a result, the cost of goods and services were inflated.” Later the report identifies the need for a “suspension or debarment” program to “preclude chronically noncompliant participants from obtaining funding.” As reported in the press in December, Connect 2 Internet Networks Inc., a New York-based Internet service company and its employees, were charged with defrauding millions of dollars of E-rate funds. In December, other articles appeared; according to eSchool News (December 4, 2002), the SLD stated that it was, “denying a sizable number of 2000 applications that list a certain service provider because they allegedly violate the program’s competitive bidding requirements.” The service provider in question that was listed on applications requesting more than \$1 billion in 2002 E-rate funding was IBM Corporation. Several large districts in Texas whom we contacted, confirmed that they were concerned about the possibility of their applications not being approved because of their selection of IBM as a service provider. However, most will likely file appeals, if initially denied.

As a result of the press coverage, the FCC OIG is likely to receive additional funding -- perhaps \$2 million -- to increase its number

of auditors; only two of its auditors now monitor the E-rate program. In January, the SLD indicated that it planned to increase the number of staff performing “selective reviews” of applications in the immediate future.

As expected, opponents of the E-rate program in its current configuration, are beginning to surface. Chairman Billy Tauzin (R-LA) of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, recently announced that he plans to launch a preliminary investigation. His spokesperson told a reporter for Education Daily (January 24), “We are not out to get the E-rate program, we are out to get the people who are defrauding the government.” Supporters such as Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), the chief architect in the Senate of the E-rate program, has reportedly dismissed the CPI report because of the small number of questionable alleged violations, stating, “I am sorry, but that does not a story make” (eSchool News, February 7). In a discussion with Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee (which has Senate jurisdiction over the E-rate program), he noted that he was not opposed to the E-rate program but objected to the way it was initially organized. He expressed surprise and concern when he was informed that the Administration’s first (FY 2001) proposed budget included language which would have resulted in serious erosion of support on the part of telecommunication carriers for the E-rate program and could result in its demise. For a copy of the Center for Public Integrity report on E-rate issues go to www.publicintegrity.org/dtaweb/report.

The FCC audit report can be found at www.fcc.gov/oig/sar902.

Technology Literacy Summit Fails to Address Major Problem: The Reality of USED Regulations vs. the Rhetoric of No Child Left Behind Regarding Technology-Related Provisions

On January 24, the 2003 Information and Communications Technology Literacy Summit was convened to arrive at consensus for a definition of technology literacy and to generate momentum among government, business, and educators to spur the movement. During the half-day conference held at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Federal and corporate officials, who had serious concerns (and even vested interests), pointed to specific provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act which would have states develop goals related to progress in increasing the number of students who become technology literate by the 8th grade. Only a small number of spokespersons from the various groups were aware of the fact that USED final regulations providing guidance to states on submitting their consolidated plans (in applying for ESEA funding across all titles) “disemboweled” most of the technology literacy mandates in the Law; the May 22, 2002 regulations deleted the requirement that states would have to submit annual reports on progress being made in meeting the 8th grade technology literacy mandate. In addition, states were told they would not have to report on other technology indicators, including the percentage of teachers qualified to use technology in the classroom and the percentage of students with access to network computers, both of which are explicit in the Law. As Title I Reports noted, “In each case, USED agreed with criticism that these indicators are not related

directly enough to achievement and that it would be difficult to collect reliable and useful data.”

As we noted in our July, 2002 Washington Update, in light of state budget deficits, an even greater amount of the “50 percent transferability” of formula technology grants under Title II D will likely be transferred out of technology into other areas such as Title I. These same regulations made it clear that Title I schoolwide programs require no separate accounting or reporting on how the money is spent. When this point was made to Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Science and Technology Melman, who was one of the lead speakers referencing the mandate for technology literacy in No Child Left Behind, he was surprised. It was suggested that he, and perhaps the White House (whose Domestic Policy Chief is his brother), might attempt to ensure that the USED regulatory framework is more closely related to explicit provisions in the Law. As one of the speakers who has been extensively involved in the development of ISTE technology literacy standards and competencies for students noted, “If states don’t have to report on how much progress is being made in the area of technology literacy, there is no incentive to actually implement these provisions in light of the availability of limited resources to implement other provisions related to testing, etc.”

To assist in the consensus-building effort, Education Testing Service, one of the conference hosts, released a report of the International ICT Literacy Panel which agreed on the following definitions:

- “Access - knowing about and knowing how to collect and/or retrieve information;
- Manage - applying an existing organization or classification scheme;
- Integrate - interpreting and representing information, it involves summarizing, comparing and contrasting;
- Evaluate - making judgments about the quality, relevance, usefulness, or efficacy of information;
- Create - generating information by adapting, applying, designing, inventing or authoring information.”

Other corporate sponsors of the summit were the AOL/Time Warner Foundation, and Dell Computer.

These definitions or criteria are very similar to the “core competencies for the 21st century” that were developed more than 12 years ago by the SCANS Commission headed by Dr. Arnie Packer, now at Johns Hopkins University. The success of the SCANS Commission can be attributed directly to the active participation and contributions from several thousand employers regarding desired employability skills in the 21st century. Because of pressures from many of these firms nationwide, virtually every state had, within three years, adopted most of the SCANS core competencies and foundations (e.g., basic cognitive skills), as reflected in their

“applied academic” competencies in vocational education and “tech prep” programs. Given the relatively low priority being placed by USED on technology literacy (vs. math and reading skills development), in order to maintain momentum, technology advocates involved in the summit will have to rely to a much greater extent on business community advocacy.

One of the speakers, Shelley Hymes, Director, Office of 21st Century Workforce at the U.S. Department of Labor, outlined a new policy redirection for the one-stop-shop centers across the states (which are the backbone of the Workforce Investment Act); it will emphasize high-level technology skill development in response to the demand generated by employers.

During the summit, Education Testing Service and the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) announced a new joint initiative which would provide professional development and create appropriate assessment instruments to evaluate the degree to which students have information and communications literacy skills. This initiative will incorporate ISTE’s National Education Technology Standards (NETS) that are currently included in the state technology plans or standards in more than 40 states.

For more information about the literacy summit go to www.ictliteracy.info.

New Survey Identifies at Least 2,300 Targeted Schools Required to Offer Supplemental Services, Significantly Less Than the 8,600 Identified by USED Last Summer

A survey of SEA Title I offices and officials conducted by [Title I Reports](#) has identified at least 2,375 targeted schools which, under Title I regulations, should be required to offer supplemental services this year at Title I expense. An additional 2,700 schools have been identified as failing for two consecutive years and therefore received a minimum of 15 percent of their budget -- out of the district Title I central office “reserve” -- in addition to their school’s regular Title I allocation, for staff development. By the end of January two states, Michigan and Oregon, had not released their final list as test data from 2002 were still being analyzed. The initial 1,500 schools so-identified in Michigan will likely be reduced significantly when Federal minimal AYP criteria are applied because Michigan criteria for failing are much more rigorous. The survey estimated that, if strict interpretation of the law were enforced, approximately 500 schools nationwide would have been under “corrective action” which could require replacing the entire staff or curriculum or other actions.

As noted in the June 2002 TechMIS Special Report on the National Supplemental Services Conference, once state and district Title I officials realized the magnitude of Title I funds that could flow out of districts to third-party supplemental service providers, they began to look for loopholes in draft guidance and regulations to allow them to reduce the number of schools targeted for improvement for having failed

three consecutive years. One loophole in the draft Title I regulations in August allowed states and districts who used 2001-2002 test scores the option of removing schools that made AYP for second year but not requiring them to add any new schools to the list. Some states argued that new state assessments used for the first or second year could not be used to identify targeted schools.

States with at least 100 schools that should be required to provide supplemental services include:

- Georgia - 360
- Arizona - 227
- California - 534
- Massachusetts - 104
- Pennsylvania - 245
- New York - 368

In each of the states, the number of schools failing two consecutive years -- which will require choice and at least 15 percent of the Title I allocation to be devoted to staff development -- are between 50 and 150 more than those subject to supplemental services.

As an article in Title I Reports (January 2003) by Alexander Russo notes, only 28 states had approved lists of supplemental services providers and eight have not even published criteria. Many states did not focus upon the process of approving supplemental service providers until final guidance on supplemental services was published by USED in December. One of the big issues finally addressed in the December guidance was whether states could require supplemental service providers to use “highly-qualified” teachers and

scientifically-based approaches. That guidance clearly indicated that the states could only require that providers use scientifically-based approaches. The standards established by SEAs who have lists of approved providers vary significantly. For example, Alaska approved only one of nine applicants while North Carolina approved 9 of 29 applications, rejecting providers who proposed to use teachers with less than three years of experience. Georgia has almost 125 approved service providers of which approximately 70 are school districts that wish to compete with outside groups by having high-performing schools provide afterschool programs in failing schools and/or delivering online instruction. The high-performing school to which parents wish to have their student transferred or otherwise wish to receive supplemental services (e.g., afterschool tutoring in a failing school or online distance learning services) has to be approved by the state in order to receive reimbursement from Title I for the services and/or transportation. These high-performing schools could be very effective partners with technology vendors, particularly those with online services as pointed out in our December special analysis of the Title I regulations.

The American Association of School Administrators has strongly encouraged districts to become state-approved supplemental service providers directly or working with regional education service agencies. In addition to Georgia, districts in Alabama, California, Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina have been approved and are currently providing services. According to Title I Reports, the Portland (Oregon), Public Schools began in January a tutoring program

for approximately 2,500 at-risk students at four schools even though only one school was required to provide such services.

In January, Los Angeles Unified School District officials began notifying parents of over 150,000 students in more than 100 schools about new opportunities to have any of 24 different service providers serve their child. However, the district's own program, referred to as "Beyond the Bell," is already in over 500 schools and will likely compete very effectively with any outside groups.

It is not clear how many nonpublic (including parochial) schools have been approved by the states as supplemental service providers and are actually providing such services at this time, although partnerships between online instruction service providers and several dioceses are being initiated. A recent discussion with Judy Samuelson, Executive Director of the Afterschool Alliance, indicated that many existing providers of afterschool services are somewhat reluctant to participate as supplemental service providers because of the time and energy and the "hoops" they would be required to jump through to become an effective provider and to meet the contractual requirements, including being reimbursed based upon student achievement.

Without question, the parent choice option and supplemental education services provisions of No Child Left Behind are the highest priorities of USED and other Administration officials. Some Democrats, such as Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), have alleged that these provisions were designed to pave the road for nonpublic vouchers. Ironically, in some states and districts, the threat of Title I dollars leaving

their district (up to an estimated possible \$500 million) has rallied a competitive spirit to implement programs that are perceived to be effective in increasing achievement among at-risk students. In a real sense, these two provisions could serve the role of a catalyst for school change, including the increased use of different technology-based approaches such as online tutoring and instruction among others.

New Report Concludes Teacher Retention is Nation's Most Serious Education Problem and Recommends Modern Technology to Improve Working Conditions and Support Learning Communities

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, chaired by former North Carolina Governor James Hunt, argues that "teacher turnover is now undermining teacher quality and it is driving teacher shortages." With the exception of the fields of mathematics, science, special education, and bilingual education, the report argues that the teacher supply is adequate to meet demands. However, in 1999-2000, schools hired 232,000 teachers who had not been teaching the year before (i.e., new and re-entering teachers, not just those changing schools) and, one year later, schools lost 287,000 teachers, 55,000 more than had been hired. Approximately one-third of new teachers leave teaching sometime during their first three years of teaching and almost half leave during the first five years of teaching. The turnover rate is one-third higher in high-poverty schools. Approximately one million teachers enter or

depart their schools annually. The cost of such turnover is “astronomical” according to the report, which cites a conservative estimate of \$329 million as the annual cost in Texas alone. The report cites numerous studies which point to poor working conditions and salary levels as the two factors contributing most to high turnover rates, particularly in low-income, high-minority schools.

A survey conducted by the Council for Exceptional Children several years ago, found that the average special education teacher spends one and one-half days a week conducting activities related to Individual Education Programs (IEPs) which are required for every special education student, including IEP development, review, and updating, meetings with parents, hearings, and litigation. Our study of the implementation of P.L. 94-142 in 1976-1978 found that special education teachers spent at that time over 20 days a year in developing IEPs for the special education students they served.

The Commission report recommends the use of modern technology to support learning communities as a means to improve, not only student achievement, but also working conditions, thereby reducing high turnover rates. For example, network information technology can be used to sustain teachers in such learning communities because technology-enriched learning communities are particularly needed by new teachers who often face difficulties finding the support they need in their local schools; hence, they are able to share and expand their expertise through regular interactions with their colleagues and other leaders in the profession elsewhere.

Specifically, the Commission recommends that public schools “adopt modern technologies and make use of research findings that enable teachers to diagnose student learning needs and deploy appropriate teaching strategies that customize instruction appropriately...and use Internet-based network learning communities that enable teachers and students to participate in high-quality learning anytime, anywhere...and, use multiple assessments and accountability indicators that give a clear and continuing picture of progress toward student learning goals.” Without question, as indicated by several recent surveys (e.g., the Center for Education Policy, ACORN, etc.), a large percentage of the almost \$3 billion under Title II/Teacher Quality will be used as financial incentives for highly-qualified teachers to teach in high-poverty schools and to retain highly-qualified teachers generally and particularly in high-poverty Title I schools; this will likely be a reoccurring cost. On the other hand, if districts purchase teacher technology tools and other configurations specifically designed to improve working conditions, the long-run cost may be significantly less. Although some firms with administrative-type packages have positioned their applications as reducing costs, very few firms thus far have positioned relevant products as improving teacher working conditions. For a copy of the Commission’s report on teacher shortages go to www.nctaf.org/dream/summary_report.pdf.

USED Promises More Clarification through Various Forms of Guidance Regarding Title I and Related Issues

During the National Title I Conference in Anaheim the first week in February (which overlapped with FETC), USED officials promised that more guidance would be forthcoming on certain Title I issues: (a) that were not finalized in the December Final Title I Regulations; and/or (b) that have been identified as requiring clarification as districts attempt to implement this somewhat dysfunctional law. Some of these points of clarification and guidance should be of high interest to certain TechMIS subscribers.

According to Title I Reports, which covered and reported on a closed meeting between the National Association of State Title I Directors and USED Officials in Anaheim, one point of clarification will be a letter scheduled to be sent to SEAs in early March clarifying what USED expects the states to include in their “consolidated applications” for Federal funding, which are due May 1. As we reported in our July TechMIS report, the guidance (May 22, 2002) in this area to states did not require states to report annually on several important technology-related provisions in the law, including: (a) the number of students at the 8th grade level who became technology illiterate; (b) the number of teachers who were adequately trained in the use of technology; and (c) the number of students who had classroom access to the Internet. The initial draft guidance (April, 2002) did include these provisions as technology indicators to be reported upon, but were significantly deleted in the May 22 guidance.

In an SIIA symposium conducted during FETC in early February, two state technology directors indicated that they had only a minor role in the development of their state’s consolidated plan that were due last June; when the attendees were reminded of the May 22, 2002 regulations, the state directors acknowledged this would be an incentive for SEAs to place a low priority on technology-related provisions, thereby encouraging districts to transfer funds out of Title II D/Enhancing Technology into other programs.

If the new letter guidance in March does not reinstate these requirements for submission of the second round of consolidated plans, the use of funds for meeting these technology mandates will be difficult to justify before Congress without any data on progress being made. This is one of several areas of “selective implementation” that the Administration follows in disregarding provisions in NCLB on which it does not place a high priority, such as technology used to deliver instruction.

As reported in our December analysis of Title I regulations, USED had initially proposed in August 2002 that no more than .5 percent of students could be excluded from taking regular state assessments and could take alternative assessments. During the Anaheim Title I meeting, a USED official indicated that USED would likely issue a more flexible set of regulations in the near future because of extreme criticism received from virtually all quarters. Another “bone of contention” among educators at all levels was the initial regulation that, if a student takes a state assessment more than once, the first score is the one that counts for accountability purposes. More flexible

alternatives are likely to be reflected in future guidance in this area.

The March guidance on state consolidated applications to states will also address graduation and drop-out rates, how they are reported by the states, and district report cards. As noted in our December analysis, a student who passes the GED is reported as a “drop-out” under new regulations, whereas NCES reported such successful GED participants, not as drop-outs, but in a category including those receiving regular high school diplomas. Under the new rules, only graduates receiving regular high school diplomas are so counted and reported. If this definition is included in the final regulations, teacher referrals of students to take the GED assessments are likely to be reduced significantly.

Among the five states whose accountability plans have been approved thus far and have been posted on the USED website as models for other states to follow, at least one state included in its plan a five-year alternative test for certain types of students. Hence, rather than adhering to regulations, the review process of the consolidated plans, requiring states to define dropouts and graduates, will be the means by which this issue will be resolved on a state-by-state basis. This will result in a significant lack of uniformity across states.

Another issue to be reflected in the second round of consolidated applications will be standards-based English proficiency assessments for LEP students which is required by the Law but which currently exists in very few states. On February 12, Secretary Paige announced \$17 million in nine grants to consortia of states whose purpose is to develop tools and approaches

which will enhance assessments of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. Most states are participating in one or more of these consortia projects. Four projects address assessment of English proficiency; two focus on appropriate test design accommodations for LEP students; one examines appropriate accommodations for special education students; one addresses improving the technical quality of alternative assessments for students with severe disability; and one addresses state capacity to evaluate and document alignment between state standards and state assessments.

To the extent that successful accommodation approaches and instruments are demonstrated, states will be offered opportunities to adopt and implement such components in their state assessments which will require a series of changes in the area of alternative assessments and accommodation for LEP and special education students. One “Achilles heel” of the No Child Left Behind will be inadequate funding; the other equally important one will be the inherent problems in assessing students with disabilities and limited-English-proficient students in the context of NCLB mandates. The press release describing the members of each of the nine consortia and the focuses of the funded projects are available at www.ed.gov/pressrelease/02-2003/02122.

Administration's FY 2004 Budget Proposal Likely "Dead On Arrival" But Clearly Indicates Administration's Priorities

The Administration's FY 2004 budget proposal, which was announced before the FY 2003 appropriation was finalized by Congress, is likely "dead on arrival" at Capitol Hill. However, it certainly reflects the Administration's priorities and illustrates the influence of the Heritage Foundation within this Administration (see September 2000 Washington Update). While Administration officials touted the proposed FY 2004 budget as a two percent increase over the President's FY 2003 request, when one compares it to the final FY 2003 appropriation level it represents only a 0.35 percent increase. Once again, the budget proposal attempts to eliminate all of the technology earmarked programs such as Star Schools, PT³, and Community Technology Centers.

The FY 2004 proposal would freeze 51 programs at the same level they were funded in FY 2002, but would eliminate 47 programs funded in FY 2002, including the Regional Technology and Education Consortia, the Regional Education Labs, Comprehensive School Reform demonstration programs, and the \$108 million Tech-Prep vocational program. The proposed budget would reduce vocational education state grants by 15 percent and would cut 21st Century Community Learning Centers by 40 percent to \$600 million (see related item). The Administration is proposing a new secondary and technical education program which would place an entirely new focus on supporting academic achievement at the high school level. The proposed budget

would also extend the QZAB program for two years and extend deductions for corporate donations of computer technology to schools. The Administration's priorities, however, would receive increased funding, including:

- mentoring programs - an increase from \$82.5 million to \$100 million, including funding for faith-based organizations to set up mentoring programs for students who are children of prisoners;
- a five percent increase for Reading First and a 33 percent increase for Early Reading First;
- a five percent increase in the TRIO Program;
- nine percent and eleven percent increases for Title I and IDEA, respectively.

Major political battles will focus on the Administration from groups such as:

- the vocational education community and its various associations as the result of changing the nature of the program and proposed budget reductions;
- various advocacy groups for afterschool programs in light of the proposed \$400 million cut for 21st CCLC;
- public school advocates regarding tax proposals for education, including refundable

tax credits for private religious schools of up to 50 percent of \$5,000 in school choice costs;

- rural education advocacy groups whose earmark would be eliminated and vocational technical education programs would severely cut.

ECS Data Base Summarizes State Policies Relative to No Child Left Behind Requirements

The Education Commission of the States has developed a data base which provides information on the way state policies match up with the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Attached is an excerpt from the data base's national grid as of the first of February.

With regard to **NCLB standards and assessments**, nearly 85 percent of the states are on track in the development of *science standards*, with the remainder in pretty good shape. About 55 percent are fully on track with their *science assessments* and seven states are not on track at all in this category. Only about a third of the state are completely on track in the development of *annual assessments in reading* and in *math*. In terms of *assessments of English language proficiency*, about 45 percent of the states are fully on track, but more than a third do not appear to be on track at all. About 45 percent are also fully on track to *include LEP students* in their assessments, but again nearly a quarter of the states are not at all on track. The findings are similar for the *inclusion of migrant students* with about half the states fully on track and less than fifteen

percent not on track. On the other hand, more than two-thirds of the states are on track for the *inclusion of students with disabilities* and only four states not at all on track.

In terms of key NCLB **accountability** requirements, only nine states appear to be completely on track to require *accountability for all subgroups*. Half of the states are apparently not on track at all. The findings are a little better for the *inclusion of graduation rates and other indicators*; a third of the states are fully on track and about 40 percent are not on track.

With regard to key requirements under NCLB's **school improvement** provisions, only three states are considered to be fully on track when it comes to *timely identification* of schools in need of improvement. Eleven states appear not to be on track; the remaining three quarters of the states are classified as partially on track. In terms of providing appropriate *rewards and sanctions* for school improvement, nearly half of the states are fully on track with about a quarter not on track at all.

States tend to be in better shape with regard to the **supplemental services** of NCLB. More than 80 percent of the states are considered to be on track when it comes to having appropriate *criteria for supplemental services*. About 55 percent are fully on track in terms of developing a *list of approved supplemental services providers*, but more than 40 percent of the states are not thought to be on track at all. Only about 37 percent of the states are fully on track when it comes to *monitoring supplemental services providers*; half are not considered on track at all. With regard to overall *implementation of supplemental services*,

nearly 40 percent of the states are considered fully on track, about 15 percent are partially on track, and the remaining 45 percent are not on track at all.

The issue of **teacher quality** under NCLB is the most troublesome. Only two states are considered to be fully on track with *high-quality professional development*. Another six states are partially on track with all the remaining states not considered to be on track at all.

The full data base, including detailed state information is available at:
<http://nclb.ecs.org/nclb/>.

FY 2003 Second Quarter E-Rate Commitments for Prior Years Released

For the second quarter of FY 2003, the Schools and Libraries Support Mechanisms at USAC listed commitments for 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001, totaling nearly \$9 million. The attached list, derived from SLD postings, includes districts receiving at least \$50,000. Anyone who is interested in pursuing sales opportunities as the result of refunds applicants have requested and/or obtained through the BEAR Form 472 process should contact Charles Blaschke directly. Cold sales calls to E-rate offices in these district applicants should not be attempted because of political sensitivities. We would be pleased to advise interested TechMIS subscribers in how to proceed. Call Charles Blaschke at 703-536-2310.

FY 2003, Quarter 2 Commitments (greater than \$50,000)

Applicant	City	State	Amount Committed
1998 Commitments LAREDO INDEP SCHOOL DISTRICT	LAREDO	TX	\$3,407,275
1999 Commitments			
2000 Commitments OKMULGEE INDEP SCHOOL DIST 1 MORRISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	OKMULGEE MORRISON	OK OK	\$329,935 \$126,308
2001 Commitments CENTRAL CONS SCHOOL DIST 22 CRYSTAL BOARDING SCHOOL GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOL AZUSA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT PIKE TWP METRO SCHOOL DISTRICT STEWART COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT CLEMENTE MIDDLE SCHOOL UNITED TALMUDICAL ACADEMY OF BOROPARK SELMA UNIF SCHOOL DISTRICT TESUQUE DAY SCHOOL TEXAS EDUC TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK LAGUNA MIDDLE SCHOOL CAYUGA-ONONDAGA BOCES WAYNE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION ONE NET PRESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT JACKSONVILLE INDEP SCHOOL DISTRICT MONONGALIA COUNTY SCHOOLS CONNELLSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DIST HARBOR CITY HIGH SCHOOL MOBILE ELEM SCHOOL DISTRICT 86 ACADEMY OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY	SHIPROCK NAVAJO GRAND RAPIDS AZUSA INDIANAPOLIS LUMPKIN NEW HAVEN BROOKLYN SELMA SANTA FE AUSTIN LAGUNA AUBURN WAYNE OKLAHOMA CITY KINGWOOD JACKSONVILLE MORGANTOWN CONNELLSVILLE BALTIMORE MARICOPA TOLEDO	NM NM MI CA IN GA CT NY CA NM TX NM NY WV OK WV TX WV PA MD AZ OH	\$819,868 \$452,425 \$372,024 \$306,337 \$269,818 \$267,084 \$217,850 \$214,953 \$199,094 \$198,414 \$195,840 \$163,549 \$138,643 \$136,465 \$127,908 \$106,915 \$104,280 \$72,749 \$70,569 \$64,260 \$61,716 \$50,522