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### MEMORANDUM

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TechMIS Subscribers

**FROM:** Charles Blaschke

**SUBJECT:** Special Report on NAFEPA, E-Rate and Washington Updates

Over the last month we attended several important meetings; highlights are covered in several of these Washington Update items. Our Special Report provides highlights from the NAFEPA Conference on issues, as well as opportunities, in Title I that were confirmed or implied by several USOE officials. Deputy Assistant Secretary Lim told the almost 200 Title I Director attendees that they will not be able to meet many of the supplemental services, choice, and staff development requirements under NCLB without using distance learning and related technology applications. This was the first time any USED official over the last 30 years has advocated technology use during NAFEPA. Questions and comments from attendees strongly suggest that many districts, that held in “reserve” up to 20 percent of their Title I funds for supplemental education services and transportation, are going to be spending such funds over the next several months because they have already reached their fifteen percent maximum carryover limit; and, many will likely be receiving additional Title I funding increases this coming year. Districts with large absolute and percentage increases in Title I funding will be sent to all TechMIS subscribers as soon as they are compiled after release of such information from the Office of the Secretary. Firms with products and services to help districts solve or cope with problems in the area of assessment, accountability, etc., for limited-English-proficient and special education students under No Child Left Behind should be in high demand over the next twelve months.

Also enclosed in this report is an FYI draft article which THE Journal asked me to prepare for publication in its May issue; it is directed toward school district officials. Please feel free to share

this draft with any corporate officials who need to be “convinced” of a number of suggestions made over the last several months in previous TechMIS reports and in this one.

Several Washington Update items resulted from presentations and followup discussions with USED and other officials during the SIIA Fly In which overlapped with the NAFEP conference. These include:

- New insights on Reading First which were gleaned from the presentation of Reid Lyon, Director, National Institute on Child Health and Human Development, and from Sandi Jacobs, the new Reading First Director, on the critical need for professional development in implementing “interventions.”
- A presentation by Dr. Steven Ross who stated that the medical/pharmaceutical model for conducting scientifically-based research in public schools is “unworkable” and who provided practical guidance for publishers and developers in meeting the scientifically-based research requirements.
- A new report which finds the New York City after-school program very effective in improving math achievement, in contrast to the recent USED evaluation conducted by Mathematica, which was used to support the 40 percent reduction in Federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning funding.
- A new report by Rand Corporation’s Mathematical Study Panel which is likely to have a major impact upon, and add momentum to, the Secretary’s math and science initiative, which was also addressed during the SIIA Fly In.
- Unintended consequences occurring in rural schools as attempts are made to implement several NCLB provisions which, not only create problems, but also provide opportunities for firms with appropriate products and services, particularly those related to distance learning.
- Recommended uses of technology for school reform by SchoolMatch could create an increased demand for such applications as relocating parents explore which schools to have their children attend.
- A proposal by the General Services Agency (GSA) to allow public schools and universities to purchase multimedia and other products now on the GSA list for Federal purchases, which could provide vendors a leg up on the Section 508 accessibility problem.
- An E-Rate update as the FCC adopts new rules to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse, and includes wireless connectivity and voice mail as eligible services.

Mailings Clearinghouse (MCH) has identified approximately 300 districts among the top 800 districts likely to receive large increases in Federal Title I funding this coming year, which have five or more failing schools. As noted in the NAFEPA report, many of these districts will be spending funds held in reserve as transportation and supplemental education services' costs were not incurred to any great extent. Contact Mary English, 800/776-6373. IRA and AEP have asked us to hold a symposium on May 5 immediately prior to the IRA conference in Orlando. For more information contact Mary English, 800/776-6373.

Our analysis of several sessions held during the SIIA Fly In will be sent to TechMIS subscribers once we have had a chance to review verbatim comments by USED officials on significant questions raised with respect to scientifically-based research and the What Works Clearinghouse.

As always, if anyone has any questions please contact me directly.