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M E M O R A N D U M

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To: TechMIS Subscribers

From: Charles Blaschke

Subj: NAFEPA Highlights, Washington Update, and State Profile Updates

In early April, we attended numerous sessions during the National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators 30th annual conference and have included a Special Report highlighting the probable impacts of recent newly-found USED flexibility policy changes (particularly alternative assessments); these could create significant opportunities for firms with certain types of products and services.

Washington Update items include:

- Highlights of the annual Council for Exceptional Children meeting which strongly suggest increased expenditures for technology and for special education products in the immediate future, confirming that many districts will be spending previously carried over Title I and other Federal funds beginning in May.
- Many states are seeking USED approval to exceed the one percent cap on alternative assessments which reinforces projected growth opportunities for firms with appropriate products and services.
- The Education Leaders Council is feeling both internal and external pressures to change the Following the Leaders project which has resulted in unfair Federally subsidized competition, reducing the level playing field for many firms.

- The National Council on Teacher Quality (a pro NCLB advocacy group), recommends phasing out certain state teacher certification standards and making extensive use of student performance as a major measure of whether existing teachers meet highly-qualified requirements.
- Opportunities for using technology to provide online teacher collaboration, especially for new teachers, is likely to grow as the result of several projects and USED initiatives.
- Government proposed FY 2005 budgets for K-12 education in nine states are lower than required by state law or otherwise fail to restore previous K-12 budget cuts.
- New NCES reports suggest significant growth opportunities for academic instructional materials and services in school-based after-school programs

Also enclosed in this TechMIS mailing are state updates regarding accountability-related events such as schools identified for improvement, policy changes in state graduation and exit exams, promotion policies, etc. We have relied upon reliable media reports, many of which were verified during the recent NAFEPA and CEC conferences through discussions with state and district officials. Sources of information on state K-12 and related funding and expenditures include the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SEA announcements, and discussions with SEA officials. If anyone has questions about the implications of certain state initiatives or events reported herein, please contact Charles Blaschke directly.