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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: December 23, 2003

TO: TechMIS Subscribers

FROM: Charles Blaschke

SUBJ: IDEA Reauthorization, Washington Update, including Final Regulations on Assessing Certain Special Education Students and Recent Developments, and State Profile Updates

The enclosed Special Report highlights the Senate version which will likely prevail over the House version of the reauthorization of IDEA early next Congressional session. Rather than requiring that “prereferral interventions” have all five essential components of a Reading First program as in the House version, the Senate version is less prescriptive. Both however, allow up to approximately \$1.5 billion to be used by districts with borderline students for purchasing interventions and professional development.

The Washington Update includes:

- Highlights and implications of USED Final Regulations allowing use of alternative assessments and alternative achievement standards with significantly-cognitive-impaired students; this should be good news for firms with certain types of products and services;
- Results of a recent meta-analysis finds that after-school or out of school time (OST) programs can improve student math and reading scores and identifies specific strategies and program features which work best;
- New USED user-friendly guide designed to help school decision-makers ask the “right questions” regarding quality of evidence supporting use of “proven practices”;

- Uncertainties regarding E-Rate rules have continued to contribute to paralysis and raise questions as to future support for the E-Rate program as currently configured;
- New NCES Report suggests growth of distance learning delivered college level remedial courses, especially in two-year colleges;
- During National Leadership Institute, State Education Technology Directors raise issues and concerns, along with possible solutions, which could involve publishers and technology vendors;
- National Governor's Association survey suggests improving budget situation in most states;
- Growth opportunities for technology-delivered post-secondary instruction for low-income adults likely.

The enclosed State Profile Updates have a variety of items related to states' implementation of NCLB including the number of schools identified for improvement and in turn how states are planning to deal with such issues. A number of states were contacted about the December 9 Final Regulations on the use of alternative assessments and achievement standards with cognitively-impaired special education students. Interviews were conducted with a number of state education technology directors during the December National Leadership Institute. While we have cited a number of local or state media publications and articles, wherever possible we have found corroborating evidence supporting excerpts which we have included in the state profile. Needless to say, media coverage of implementation of NCLB in states has generally been less than desirable.

If anyone has any questions, please contact me directly.