

Alabama Update - August 2002

Under a \$3 million Federal grant, the first round of teacher training under the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Summer Institute has been initiated. According to Education Technology News (July 31), the program is designed to deepen content knowledge, teach new strategies for presenting math and science concepts, develop new techniques for assessing students, and train on subject-specific resources for classroom use in elementary (K-5) and secondary (6-12) schools. The contact at the Alabama Department of Education is Steven Ricks, 334/353-9151.

The State will receive \$102 million over six years under the Reading First initiative. It will build upon the current Alabama Reading Initiative which is headed by Dr. Catherine Mitchell. Thirty-six Alabama school districts meet the eligibility requirements and may apply for subgrants. Each grantee will use funds to employ a reading coach, use a research-based reading program in specific assessments, and spend \$1,000 for every teacher in the school on professional development. Teachers will be trained in the use of dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills. Assessment systems will be provided to every kindergarten teacher in the State in 2003, every first grade teacher in 2004, every second grade teacher in 2005, and every third grade teacher in 2006. For a list of eligible county systems, contact Mitch Edwards, 334/242-9950 or review the June 25 press release at USED's website.

Alaska Update - August 2002

During a special session in June, the legislature passed a \$2.4 billion budget for fiscal 2003; an \$850 million shortfall was made up by taking funds from the State's budget reserve. The K-12 education budget increased from \$722 million to \$729 million. An additional \$170 million in school bonding authority for construction was also passed and will be part of a referendum in November. Slightly over \$10 million was allocated for the new State assessment system which will take effect this year.

Arizona Update - August 2002

The Mohave Valley Contractors Association has applied to the State for a grant to establish a vocational high school which would begin operation in the 2003-04 school year. The new charter high school would focus on building trades (e.g., carpentry, heating/air conditioning) as well as on associated management skills (e.g., accounting). The association has asked the State for \$450,000 in start-up funds and \$5,000 per student for operating expenses.

The State of Arizona's ASSET (Arizona School Services through Educational Technology) program is the primary means by which the State offers professional development for teachers and administrators. ASSET has recently established a website called the ASSET Education Portal supported by Classroom Connect. Starting last month, free online professional development courses are available to all Arizona administrators and teachers. Classroom Connect's Connected University is providing 12 selected courses from its catalog. In addition, the portal will offer five Arizona customized courses. A total of 35,000 teachers and administrators are expected to make use of the ASSET Education Portal.

According to eSchool News (July 2002), the \$100 million project to connect Arizona schools to the Internet has been halted; the contractor, Qwest Communications, has told the School Facilities Board that additional funds are required to complete the task. Approximately one-third of the schools that Qwest was supposed to wire have been completed. Qwest estimates an additional \$60 million will be needed to complete wiring all schools. State Senator Jay Blanchard (a technology advocate and active member of the International Reading Association) heading an investigation of the project, has stated that no additional funds should be provided until the investigation of how Qwest spent the \$100 million is complete. Earlier this year, the former head of the School Facilities Board resigned amid media reports that he had business connections with one of the contractors who received the \$37 million ISP contract.

Arizona will receive almost \$18 million under the Reading First grant as part of \$116 million over the next six years. About \$14 million will be subgrants to approximately 40 schools that are eligible; these awards will be made in March 2003. Part of the remaining funds will be used for

professional development to be provided for all teachers in implementing scientifically-based reading programs and assessments. Professional development will be provided through reading academies for all K-3 teachers and special education teachers throughout the State. The estimated timetable is as follows:

- pre-application workshops - November 2002
- pre-applications due - December 20, 2002
- applicant LEAs notified - January 17, 2003
- RFP announced - January 17, 2003
- workshops on preparing responses - January through February 2003
- responses to RFPs due - February 28, 2003
- approvals - May 31, 2003

Arkansas Update - August 2002

In early June, the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education called for major reforms in K-12 education in the State. At the heart of these reforms is the creation of Regional High Schools that would offer a greater and more rigorous range of academic programs, as well as a comprehensive vocational education curriculum in five occupational areas. The Commission has not established a schedule for implementing this ambitious plan. Under the Commission's recommendations, in the short run, existing Arkansas high schools will be required to increase their core academic requirements, provide vocational education in at least three occupational areas, and double professional development for teachers to at least 60 hours per year.

Projected to cost as much as \$700 million, the recommendations also include:

- raising teacher salaries to an average of \$45,000 by 2006-07;
- providing incentives for teachers to transfer into low-performing schools;
- requiring districts to provide work force education programs and career centers; and
- require all high school students to pass an approved assessment in order to graduate with a high school diploma.

These, as well as recommendations from other panels, will be considered by the State legislature next January. The Commission's recommendations can be viewed at www.educationinarkansas.com.

California Update - August 2002

The State Department of Education is implementing a portal called Gateway Presentation System from iAssessment, Inc. which would allow teachers to self-assess their competencies in using technology. According to eSchool News (August 2002), the web-based portal was designed to provide access to professional development systems, make available tools for assessment, and provide ways to report data and quantify results. While Gateway Presentation System was designed to assist the State in implementation of the new ESEA provisions on May 22. However, the USED dropped requirements included in a previous draft of the regulations for states to follow in applying for their consolidated ESEA grant proposal and for reporting on progress being made to increase the number of teachers that are prepared to use technology for curriculum integration.

Colorado Update - August 2002

The result of the 2000 constitutional amendment guarantees increased spending on K-12 education for ten years. The new State budget for FY 2003 includes a five percent hike for K-12 education which will result in a \$330 increase in per pupil spending; \$9 million will be provided to charter schools for facilities costs. The legislature also is requiring the State Department of Education to modify State tests as part of the State assessment's diagnostic tools.

The Colorado Department of Education will be awarding one grant each under the three new Title IID programs -- professional development, online courses, and decision-making. Under a fourth program -- technology access -- multiple grants will be awarded. Many states are under pressure to provide greater technology access by digitizing textbooks and providing reasonable accommodations for students with certain disabilities.

During October and November, one-day workshops will be conducted by the State Department of Education's Educational Telecommunications Unit and the Colorado State Library to help districts apply for E-Rate and Title IID state grants. The use of technology and standards-based curriculum and instruction may be included in the next round of school district accreditation. The primary contact is Eric Feder, 303/866-6859.

Based upon a 1998 law, school districts in Colorado have been able to develop online instructional programs that will allow students to do homework on the Internet. Excluded from this law were students who were in non-public schools or who were home schooled. This year funding was provided that would permit 135 students across the State to participate in the online program.

Connecticut Update - August 2002

The FY 2003 budget of \$2.01 billion for pre-K-12 education is slightly less than had been planned in the biennium budget passed last year. However, the revised budget represents an almost four percent increase above FY 2002 budget. The legislature also increased funding for magnet schools and charter schools which reflect the State's response to a desegregation lawsuit. In a reversal, the legislature eliminated \$7.5 million to reimburse districts for excess special education costs and capped for last year and froze next year's special education expenditures at \$66 million.

The new State Technology Coordinator in Connecticut is Travis Rose, 860/713-6595.

Florida Update - August 2002

Florida will receive a \$45 million first-year Reading First grant and a total of \$300 million over the next six years to implement the State's Just Read Florida initiative. Slightly more than 300 schools have been notified that they are eligible to submit applications (most likely during the winter) to create and expand their Reading First projects. In July, the State provided more than \$12 million to the eligible schools to hire reading or literacy coaches. Such allocations of funding for reading coaches will partially make up for a \$30 million reduction in anticipated Title I funds. In February, using preliminary Florida DOE data, \$30 million more than the final Florida allocation was estimated; many of these districts determined budgets for new Title I schools in the Spring and then later had to tell the schools that they will receive approximately ten percent less.

For more information go to www.myflorida.com.

Florida's two-year-old McKay Scholarship program gives vouchers to approximately 5,000 special education students. In the education law revised this Spring, changes were made to simplify the enrollment procedures and to allow children to enroll in independent schools in any quarter of the year. A state court recently determined that this voucher program was unconstitutional unless \$2.5 million more was provided by the legislature.

Hawaii Update - August 2002

The State of Hawaii has contracted with EBSCO Publishing to provide access to full-text data bases for nearly every educational institution in the State. All public schools, colleges, and libraries, as well as many private schools and colleges, will have unlimited access to 20 reference data bases hosted by EBSCO. These data bases include a broad range of subject matter including most content areas taught in the public schools and colleges.

Although the 2003 budget is less than projected, the \$1.34 billion budget for FY 2003 is \$25 million above the prior year's expenditures. Casualties included a \$3.5 million reduction in computer purchases.

Indiana Update - August 2002

According to eSchool News (August), pressures to cut state funding could eliminate free Internet service access currently offered by libraries, schools, and universities throughout the State. Earlier this year the fund which provides free access was cut by \$3 million. Also affected was INSPIRE, a volume discount contract which purchased 17 reference data bases, encyclopedia, and news articles.

Approximately \$5 million will be available to school corporations under the Common School Fund which can be used to purchase hardware and software for instruction. Requests are being made in August for between \$20,000 and a maximum of \$16 per student. Under the Project 4R program, \$1.3 million was made available to 55 schools for purchasing hardware and software for use with kindergarten and first grade students to assist in instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and remediation. A new contact is Laura Jean Taylor, 317/232-9175, who directs the Office of Learning Resources. Michael Huffman, 317/232-6672, continues to be responsible for infrastructure, E-Rate and related programs.

Under the last round of Federal Reading Excellence Act grants, slightly over \$20 million was awarded to 66 schools in 37 districts to develop a coordinated professional development system, to access the State's distance learning "Focus on Reading" series, and to hire reading coaches, among other purposes. Earlier this year, Indiana invited 20 vendors to meet with approximately 100 eligible schools for the first state round of Reading Excellence grants. Over the next two years these schools will transition to Reading First requirements.

The IndianaNext initiative provides professional development to public and private school administrators related to technology use, following guidelines in the new Reinventing Indiana's School Library Media Program in the Age of Technology. An effort has been underway to correlate nine library information literacy standards with the State's academic standards in music, physical education, social studies, and visual arts. Correlations are available on the DOE website (does.state.in.us/standards).

Iowa Update - August 2002

Over the past five years, Iowa has spent \$30 million each year for school technology. This year (2001-02), faced with major revenue shortfalls, the State budgeted only \$10 million. Iowa has allocated \$1.5 million this school year for educational technology in private schools.

If revenue shortfalls occur during the last quarter of this year, some State employee layoffs may be required to make up for an estimated budget gap of \$200 million. General revenue funds are estimated to increase next year by almost two percent. However, a travel ban and likely employee layoffs may be required at the State level.

Louisiana Update - August 2002

A Federal Judge in Louisiana has ruled that almost \$18 million of state tobacco settlement funds could not be allocated to parochial and other private schools. The legislature had previously enacted a law that would have provided some of the \$160 million installment of the tobacco settlement to go to private schools. Baton Rouge and Calcasieu Parish sought the injunction.

The state has announced Title IID technology grant awardees for Round One; applications for Round Two were due in August. The competitive grant categories included on-demand learning and Regional Teaching, Learning, and Technology Centers, among other areas. Grantees are available at www.lcet.doe.state.la.us/lcetgrants.

The State has initiated the Geographic Information System K-12 initiative which will allow teachers and students to participate in authentic GIS technology programs. One teacher in one class in every K-12 school will participate in a Statewide social studies lesson and project.

Under a three-year Gates Foundation grant, the LEADTech will orient principals and superintendents in the role of technology in education and how it can be used to improve student learning. The new State education Technology Director is Sheila Talamo, 225/763-5575.

Maryland Update - August 2002

During the June AEP Conference, Ron Friend, former state Title I director from Maryland and now responsible for Title I and other initiatives related to overall school improvement in the State, said that the Department had issued an RFP to vendors of supplemental services and school districts which have developed supplemental services; responses will be used to develop an approved list from which targeted schools may select to meet the new Title I supplemental services requirement. He indicated that his office has been compiling studies and research on effective practices for several years. He also described a number of other initiatives designed to ensure Maryland's compliance with No Child Left Behind. He emphasized, however, that the State's major initiative reflected in a new law entitled "the Bridge to Excellence Act" signed by the Governor on May 6, as well as the recommendations of the Thornton Commission and the State's visionary Panel for Better Schools would be a major focus of concern. Unlike the situation in most states, Maryland schools will receive an additional \$1.3 billion over the next six years to reduce inequities in its finance system.

About 75 schools have been targeted for improvement with 63 located in Baltimore City, ten in Prince George's County, and one each in Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties. Responses to the RFP, announced on May 14, were due by June 21 after which time a list will be provided and parents will be notified of approved supplemental service providers. For more information go to www.msde.state.md.us.

One of the new initiatives redirects the State's assessment system from focusing on performance of schools to performance of individual students. New tests will be administered in grades 3, 5, 8 in reading and math and grade ten reading. The State is currently reviewing commercially-available norm-referenced tests, one of which one will be selected and modified to ensure direct alignment with State standards. The new test will not only produce individual student scores but also "produce some diagnostic scores;" it will include both multiple choice and structured response items. However, unlike the previous widely-recognized and excellent State assessments, it will not include any manipulatives. Districts will be required submit comprehensive master plans in implementing the Bridge to Excellence Act, and over time, if

districts do not meet the targeted achievement levels for students, financial implications could ensue.

The revised State Technology Plan, accepted by the State Board of Education in March 2002, is available on the Department's website. Under the Maryland Technology Academy initiative, 120 new participants participated in a two-week program to learn about effective use of technology. These teachers will join more than 350 previously trained teachers to act as change agents in their districts. Administrators received two days of Technology Leadership Training in July. For its third year, the State Satellite initiative will receive \$1.6 million to allow 600 additional teachers to participate in the program. Under the State's PT3 catalyst grants, models of standards-based electronic portfolios and standards have been developed and will be the focus of four regional meetings this summer with two- and four-year teacher colleges participating. The State's web-based learning project would provide a single point of entry web portal to gather information, provide online courses, and offer MSDE-sponsored professional development online training modules.

As noted in a previous State profile update, last year the State Board of Education approved a new regulation generally implementing Section 508 standards to ensure that students with disabilities have access to technology. For a Powerpoint presentation go to <http://cte.jhu.edu/accessibility/>.

Massachusetts Update - August 2002

The Title IID application process is underway; applications were due July 1. One set of grants under the Model Technology Integration initiative totaling \$1 million will total \$30,000 each for one-year programs. The second component, Technology Enhancement, totaling \$5 million will provide two year grants for approximately \$200,000. Other grant information is available on the Department of Education's website at <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/>.

The SEA consolidated plan for ESEA is available at www.doe.mass.edu/nclb/news/csapp.

In late October of last year, the Board of Education approved the pre-K-12 instructional technology standards.

The Massachusetts Department of Corrections' computer technology program offers inmates hands-on experience in the areas of basic literacy, keyboarding, word processing, database use, spreadsheet use, and simple programming.

Michigan Update - August 2002

The Michigan legislature has committed \$10 million for Phase One of a new initiative to provide all students in the State with portable wireless computing devices by 2005. Five demonstration sites would be provided the technology during the first year to assess the implementation process and answer related questions. The Michigan Virtual University, which will be the fiscal agent, will develop, with the Michigan Department of Education, an annual evaluation. Approximately \$3 million is provided by the State legislature while several million dollars will be allocated from Federal grants.

Under a Gates Foundation project, approximately 4,000 school superintendents and principals this Fall will be provided Palm 505 devices, the cost of which is estimated to be slightly over \$6 million. In September 2001, under a \$110 million State appropriation, most of the teachers in the State were provided laptop computers and appropriate training.

Minnesota Update - August 2002

Minnesota is only beginning to explore Internet-based learning. The State will sponsor approved local projects and has appointed a task force to investigate e-learning possibilities. The State does provide \$5 per student to local school districts -- a total of \$19 million -- for telecommunications activities including Internet connections and data support.

While there are currently no State funds earmarked for technology -- with the exception of a telecommunication access initiative -- any of the \$8.6 billion in general revenue for K-12 can be used for technology. The Telecommunications Access Revenue Program (TARP) had its budget for FY 2002 reduced by \$5 million to \$15 million. An additional \$5 per student in operating capital is earmarked for telecommunication access. Districts eligible for TARP must apply for E-Rate discounts. The new K-12 Education Technology Plan includes, for the first time, a major focus on technology use in improving system accountability. Under a new School Academic and Financial Performance Evaluation, attempts are being made to relate changes in student performance to per-pupil expenditures as part of the accountability. Data-driven decision-making is one of the priority technology goals. Another is Statewide security infrastructure for data transmission and the use of technology as a tool for school administration. Both the Gates Foundation and the local Blandin Foundation provided funding to support technology training for administrators. The Connecting Learning & Accountability for Students and Schools (CLASS) website supports data-driven decision making and contains, among other components, Best Practices for Teaching & Learning and Resources. For more information go to <http://cflapp.state.mn.us/CLASS/indiex.jsp>.

The primary contact reflecting the emphasis on management information systems is Kenneth Hasledalen, Assistant Commissioner and Chief Information Officer, 651/582-8808.

Mississippi Update - August 2002

Under the Mississippi PowerPALS program, 20 station computer labs have been provided for extended learning to fifty schools. In addition, such labs also provide opportunities for development of computer literacy skills and teacher training. Training is provided by AmeriCorps Members.

Under the School Renovation program created by the Clinton Administration, of the nearly \$16 million in grants, \$2 million are dedicated to school repair and innovation. A list of grantees is on the State's website, <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/oet/TechGrant/SRITGINDEX.html>. The State has undertaken several large-scale teacher technology training initiatives in the form of in-service projects conducted by State and local staff, as well as technology-related training in five historically black colleges to prepare faculty and preservice students to use technology. The new Mississippi Online Learning Institute provides web-based services to both teachers and students, including online access to course work and online instructional support. The project director is Cameron Conner Ball, who has taken Helen Soule's place as Information Technology Planner.

The MDE coordinates purchases of information technology for local and State agencies and maintains the Express Product List which includes products with bid prices to allow districts to purchase directly without competitive bids. Such products must meet minimum equipment specifications. For more information about the list go to www.its.state.ms.us/vendor/index.html.

Missouri Update - August 2002

The Governor is expected to sign a new bill passed by the legislature that will require elementary and secondary schools to install filtering software for equipment used by students to receive Internet service from a provider that can filter pornographic materials. The State requirement would go beyond the CIPA which requires filtering for all schools and libraries receiving E-Rate funds. Recently, however, a panel of judges ruled that CIPA as applied to public libraries is unconstitutional. SEA officials estimate approximately 50 percent of public schools in Missouri already have filtering software.

Nebraska Update - August 2002

The State's consolidated plan addresses NCLB including assessment requirements. State Superintendent Christianson has threatened to reject all Federal ESEA funds if a strict interpretation is made of the assessment provisions in the law, i.e., no local assessments will be allowed. Proposed regulations published on August 6 provide more flexibility to accommodate most types of assessments in place in Nebraska. Completed installation in Nebraska high schools of sixty different learning rooms and network connections were authorized at the level of \$3 million by the legislature. The State has approximately \$13 million to connect all schools with wiring for LANs in school districts; this will be finished in about a year from now. The State Technology Plan includes a component for K-12 with a major new focus to demonstrate the effectiveness of technology in improving student performance. It would appear that contingency plans are being developed to ensure that adequate non-Federal funding sources will be available to cover many of the priority technology initiatives.

Under a \$1.3 million three-year grant, Gates Foundation three year grant, education administrators will receive training relating to technology leadership following the new technology standards for administrators.

Grants of between \$10,000 and \$25,000 are available for schools and universities for training related to use of distance learning.

New Hampshire Update - August 2002

The general fund FY 2002 budget gap of \$11 million has been made up through freezes on purchasing, out of state travel, and hiring. The degree to which budget cuts may be required next year are tied directly to whether or not the estimated revenues for this year meet their target and budget gaps are eliminated for FY 2002.

New Hampshire is using the Internet to provide teacher training in integrating technology into their instruction. Online programs are available using: (1) Classroom Connect's Connected University; (2) Vital Knowledge's Tech Tutor; and (3) Fresh Pond Education.

Applications by which districts may apply for Title IID technology funds will be available in the early Fall with awards expected by the end of the calendar year. Under the School Renovation initiative, the SEA has received \$5.4 million of which about \$1.3 million is available for technology initiatives related to innovation or implementing IDEA.

The State's Educational Technology Plan has been modified to meet ESEA Title IID requirements and was submitted as part of the State's consolidated application to USED. The annual Technology Survey and Teacher Assessment for 2001-2002 school year, which assesses the level of technology integration, is now available on the SEA website.

Numerous staff development efforts are underway including technology leadership training for administrators under a Gates Foundation Grant; the Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference, in early December, focusing on best practices and the year-round Marco Polo Workshops which may not be provided in the summer depending upon continuing support from MCI.

ET News, which includes technology services and vendor information, is available at the State's website and the new NHEON portal is available at www.nheon.org.

The State has posted information on IT contracts between vendors and the State for special pricing on hardware and software; districts can purchase using these contracts without having to

go through the normal bid process if they so desire. The Division of Instructional Technology Management website has such information posted and updated periodically. Cathy Higgins, Educational Technology Consultant, is the primary contact, 603/271-2453.

New Jersey Update - August 2002

During the June AEP Conference, Gloria Hancock, Assistant Commissioner for Student Services in the New Jersey Department of Education, indicated that the State has been meeting with local districts who have identified effective supplemental services that are with various types of students. From a list submitted by districts, the State will compile, over time, its initial approved list. In addition, it will consider other appropriate supplemental service providers -- including online tutoring -- for which there is some evidence that the services are effective with low-achieving students. Some components of model programs, which have been adopted with varying degrees of success by the 34 districts involved in the Abbott decree, are also being considered. One model that was to have been used in several hundred schools in these 34 low-wealth districts was Success for All. However, achievement gains vary significantly and many schools discontinued their use of this program. Ms. Hancock, who is responsible for both special education and Title I programs throughout the State, indicated that the State assessment system which has been in place for more than ten years, will be modified somewhat and that supplemental services and other products must be clearly demonstrated to be aligned with State assessments and State content standards that are available in seven core content areas. Gloria Hancock can be reached at 609/292-9899.

Currently, the State has identified 274 schools that have been failing for one year. Hence, until the Spring test results become available (which will probably be in the Fall), they will not be in a position to determine which of these schools will have been targeted for improvement (two years failing) and have to provide parent option and at least 15 percent of their budget for staff development. In the meantime, however, the SEA has developed policies for intradistrict parent options to meet the "choice" requirements of the new Law. For those districts with only one school which has been targeted, the new policy would give parents the choice of having students transferred to charter schools where they are available or other schools that have openings for transfer. The SEA is contacting a number of service providers to see how many are in the State and would likely reply to a formal RFP sometime next year. For this coming year (as of August 1, 2002), there are no districts with schools that will be required to provide supplemental services.

The Reading First initiative is under the SEA office responsible for curriculum, although Title I interfaces with this office on a daily basis. The SEA Title I director, Linda Dold-Collins, is a former ESL/early childhood instructor and feels that the Reading First initiative will be folded nicely into Title I at the district level.

The state will shortly be issuing an RFP to meet the new assessment mandates and, unlike many other states, will be calling for a Spanish version of the assessment to be administered at the third and fourth grade levels. The SEA is very concerned that, over time, special education and limited-English-proficient students would not be able to meet the same proficiency standards as other students and that this is going to create an inevitable problem given the fact that certain special education and LEP students graduate “out” of their special ed or LEP designation.

The SEA Title I office is very concerned about the possibility of “supplement not supplant” requirements under the traditional Title I legislation being violated. While it is aware that Federal regulations would require less reporting to the State on how funds are being spent in Title I schoolwide programs, the SEA is pilot-testing in a limited number of schoolwide programs new State and audit reporting procedures that they hope will provide a balance of increased flexibility with some reporting for accountability (with regard to “supplanting”) purposes. The Title I office is under the New Jersey Assistant Commissioner, Gloria Hancock. The phone number is 609/292-9899.

A new Statewide utilities regulatory plan includes a plan for Verizon to provide up to \$55 million in equipment and facilities to enhance the technology capabilities of schools and libraries across New Jersey. These funds will be used to: (1) support Career Academies, on-site instruction for high school students; (2) provide additional equipment that will allow more schools and libraries to have high-speed Internet access and other video services; and (3) expand video services for K-12 including interactive, online classes.

Under a June spending moratorium, all of the 618 districts will receive the same amount of state funds they received last year. The 30 so-called Abbott districts, which have been receiving

significant increases above other districts in the State are also affected. These districts represent almost 60 percent of all State aid and includes \$370 million for court-ordered preschool programs and \$512 million to reduce funding inequities. Many of the Abbott districts had planned to increase expenditures next year; they will now have to be cut or postponed. Some of the casualties are before- and after-school programs, and purchases of computers for one-on-one instruction, among others. As of the middle of August, five of the 30 Abbott district budgets have been approved by the State for the coming school year under the direction of George MacInnes, Assistant Education Commissioner. Under the court order, the core instructional program designed to improve performance of students in these 30 districts has remained essentially untouched by budget cuts.

North Carolina Update - August 2002

North Carolina Governor Mike Easley intends to reallocate an additional \$54 million to increase the number of preschool children from 1,600 to 7,600 next year, and to reduce class size in kindergarten and grade one. Approximately half the money would be devoted to the preschool program and the remainder to hiring new teachers. Most districts are hesitant to hire new teachers until the State legislature finishes its special session and passes the Governor's proposed legislation.

In July, North Carolina education officials decided to throw out the results of the State's writing assessments for fourth and seventh graders because of large drops in student scores. Only 47 percent of students in the fourth grade passed the test this year compared with 69 percent in 2001; and only 63 percent of this year's seventh graders passed compared with 63 percent in 2001. Because the exam is single-essay writing test, State educators are questioning the validity of the exam and its scoring reliability.

Under ESEA Title IID, applications for the formula flow-through funds were due in early June with the competitive grant applications due September 13. North Carolina is one of several states that is confronted with cash flow problems as a result of "advanced funding" at the Federal level and attempts to provide Federal and State funding as quickly as possible to districts to minimize such cash flow problems. Reports on how districts spent State technology funds last year is also available on the State's website, as is the revised five-year State education technology plan. The State Department has sponsored several evaluation conferences for a number of instruments that have been developed for use in assessing the impact of technology on the State's accountability system, referred to as ABCs of Public Education. The domains include student achievement, safe and orderly schools, quality teachers, administrators and staff, strong family, business, community support, and productivity of operations. The State has also prepared a set of guidelines to assist districts in planning for the implementation of technology initiatives for instruction and administration. The State's website is www.tsp.dpi.state.nc.us. The director of instructional technology continues to be Frances Bradburn, 919/807-3292.

The State legislature in early August voted to remove the State's existing portfolio system for licensing new teachers. The portfolio included a compilation of lesson plans, how instruction was aligned with State standards, and a 15-minute video that demonstrated teaching approaches. Critics of the portfolio system said it was making recruitment of new teachers difficult and driving new teachers out of teaching. The current North Carolina system was modeled after the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) which has certified slightly over 2,500 teachers thus far. However, as noted in an Education Daily article, a Tennessee study found that there was no significant difference in terms of student test scores on standardized tests by differentiating NBPTS-certified vs. non-certified teachers. As a result, until the State develops or adopts a new system, local school districts will use their own teacher evaluation systems which rely primarily on principal observation.

North Dakota Update - August 2002

North Dakota has allocated \$8.8 million for educational technology during the 2001-03 biennium. Of this total, \$2.3 million is used to pay Internet connection fees for all of the State's school districts as well as for connection to the new State network. This network is expected to support a Statewide student management system, incorporating student scheduling, attendance, and grading.

Ohio Update - August 2002

This coming school year the State will be implementing the Statewide Student Identifier System (SSIS) to implement some of the student-reported disaggregated reporting provisions under the new ESEA. Price Waterhouse Coopers consulting has been hired under a \$1.25 million contract to collect student identification data, but not academic data, for implementing the system. Ironically, in the late 1970s Maryland implemented its statewide information system for special ed students, also called SSIS. It generated threats of lawsuits by the ACLU in terms of student privacy violations, as is the current situation in Ohio.

Almost 120 low-wealth schools have been allocated almost \$3 million to supplement SchoolNet services and funding. Under SchoolNet Plus, almost \$40 million for FY 2002 and 2003 will be used at the 6th grade level to purchase software upgrades and professional development (30 percent of the remainder would be spent on hardware). Sam Orth, Executive Director, Ohio SchoolNet Commission, is a good contact for information about these programs, (614/728-8324). The Ohio SchoolNet Telecommunity distance learning initiative will add three more partners funded at \$150,000 each with applications due in September. The Biannual Education Technology Assessment (BETA) will be available on the State's website at www1.osn.state.oh.us/beta/ in October. Under a \$3.6 million Gates Foundation grant, over the next two years, technology training opportunities for school administrators in the form of three day training workshops will be available. More than 2,300 principals and superintendents will receive laptop computers and software. The 2002 Ohio SchoolNet Technology Conference will be held on February 3-5, 2003 in Columbus. The last conference attracted more than 5,500 educators.

Oklahoma Update - August 2002

Effective July 1, Oklahoma students have the option of taking online courses, if specific courses are not provided at their current school; and Career Technology Centers across the State can offer courses online to students anywhere in the State. Moreover, halfway houses and alternative schools can contract with local districts to purchase online courses through them. In addition, schools, for the first time, can be reimbursed for providing online services to part-time students on a prorated basis.

The K-12 education appropriation for next year is \$2 billion which is a 1.6 percent cut from last year. Early intervention, adult education, and bonus programs were level-funded.

Pennsylvania Update - August 2002

A Pennsylvania State court has ruled that cyber schools can qualify as charter schools under State laws. The suit was filed by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association for a number of school districts which asked the court to rule against cyber schools because students do not physically attend and basic information (e.g., curricula, student enrollment) is not always available. As of June, Pennsylvania had refused to pay more than \$10 million to 300 school districts which have not paid tuition for students attending cyber schools.

In June, the State General Assembly passed the State budget which included a number of provisions relating to online education. In particular, the budget provided funds for a non-profit institute intended to improve cyber education, rigorous standards for cyber schools, and State reimbursements to local school districts for students attending cyber schools. The budget includes \$45 million to reimburse districts for 30 percent of the cost of charter school tuition. The State will also pay about two-thirds of the cost of cyber school tuition.

Toward the end of June, Governor Schweiker signed the bill that would reimburse, in part, school districts for funding which they lost on a per-pupil basis when students enrolled in alternative schools, including cyber charter schools. The law would also give the Pennsylvania Department of Education authority over the governance of cyber charter schools. Over the past year, approximately 300 districts had refused to pay \$10 million in invoices to the seven cyber charter schools. Earlier in June a state court refused to review a lawsuit by the State School Board Association which challenged the legality of the State's online charter schools according to [eSchool News](#) (August 2002). Cyber schools applying for charter school status now have to include a description of the curriculum they would use, technologies, and special education procedures that would be followed. Approximately 5,000 students are currently enrolled in the seven cyber charter schools.

Paul Vallas, who until recently ran Chicago's schools for six years, the new Chief Executive Officer of Philadelphia Public Schools, has taken charge of the overall reform initiative which will use Edison Schools Inc. and other school "takeover firms" as well as internal reform

initiatives to improve student performance. Based upon a last minute agreement among all parties on July 31, contracts totaling \$129 million over five years would be awarded to outside groups to operate 45 of the 264 schools. An additional 25 struggling schools will be converted to charter schools or reconstituted but run by the district while another 16 will receive additional financial help. The city estimated it would need an additional \$45 million, along with the \$83 million in State funds, to implement initiatives which Vallas supports, such as summer school, universal preschool, and extended school day. Eighty-six additional schools have been targeted for improvement and will receive some of the increased per-pupil allocation coming from local and State resources, along with Federal Title I funding.

The State legislature has eliminated funding for a remedial initiative started last year which provided extra money to twelve districts which have more than half of their students in the bottom quartile on standardized State tests in math and reading. About \$1.8 million would have been allocated to 46 schools in these districts.

As an extension of the original Link-to-Learn initiative, the Students Achieving Standards initiative will provide three-year contingent grants to use instructional management and integrated learning systems; \$30 million has been approved for the first two years with over 120 grants anticipated in Year One.

Approximately \$10 million will be allocated to the three digital school districts which will demonstrate effective practices and ways to save costs using technology. The districts include Carlisle Area, Quaker Valley, and Spring Cove.

Under Title IID, the 50 percent formula grants will be allocated to all Title I districts in August, with the remaining \$11 million in competitive grants to be solicited in October. The State provides access to eTechPlanner so school districts can develop three-year technology plans and budgets. The eTechPlanner was developed through a joint effort of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Colonial Intermediate Unit and IGCN Corporation..

A study began this year to assess the 88 teacher college preparation institutions on how well they are integrating technology into their course offerings. The Link to Learn initiative provides approximately \$5 million in competitive grants to colleges and universities and will likely focus in the future on those having the greatest need. The State department plans to provide students with free online access to AP exam review courses from AP experts. There are currently 1,300 course enrollments in eleven subjects offered by Apex to all students currently enrolled in an AP class.

Three large local foundations recently announced, to the chagrin of the Pittsburgh Board of Education, that they would suspend all of their grants to the district. The foundations -- Graebel Foundation, Heinz Foundation, and the Pittsburgh Foundation -- sent a letter to the Board and Superintendent John Thompson as reported in Education Week (August 7) that said, “ the Board is divided and the Administration embattled personnel are leaving or under attack and morale appears devastatingly low.” If the foundation cannot be convinced to change their plans, the Pittsburgh schools would receive almost \$4 million less this coming year and at least \$12 million over the next four years.

Tennessee Update - August 2002

Bonuses of \$100,000 will be provided to twelve TLCF pilot schools based on their performance during the 2001-2002 school year; these twelve schools met five achievement criteria as part of the grant. Awardees are on the State website at www.state.tn.us/education/. Information about the application process for Title IID is also available on the website. The State technology goals parallel very closely those built into the new ESEA such as every student will have demonstrated technology literacy skills by the end of the eighth grade. However, as with other technology-related indicators, states are not required to report on progress that is made in these areas, which indicates they could reduce the level of priority. The Southern Regional Education Board AP Nexus program will be offering AP courses online to poor students. Students will be assessed using authentic assessments on technology literacy.

Texas Update - August 2002

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recently announced that approximately 40 percent of the \$72 million school renovation Federal grant would be allocated to charter schools. As reported in Education Week (August 7), many of the 344 applicants which were public school districts, were upset that charter schools received grants up to \$1 million for renovation and facilities repair. Only 16 percent of the districts were awarded grants. The Texas Education Agency indicated that the major rationale was that charter schools cannot hold bond elections to raise money for facilities, renovation, and repair. By this Fall, almost 200 charter schools will be in operation according to the Texas Charter School Resource Center in San Antonio. Approximately 25-30 percent of such funds are supposed to be used to purchase technology to implement IDEA/special education programs.

The Public Access Initiative (PAI), which provides information on districts including test data over the last four years, also includes a section for vendors (www.tea.state.tx.us/pai/). The first administration of the new Master Technology Teacher Certification will begin a year from now. Grants will likely be available based on staff meeting the State's Master Technology Teacher Standard, and preference will be given to teachers in high-need schools. The Texas Library Connection provides opportunities for teachers to access and use technology applications online. These TEA Technology Applications cross all content areas and are available at www.tea.state.tx.us/technology/ta. The Technology Instructional Materials Proclamation 2001 (May 2001), will result in an adoption process available to schools in 2004-2005 in an online format and will be subscriptions based. The adoption will address technology applications for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and high school, and will also include computer science and various tool applications such as desktop publishing, video technology, web mastering. The proclamation and textbook adoption information is available on the TEA website.

Utah Update - August 2002

In five Utah school districts, ten schools have participated in a state-authorized online pilot test of the Lightspan Edutest Assessment System using the Utah criterion-referenced tests. State officials have indicated that the Lightspan online testing system will help them meet the new ESEA assessment mandates. Beyond the five districts, an additional sixty schools use the online assessment system for formative evaluation purposes to help teachers modify instruction based upon results on the criterion-referenced tests.

The State of Utah has recommended the use of two bigchalk products as “supplemental materials” for middle and high schools across the State. The two packages -- bigchalk *Classmate Earth Science* and *Classmate United States History* -- are the first digital instructional resources approved by the State of Utah. These products can be purchased by districts and schools using State textbook funds for “approved instructional materials.

Once a \$24 million annual technology earmarked program, the Educational Technology Initiative (ETI) has suffered significant budget cuts. Moreover, it is included as part of an overall block grant with few if any critical categories that would specifically encourage such funds to be used for technology projects. Under the new Title IID, the State will receive \$1.4 million for competitive grants, applications for which are due in December. Formula grants of a similar amount have already been distributed to districts.

The State Department of Education has licensed the rights to use COGNOS by administrators and teachers to facilitate data management and data-driven decision-making. COGNOS will also assist in tracking student progress on State tests for diagnostic and prescriptive purposes. A pilot program for administering online end-of-level tests is underway using a system developed by Measured Progress. The new science test will be for all elementary students during 2003. The Utah Technology Awareness Project (UTAP) is available to teachers for self-assessment with respect to technology integration in the classroom. The same system is also used in a number of other states such as California and Arizona.

Several professional development efforts are underway, including:

- a PT3 grant which will allow pre-service teachers to create portfolios of best practices and other information useful in finding employment;
- more than 35 two-day workshops for teachers on technology integration;
- possible implementation of the MarcoPolo professional development effort Statewide;
- the implementation of Teacherline from PBS, which provides on-demand, standards-based staff development, building on the PBS MathLine multimedia program developed during the 1990s.

The State also has an initiative underway, referred to as Cybercorps, which provides students with instruction on networking, troubleshooting, operating systems, etc. so they can provide first-line technology support in their own schools.

Virginia Update - August 2002

Dr. Pat Wright, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction at the Virginia Department of Education, is responsible for instructional programs and services Statewide, including Title I. During the June AEP meeting, she noted that there are instances where there is a conflict between the State Standards of Learning (SOL) initiatives, including assessments, and No Child Left Behind, but that in no way will the new Federal law affect the continuing implementation of the State SOL initiatives. Two years ago, the Virginia Department of Education selected several contractors to pilot-test online assessments related to Standards of Learning and, subsequently, to implement remedial online services that eventually would be made available to all districts and schools. Inadequate funding has slowed down the overall implementation process. Dr. Wright emphasized that the new ESEA provides considerable flexibility to states and that Virginia has taken a “middle-of-the-road,” “common sense” position on issues requiring clarification. For example, the State has been compiling effective practices for several years based on its own research and research conducted by reputable groups and it is currently canvassing districts for their nominations for effective practices, including products and services which could meet the “supplemental services” requirement. She emphasized that some districts are developing their own supplemental services which will be submitted for approval on the State list. However, beyond supplemental services the State will not be developing State lists, for example, for implementation of language acquisition for Titles I-III or even Reading First. She emphasized that, first and foremost, the State will review research and empirical evidence on products and services with the following priorities first:

- the program and services must be closely aligned to the SOL and the evidence must be achievement scores on the State’s SOL assessment, not norm-referenced tests from other states;
- the approach must be easy to implement, and;
- the vendor or group must be willing to provide technical and other support on a continuing basis.

She advised the publishers in attendance that they should assume that other states will use “common sense” to implement NCLB.

Dr. Wright has been with the Virginia DOE for 17 years and can be reached at 804/225-2979.

Governor Warner recently announced a \$4 million initiative to help 34 schools targeted for improvement and 80 others that are on “academic probation.” The initiative would involve special teams of principals, teachers, and mentors from high-achieving schools throughout the State to work with the low-achieving schools to help turnaround academic performance on the State’s SOL. Seventeen schools are in Richmond and ten are in Petersburg. The Governor’s office has a website, www.passvirginia.org, where according to Education Week, potential business partners can sign up to help these schools.

As reported in The Washington Post (July 12), summer school enrollment in Virginia has increased dramatically, especially for limited-English-proficient students and students who are preparing for the state-mandated SOL test next school year. In Alexandria enrollment in summer school increased 22 percent.

Implementation of the Virginia SOL instruction, remediation and assessment initiative continues. In May, \$58 million was released (\$26,000 per school and \$50,000 per district) to support high school use of web-enabled systems. Districts are required to provide a 20 percent match. At least 25 percent of that match is to be used for training. Middle schools will not be eligible for participation until all high schools have been certified as ready.

The State Technology Plan is being revised and the 2002 technology survey will soon be available from the State. The annual Virginia technology conference will be held in Roanoke on December 3-5, 2002.

Washington Update - August 2002

A survey, recently conducted by the Washington Education Association, of over 3,800 teachers and teacher aides, which included almost 70 percent of all teachers certified to teach in special education, has found that only about one-third of those teachers and aides felt that five years from now, they would still be teaching in special education. About 20 percent and 22 percent, respectively, stating they would likely be working in education, but not special education or not sure what they would be doing. The respondents also included a number of teachers who left special education. More than 70 percent report that the primary reason they left was associated with negative experiences. Virtually all of the reasons for leaving special education or feeling they would not be involved in special education five years from now related to increased workloads. Two-thirds felt that meeting needs of their caseloads was more difficult than it had been three years ago. Three quarters felt that less paperwork per student would have encouraged them to stay in special education and almost 50 percent stated that they worked more than eight unpaid hours beyond their regular workweek and only four percent indicated they do not work any unpaid hours beyond their regular workweek.

A recent court case has embroiled the State of Washington in a heated conflict with some of its school districts. Washington receives a share of the timber profits generated by National Forests within its borders -- as much as \$30 million. These funds are, in turn, evenly divided between the State highway program and local school districts located in counties which contain National Forest land. A Federal court has backed the policy of the State Department of Education that deducts these timber fees from the district's basic State education allotment. But the districts bringing the suit against the State may appeal. (See related Washington Update item.)

West Virginia Update - August 2002

This summer, about 400 math and science teachers are participating in eight week-long training programs focusing on problem-based inquiry learning. West Virginia's InSTEP (Integrating Strategies and Technology in Education Practice) program, in conjunction with Palm, Inc., are including handheld computers in the training sessions for the first time. Regional coordinators in each of the State's Regional Service Agencies will, under an agreement with InSTEP, provide teachers with technical and instructional support for the next year and will make available to teachers loans of handheld computers.

Wisconsin Update - August 2002

According to a new study of special education programs and cost, the Wisconsin Policy Research Group reports that Wisconsin spent more than \$1 billion to educate 125,000 students which is almost a 70 percent increase in spending since 1992-1993. The report blames over-identification and placement of children, especially minority children, in special education programs. The number of learning disabled students in the State increased over the last five years by more than 50 percent. According to Education Daily (August 14), the Wisconsin SEA, in conjunction with University of Wisconsin/Oshkosh, is conducting its own study focusing on the same issue in an attempt better to prepare staff to identify students needing special education services. The report, entitled The Growth of Special Education in Wisconsin, is at www.wpri.org.