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MEMORANDUM

June 24, 2003
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TO: TechMIS Subscribers

SUBJECT: Special Update Report on What Works Clearinghouse and Senate Version of IDEA Reauthorization; Washington Update Items on FY 2004 Budget and Perceived Training Needs of Teachers

FROM: Charles Blaschke

This TechMIS issue includes a Special Report on the somewhat changing policies and procedures of the What Works Clearinghouse, which strongly suggests that the “gold standard” for accepting positive research findings on particular products may be higher for basal texts used statewide than for supplemental products used at the district level. This strong inference is based on two presentations - one made by What Works Clearinghouse staff and another by Assistant Secretary Whitehurst. Any TechMIS subscriber who is interested in having evaluations conducted comparing classrooms and schools which have used their products for two or more years compared to a “national norm” should contact me directly ASAP.

A second Special Report includes an update on the IDEA reauthorization in which the Senate version is more flexible than the House version. They basically would require prereferral instructional interventions for borderline K-3 children to use Reading First-approved -- mostly basal -- texts.

The Washington Update includes:

- Findings from a new Public Agenda survey which identifies teachers’ perceptions of priority training needs including more training on effective ways to reach struggling students and new teaching techniques.
- The proposed FY 2004 budget by the House which is good news for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, IDEA/Special Education, and Math/Science Partnerships.

- New NSSEA market segmentation survey which finds that, in 2002, almost \$8 billion of instructional materials were sold to teachers in schools through dealer channels, of which \$640 million was for education games and \$560 million for instructional software and media.
- Reports in the media which confirm USED mistakes in determining preliminary district Title I allocations which, in combination with late guidance to SEAs regarding how to make LEA allocation adjustments, will create additional confusion resulting in uncertainty and postponed purchases at the district level.
- USED use of 1999 census data in determining state Title I allocations for next year which will benefit most states while negatively impacting two.
- A new AASA guide for small and rural schools which recommends an increased role for technology to assist such schools implementing several major NCLB provisions.

Our next TechMIS report will include results from interviews which we will have conducted with state technology directors and others during the NECC conference in Seattle beginning next week. For those of you attending the NECC conference as exhibitors, you might want to bring one or more copies of the May Special Report on districts receiving increases in Title I funds next year of at least \$500,000 and the most recent Special Report of districts receiving increases of at least 30 percent, which was at least \$100,000 or more. You should invite technology coordinators from districts to come by your booth to see how much, if any, of an increase their Title I program will be receiving and suggest they contact their Title I coordinator to see if there are opportunities to use increased Title I funds for purchasing your products and/or services. We have found this to be a very “enticing way” to get people to come by a booth. Remind them that in most cases their Title I director has not been told by the state Title I office about the amount of funds they will be receiving.

As always, if you have any questions contact me directly.