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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 18, 2013
TO: TechMIS Subscribers
FROM: Charles Blaschke, Blair Curry, and Suzanne Thouvenelle
SUBJ: PD Market Size; New/Refined USED Priorities; Extended Learning; Graduation Rates; Sequestration Updates; and State Profile Updates

USED has proposed new/refined priorities which it will fund as part of Innovation in Education (i³) grants and other flagship competitive grant programs such as TIF, Race to the Top, and Title II. While these refinements fall under the four “assurance” categories of the first four-year term, they are much more specific and narrowly-focused and include using technology to improve productivity and instruction. Some were recently included under the recent Race to the Top-District and TIF competitions.

The most recent National Survey of Professional Development Trends, conducted by Education Market Research, reports that Federal funds have increasingly been used to purchase professional development within the estimated total of \$3.2 billion of expenditures on professional development, with about 43 percent being expended on outside providers and materials. The EMR annual longitudinal report is the best of its kind and we rely on it.

The Washington Update includes a wide range of items of interest to most TechMIS subscribers including:

- **Page 1**
Graduation rates will likely become the key measure at the high school level for accountability and differentiated recognition under state waiver flexibility, which will be easier for the public to understand than the AYP measure under NCLB and could provide increased opportunities for certain products and services.
- **Page 2**
The Brookings Institute recently published a report and conducted a forum on mandated state testing costs and implications for implementing Common Core assessments, which

suggests some opportunities as well as pitfalls.

- **Page 4**

As the Administration considers implementation of state waivers a major priority, Congressional committees are increasing their oversight role of waiver implementation and will likely hold hearings in the immediate future in which the legality and prescriptive nature of the Duncan waiver initiative will be addressed.

- **Page 4**

The Gates Foundation is funding seven new districts, adding to the nine previously funded, to foster collaboration and reduce tension between districts and charter schools hopefully to transfer more promising practices from charter schools to public schools.

- **Page 5**

A state pilot involving 11 districts, 40 schools, and 20,000 students will be extending learning time by about 300 hours beginning in 2013, which Secretary Duncan has called a “kernel” of a national movement that is in its infancy.

- **Page 6**

If sequestration should occur, early childhood education, including Head Start and Child Care and Development Block grants, could be impacted immediately with “advanced” funded programs such as Title I and IDEA not to be impacted until July.

- **Page 7**

The number of Title I schoolwide programs increased to 65 percent of all Title I schools in 2010 and continues to represent the best opportunities for most firms.

- **Page 8**

Head Start recompetition is delayed until the spring and “family engagement” framework is published.

- **Page 10**

The governing board for the PARCC consortium has approved draft policies for comment which could narrow eligibility of students with disabilities to receive assessment accommodations in its 23-member states; it could also increase the demand for RTI approaches.

- **Page 10**

The first waiver guide produced by American Institute for Research (AIR) focuses on English language learners and highlights promising practices which should be used in waiver states.

- **Page 11**

A number of miscellaneous items include:

- a) Likely trends in the charter school movement could have implications for many TechMIS subscribers over the next year.
- b) A conservative Indiana Republican, Todd Rokita (R-IN), is to head House K-12 policy subcommittee which wielded significant power when headed by former chairman Mike Castle (R-DE).
- c) The American Association of State Colleges and Universities anticipates a higher priority being placed on improving college graduation rates rather than admissions.
- d) As we previously reported, districts/schools receiving Impact Aid funding will probably feel the earliest effects of sequestration, should it occur in March.
- e) The 16 Race to the Top-District competition winners, available on the USED website (ed.gov), are developing scopes of work -- which have to be approved by early March -- outlining detailed planned activities and budgets; TechMIS subscribers with personal contacts with the winning entities should communicate with them immediately rather than wait until scopes of work are approved.
- f) Congressional Research Service's Wayne Riddle discusses the evolution of the Secretary's waiver authority since 1994 and argues that future Secretaries of Education could use the waiver authority to implement different policies.
- g) USED Inspector General released an audit report on its monitoring of charter schools as being inadequate and lacked procedures to track Federal funds.
- h) A new report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center finds that actual college graduation rates as self-reported by students are higher than those reported by colleges.
- i) The Gates Foundation has awarded more than \$5 million in Next Generation Learning Challenge grants to recipients to improve college readiness and completion through the use of blended learning.
- j) A Harris Interactive survey of high school dropouts identifies major causes and identifies promising practices for credit recovery.
- k) A draft framework to guide states as they modify their standards in social studies has been released, which does not prescribe social studies content and actual standards.
- l) The latest round of 17 grantees for the 2012 Promise Neighborhood funding could provide opportunities for firms with social, health, behavioral interventions and support activities for parent and community engagement and increasing school safety under the President's proposed new "gun control" initiative, if funded.
- m) The National Student Clearinghouse has partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a new reporting system and database which would be useful to firms targeting veterans postsecondary niche market funded by the new GI Bill.
- n) The conservative American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has decided to drop its opposition to Common Core Standards, but not necessarily support such standards, which could create a political climate more conducive to state

legislative support for implementation.

- o) A new report from the National Center for Education Statistics has found that the percentage of students who reported taking college remedial courses increased slightly from 2003 to 2008.

Also included are State profile updates which address a range of issues including: Common Core adoption, school funding, teacher evaluations, educational technology, and preschool programs.

**Special Report:
USED Announces Newest Priorities
for Investing in Innovation (i³) Grants
and Very Likely Other Major Flagship Competitive Grant Programs**

*A Technology Monitoring and Information Service (TechMIS)
Special Report*

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Secretary Duncan recently announced new/changed priorities under the first-term four “assurances” (i.e., state data systems, teacher quality, turnaround of low-performing schools, and state standards and assessments) which USED will initially be including in the i³ program. These refined priorities very likely will also be reflected as new absolute priorities, competitive grant “preferences” and other aspects of other large competitive grant programs such as Title II Teacher Quality and Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF), among others. Bolstered by the latitude given the Secretary under the State Waiver authority, the Administration has already begun the process of integrating some of the refinements into its flagship competitive grant programs. One example is the infusion of STEM-related priorities into TIF, in which almost half of the last competitive round’s (nearly \$300 million) funded grantees addressed specifically STEM or STEM components.

Also, as Michele McNeil noted in the *Politics K-12* blog on [Education Week](#) (December 14th), the Secretary will also want to focus more narrowly on one or more of ten different areas to support “a more focused set of projects within areas of acute need and in more directly addressing a particular challenge which would let folks know what kinds of applications they are looking for when they put out the all-call for grants.” As we have reported over the last year in TechMIS reports, updates, and conference calls with clients, some of these “new priorities” are not necessarily new, but have been stated as “new” refinements/priorities.

In his first speech after the election, Secretary Duncan noted that, during the Administration’s second term, USED will place its highest priority on improving “teacher” and “principal” effectiveness, including professional development and support, developing rigorous evaluation systems, assigning effective teachers to low-performing schools, and related initiatives.

Wraparound services, as we previously reported, have transferred from one of the highest

priorities in Promise Neighborhoods grants to state waiver “encouragements” for SIG/Priority and Focus Schools to the most recent Race to the Top-District competition. Use of intervention funds to develop district-level reform/capacity-building relating to turning around low-performing schools is an important growth trend using freed-up, flexible waiver and other funding. It is interesting to note that one redirected priority under the improving low-performing schools area would be, not only to expand district-level capacity, but also to develop and enhance the capacity of external partners to support turnaround efforts.

Already a high priority, but without a large funding source, improving STEM education will continue and begin to focus on professional development and related activities for specific target populations such as students with disabilities and under-represented groups, such as girls/women.

Improving academic outcomes for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) will become a major focus under Common Core Standards, with Federal funding likely to be used for alternative assessments, accommodation, and student access to quality curriculum. With both populations, alternative ways of providing professional development to all teachers and evaluation of teachers will likely receive additional funding, particularly at the high school level, in preparing target student populations for successful college admission and completion.

Improving parent and family engagement has also expanded from the Promise Neighborhood grant program to other competitive grants such as Race to the Top (e.g., Early Learning Challenge). Moreover, family engagement will likely receive higher “preference” priority points in competitions. Parent involvement and engagement will also receive higher priority in funding set-asides under traditional formula programs such as Title I, possibly setting aside state administrative funds for state-level activities in this area. Secretary Duncan proposed as much more than a year ago before a National Parent Teachers Association (NPTA) conference.

While improving “cost effectiveness and productivity” and “ensuring the effective use of technology” are listed as separate new priorities, they will likely be combined in most new grant applications, as the Administration’s general technology thrust has been to improve productivity. In light of Secretary Duncan’s speech in December 2011, one can anticipate grant applications to attempt to reduce the barriers which prevent the cost effectiveness benefits from being realized through the innovative use of technology. This could include doing away with seat time requirements, encouraging competency and mastery assessments/evaluations, and removing/modifying truncated laws and regulations at the Federal, state, and district levels. Specific activities here might include:

- maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-pupil costs
- testing multiple versions of a practice designed to increase cost-effectiveness in order to identify the most viable approaches;
- using instructional platforms to provide customized instruction for different learners, including integrating assessments and continuous feedback;

- using online tools to extend the reach of effective teachers and to provide high-quality learning resources to learners whenever and wherever they are needed;
- using technology to assess student proficiencies in complex skills, such as critical thinking and collaboration, across academic disciplines; and
- integrating technology with implementation of rigorous college- and career-ready standards.

Two other priorities receiving more attention will be “serving rural communities” and “codifying effective practices.” While the Administration has given lip service to criticisms coming from rural education advocacy groups, only limited progress has been made in this area, even though competitive “preferences” for rural education have been included in competitive grant programs, such as i³ and Race to the Top-District. It appears that possible changes during ESEA reauthorization in the Title I formula, which currently favors large urban districts, could represent the biggest funding windfall for rural districts, unless rural districts/entities receive set-asides as part of most competitive grants in the future. Certain opportunities could be provided for many TechMIS subscribers if improving effective practices includes guides and large dissemination efforts which are designed to help school/district practitioners rather than the education research and evaluation community.

Related to the notion of unfair government competition, the proposed priorities and changes do not address the barriers precluding opportunities for “profit-making” companies to compete directly for competitive grants or otherwise participate in a substantive manner in existing priority grant programs such as i³. As we noted in our last TechMIS issue, according to USED official Jim Sheldon, such legislative barriers exist because of bipartisan opposition in Congress to for-profit participation.

In the request for comments on the above proposed priorities released by USED on December 7th, USED specifically requested comments related to the priorities of improving cost effectiveness and productivity and improving academic outcomes for ELLs. They are also interested in comments on whether or not preference priorities or additional handicapping points should be provided to applicants who have been recipients of any other major Federal competitive grant programs, especially under the i³ grant initiative. Comments were due on December 14th.

Special Report:
**Newest National Survey of Professional Development (PD) Trends
Conducted by Education Market Research (EMR) Finds Federal
Funding Sources Increased Significantly for PD While State Funding
Declined During the Last Two Years; the Amount of Professional
Development Hours Provided by Outside Consultant Companies Has
Increased and an Estimated 43 Percent of the \$3.2 Billion PD Market
Size Was Expended on Outside Providers and Materials**

*A Technology Monitoring and Information Service (TechMIS)
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Based on EMR's most recent survey findings and our ongoing analyses, below we highlight some findings along with our interpretations.

As the report notes, Federal funds used for PD spending has apparently increased significantly in the last two years -- to 43 percent compared to 36 percent in 2010 -- while state contributions have fallen nearly 12 percent to 21 percent with local funds basically remaining the same. In 2010, initial use of ARRA stimulus funding focused on professional development. Other Federal initiatives, such as School Improvement Grants (1000g), Race to the Top, Promise Neighborhoods, STEM-related activities, began implementation in 2011 and have expanded since then, all requiring expanded or new types of professional development. The primary Federal funding source -- not unexpectedly -- was Title I (29%) as ARRA stimulus funds (\$10 billion) were used to expand Title I programs to upper levels in existing Title I schools and to new, previously unserved, schools as districts used increases in Title I PD "set-asides." New activities for professional development in Title II, Title III, and the Teacher Incentive Fund, among others, also contributed about 15 percent of Federal funding in 2012-13. Under the recent state waiver initiative in most Focus Schools and in some Priority Schools, implementation of new interventions included and/or required professional development and fewer states than expected requested waivers to "free up" the 10% PD Title I set-aside. In addition, states began to implement Common Core State Standards related activities in late 2011 and 2012; surveys by the Center on Education Policy found that the first CCSS activities in most states and districts

were related to professional development.

Although EMR estimated that the professional development market has had an annual growth rate of only 1.6 percent over the last nine school years, the amounts spent on the types of providers and topics has changed significantly. EMR estimated that, in 2012-13, expenditures for in-house budget items, including conference registration fees, hiring substitute teachers, and district-based staff developers, represented \$1.8 billion of the \$3.2 billion PD total. The "outside items" led by conferences and consultants came to \$1.4 billion or 43 percent of the total, up from 41 percent in 2010. When asked about the items on which they were planning to spend significantly more now compared to the past, consultants led with 20 percent, particularly in the Southwest, Midwest, and Western regions. The five top increased PD spending priorities included consultants and conferences involving "outside" spending, and internal spending on substitutes, coaches and teachers' stipends.

It is interesting to note that the highest priority criteria used to determine the success of a PD program, reported by 50 percent of the respondents, was "Evidence of the content being used in classroom instruction;" hence, there is a definite incentive and, we suspect, significant increase in, professional development included in the purchase of materials or otherwise embedded in the materials which were probably not included and reported as a separate line item for PD. And, while more than five percent of respondents expected increased spending on online courses, the amount of hours or dollars spent on online training and support to implement interventions, materials, and instructional programs (representing a substantial \$90 million market niche) was also probably underreported.

Regarding market size, even though EMR indicates that the \$3.2 billion estimated expenditures is lower than the \$3.6 billion projected by respondents on the survey two years ago, it should be noted that the survey was sent on October 1st to respondents when Federal budget levels and sequestration uncertainties were at their highest levels. This could have lowered respondent's anticipated expenditure levels for PD, especially since Federal funds represented almost half of overall funding for PD. However, as we have discussed with EMR, accurate and reliable longitudinal survey results lock one into certain question and times when surveys are conducted.

Almost half of the respondents felt that spending over the next three years will be about the same each year; however, in its analysis by subgroups and regions, EMR suggested that marketers would do best to look at those who are already "high spending districts of more than \$100,000 per year" focusing on elementary and senior high grade levels, especially in districts in the Midwest and West regions. As a footnote, the report also concluded that higher spending districts were far more inclined to rely on the What Works Clearinghouse or their own research in finding evidence of the effectiveness of professional development and were more cautious about depending solely on publishers for evidence of effectiveness, especially compared to low-spending districts.

Based on respondents' perceptions, there appear to be some changes in the perceived high-demand needs for certain types of PD over the next several years compared to ratings in the 2010

survey. Professional development needs related to Common Core State Standards and core curriculum areas increased significantly while perceived needs in the area of data analysis, differentiated instruction, learning styles, and even RTI are down significantly over the two-year period. However, as the report notes, "Common Core" is the latest "buzzword" when in fact the types of training that will likely be in high demand will still be differentiated instruction, RTI approaches, and certainly formative assessments as these types are required to implement Common Core Standards and intervention approaches in Priority and Focus Schools under state waivers. They will likely be in even higher demand as states begin implementation of Common Core assessments in 2015 or later. At the district level, superintendents, curriculum supervisors, and staff development leaders are more likely to be able to generate and justify additional funding for professional development if it relates to "Common Core Standards implementation." The survey also found a fair amount of consensus that PD designed for teachers in the above areas would be in highest demand; however, given recent statements by Secretary Duncan, it appears that more Federal funding will be encouraged to be used to improve the quality of principals, and other staff.

Other findings in the most recent EMR survey include:

- The key purchasing decision makers are superintendents, deputy superintendents, curriculum supervisors, a school-based person, and the principal, the staff development supervisor and Title I or Federal programs administrator; the principal or building-level person has become more influential in implementing RTI PD based on last year's survey on RTI Adoption; when Federal funds are a primary source, district-level decision making prevails to ensure implementation which is compliant with Federal accountability, waiver, and other regulations.
- The survey found that the demand for professional development and teacher collaboration techniques in the use of "professional learning communities" has dropped from nine percent two years ago to slightly under five percent this year, which is surprising given that a major allowable activity under the Administration's priorities for extending learning time is teacher planning/collaboration time;
- For the first time, a new item was added on expenditures for "literacy coaches," which was found to be \$224 million.
- Training in use of mobile devices in the classroom was reported in high demand by seven percent of the respondents.

We have found the EMR longitudinal to be the best available trend information available. To get the latest EMR Professional Development Trend Market Survey report email: bob.resnick@ed-market.com or call 718-474-0133. Special discounts are available to AEP association members and survey participants.

Washington Update

Vol. 18, No. 1, January 18, 2013

Graduation Rates Will Likely Become Key Measure Under State Waiver Flexibility

Graduation rates using the “uniform four-year adjusted cohort,” now fully implemented, will likely become a key high school accountability measure replacing AYP under state waiver, accountability and differentiated recognition. Although the difficult-to-understand Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure under NCLB became the most “cussed and discussed” keyword among both educators and parents during the last decade, the concept of graduation rates is familiar to the public although the inclusions, definitions, etc. surrounding the 2008 “uniform four-year adjusted cohort” graduation rate may still be difficult to communicate to the public. However, in November, USED released four-year high school graduation rates for the 2010-11 school year for the first time state-by-state data. Rates varied from slightly less than 60 percent in the District of Columbia to 88 percent in Iowa. The rates reported on percentage of ninth-graders graduating with a standards diploma within four years. Significant graduation rate gaps were posted for minority and economically-disadvantaged students.

Prior to the release of the first such reports, advocacy groups, especially those representing students with disabilities, expressed concern that, under waivers, states would not continue to be accountable. *Education Week's On Special Education* blog (October 22nd), reporting on alleged

violations of the 2008 graduation rate regulations, cited an analysis by the Alliance for Excellent Education which found that several waiver states inflated rates by combining calculations that included GEDs; others used alternative diplomas in their measure of high school completion, often omitting graduation rate accountability for student subgroups and used extended year rates. The AEE analysis also found some states did not designate high schools with graduation rates under 60 percent as Priority and Focus Schools. Such criticisms generated criticism from key Congressional Democratic leaders, such as Congressman George Miller, that some states were trying to “wriggle out of graduation reporting regs put in place in 2008.”

As a result of these and other criticisms, on November 26th, Secretary Duncan sent a policy letter to all Chief State School Officers complimenting them on movement toward uniform graduation reporting rates, but at the same time emphasizing the importance of graduation rates using the uniform adjusted cohort formula to determine accountability and differentiated recognition under the waiver process. As his letter states, “Although a State approved for ESEA flexibility is no longer required to make adequate yearly progress determinations if it requested the waiver of that requirement, I want to emphasize that the Department has not waived any of the graduation rate requirements of 34 C.F.R. Section 200.119(b)” [i.e., the 2008 regulation]. The letter emphasized that the SEA must set a single graduation goal that

represents the rate the SEA expects all high schools in the state to meet, as well as annual graduation rate targets ensuring continuous and substantial progress toward that goal. The SEA must report performance against its graduation rate goals and targets for all students and all subgroups making all such information available to the public at accessible locations. Furthermore, the letter states, "In addition, each SEA that has selected ESEA flexibility must identify all Title I schools with graduation rates below 60 percent over a number of years, must implement rigorous interventions in those schools, and must also use graduation rate targets, including subgroups, to drive incentives, interventions, and supports in all other Title I schools." In short, as the Secretary's letter noted that the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate "will play a key role in the new State-developed systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support approved under ESEA flexibility, which also may include other measures of student achievement and other educational outcomes."

The New America Foundation, which has been following developments in the area of "college readiness measures," recognized the misuse of the 2008 regulations and definitions by some waiver states. Its December 4th *Ed Money Watch* blog about the Secretary's November 26th policy letter states, "However, actions speak louder than words, and the Department has not required any state to modify its waiver plan if it undermines the intent of the 2008 regulations....Without getting serious about graduation rate accountability, the 2008 regulations will remain half-baked." The Secretary's November letter states, "The Department is committed to working with each SEA to ensure full and effective

implementation of ESEA flexibility by providing technical assistance and monitoring implementation progress."

We will continue to follow developments in this important area. Given the difficulty among Common Core related groups being able to define "college readiness," we believe replacing AYP with graduation rates will have a significant impact over the next few years and will become more acceptable to the public, which in turn could point to opportunities for firms which have products and services that could improve graduation rates.

Mandated Standardized Testing Costs Estimated/Addressed by Brookings Institute

The Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings recently released the report, [Strength in Numbers: State Spending on K-12 Assessment Systems](#) by Matthew M. Chingos, and in conjunction convened a moderated discussion with an expert panel. Through extensive data collection and analysis of state contracts with testing vendors Chingos examined the current costs to states of implementing assessment systems necessary to meet federal and state legislation accountability requirements. These data cover a combined \$669 million in annual spending on assessments in 45 states.

Highlights of the report include:

- analysis of costs of testing seems to be high; however, relative to the total monies spent on schooling, it is actually quite small with about \$27 per student cost in grades 3 to 9;

- testing costs vary dramatically by state from a low of \$16 to a high of \$106;
- confirmation of the strategy currently used by a number of states to form consortia to address test development and implementation in a cost-effective way;
- collaboration in forming assessment consortia is occurring across nearly all states that have adopted the Common Core standards;
- lack of transparency in assessment pricing is a barrier to states in making informed decisions regarding their testing systems;
- Recommendation that the consortia could use their power to encourage test publishers to share details about their pricing models.

Russ Whitehurst lead a discussion with the assembled audience and a panel including the report author, Matthew Chingos, David Coleman, CEO of the College Board, Jeffrey Nelhaus, Director of the PARC assessment consortium, and Nancy Gasmick, former Maryland Chief, and Gerard Robinson, former Florida State Superintendents of Education.

“Take-aways” from the moderated discussion include:

In response to critics of the amount of time students and teachers spend on assessment it will be important to communicate that *time in assessment is actually instructional time*. Assessments can make explicit the importance of specific knowledge, information, and skills that are integrated within instructional experiences. However, the quality of assessments must significantly

improve in order to support the claim that assessment time is instructional time.

To redeem assessments we need to recognize that assessments can be extremely powerful tools to provide evident of progress that informs where students are headed; they should be seen as a way to reveal someone’s potential. Assessment results should be seen as a “light” not a wall that blocks a student’s progress. Does the test score propel you? What happens after the test? Where do the results drive the student? The teacher?

Consider end-of-course exams, like the advanced placement (AP) exams. Teachers love these, but hate assessment. Let’s examine why. AP scores aren’t used for determining the accountability of teachers, schools or districts, so they are not perceived to be as high stakes as assessment scores. However, AP scores are high stakes for the students, and perhaps the families. Passing AP exams permits students to “test out” of lower level or introductory college courses. In other words they can save money on tuition and the time required for attaining a college degree. Money and time are both important to students and families, so the family and student become motivated and invested in the student’s passing the AP exams.

What about teachers of advanced placement courses? Perhaps AP teachers have higher expectations of students, and are seen as teachers of “elite” students. Perhaps they teach the specificity of the content. Further, teachers may believe the AP curriculum content is the “real stuff” of which college courses are made.

Whitehurst’s statement, “You need good

standards AND great tests,” says it all.

Waivers Will Be Major Focus of Upcoming Hearings

According to Education Week's Politics K-12 blog (January 8th), an aide to Senate Committee Chairman Tom Harkin reportedly said in an interview, “The Committee intends to examine how waivers are working in states to inform our work on ESEA. It will most likely come in the form of a hearing, but all those details are still being worked out.” Shortly after the November elections, Senator Harkin did call for an early reauthorization of ESEA which surprised some observers after Secretary Duncan also publicly stated that his primary focus would be on the implementation of state waivers, not ESEA reauthorization. The hearing which would include testimony from Secretary Duncan and state chiefs is likely to occur in February.

On the House side, Education Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) has questioned the legality of waiver “conditions” and noted that some waiver states were not happy with the conditions. As reported in the TechMIS State Profile Update, California refused to meet some of the waiver conditions related to teacher evaluations which likely resulted in its being denied a waiver earlier this month by Secretary Duncan. Chairman Harkin’s state (Iowa) has also been denied a waiver and Texas has not yet formally applied for a waiver.

The *Politics K-12* blog has raised a number of key questions for hearings such as the degree to which rigorous graduation rates were a significant portion of accountability

measures and the use of super subgroups and their impact on students with disabilities and English language learners. Other likely hearing questions/issues relate to: the degree of flexibility that is provided to states to design their own intervention models and apply them, rather than being forced to use the four SIG models in Priority Schools; the capacity of USED to administer education programs in states with approved waivers and those states denied waivers and other states which have yet to apply; and the ability of SEAs to develop their own homegrown regulations based on each SEA’s interpretation of USED’s waiver guidance.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is Adding Seven New School Districts to the Nine Previously-Funded to Support District-Based Efforts to Foster Collaboration and Reduce Tension Between District Schools and Charter Schools

As Reported in the *District Dossier* Blog on Education Week (December 5th), the Gates Foundation will award \$25 million in grants of between \$2.2 and \$5 million each to seven school districts. The projects will focus on personalized learning experiences, joint professional development for charter and district teachers, Common Core implementation, and fostering transfer of best practices from innovative charter schools to districts. As Vicki Phillips, Gates Foundation Director of Education, noted, with only three million students enrolled in charter schools nationwide, transfer of best practices from charter schools will promote innovation more than attempting to convert all schools to charter schools. Nina Rees,

President of the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools and former Assistant Secretary for Innovation and Improvement under the Bush Administration, stated, “When schools and leaders in communities work together, learn from each other, share resources, but practices, and sometimes even facilities, collectively we have a better chance at improving the educational opportunities for all children.”

Over the next few years, the seven winning cities will receive multiple year grants of the total amounts: New Orleans (\$3.0 million), Hartford (\$5.0 million), Boston (\$3.3 million), Denver (\$4.0 million), Spring Branch (\$2.2 million), Philadelphia (\$2.5 million), New York City (\$3.7 million). Additional districts which have participated in the earlier District/Charter Collaboration Compacts include: Austin, Baltimore, Central Falls (Rhode Island), Chicago, Rochester (New York), Sacramento, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Nashville. The Gates Foundation has also contributed funds to similar efforts in the Houston ISD school district involving Professor Roland Fryer of Harvard University (see [October Washington Update](#)), in an attempt to “turnkey” best practices, including intensive tutoring and extended learning time, from charter schools to the district. The project has reported positive preliminary results.

For firms with innovative products that are used in charter schools, the Gates-supported district/charter compacts could provide an opportunity to demonstrate effective practices and then transfer them into district operations, thus providing opportunities for, among others, small firms to penetrate market niches. However, the opportunities for for-profit organizations may be limited in the Gates-supported efforts. As Vicki

Phillips commented in [Education Week](#) (December 4th), “In our experience, the best professional development comes from those already in our schools. When engaging in inquiry or lesson study, teachers draw on their shared trust, expertise, and experiences to improve instruction. And when this collaboration focuses on student work, it builds educators’ capacity to address students’ academic needs immediately.” In addition to opportunities for increased teacher collaboration, she outlined the types of materials aligned to standards, with a focus on real-time assessment, that are going to be needed to implement the Common Core standards. In the December 4th [Education Week](#) article, she cites the Literacy Design Collaborative and the Mathematics Design Collaborative which are creating high-quality, useful lessons and research-based instructional tools to be provided through a free online library of new lessons and units -- which are also be funded by the Gates Foundation. As noted in our [October TechMIS Washington Update](#), Gates has a penchant for supporting non-profit vs. for-profit initiatives.

For more information about District/Charter Collaborative Compacts, go to: www.gatesfoundation.org/education

Five States Will Be Extending Learning Time in a Pilot Involving 11 Districts, 40 Schools, and 20,000 Students by Adding 300 Hours of Learning Time in Most Schools Beginning in 2013

The three-year pilot program in Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Tennessee is part of an initiative intended to improve the achievement of U.S. students

and is supported by \$3 million from the Ford Foundation. And, according to an observer during discussions with several governors, funds “freed up” under the State Waiver Initiative are also being used to fund the pilot districts and assistance being provided by the National Center on Time and Learning. Massachusetts will build on the State’s existing expanded learning program, while Connecticut considers the initiative a natural outgrowth of its State reform law passed in May, which includes \$100 million in new funding. Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper pointed to the opportunity to expand summer school learning and reduce the “summer loss” gap. As reported in Education Week’s Beyond School blog (December 3rd), Secretary Duncan focused on the value of time as closing the “opportunity,” rather than the “achievement,” gap for disadvantaged students who need more time to learn. He emphasized “This has the kernels of a national movement, but we are in our infancy and have a long ways to go. In my opinion, we’re moving far too slowly.”

During the briefing, the National Center on Time and Learning released its new report examining extended learning time trends among the 1,002 schools participating in their project which included:

- Expanded Learning Time schools in 36 states and District of Columbia serve approximately 520,000 students; 40 percent of the schools are located in traditional districts and the remaining 60 percent in charter schools;
- The average length of a school day across all Extended Learning Time schools is 7.8 hours compared to 6.7 hours for conventional schools; the average number of hours among

Extended Learning Time schools is 1,430, or over 200 more hours than the national average.

For a copy of the report “Mapping the Field,” go to: <http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/MappingtheField.pdf>

ECE Funding Cuts Would Kick In In March if Sequestration Occurs

According to Education Week’s Politics K-12 blog (January 8th), automatic spending cuts, the result of possible sequestration, are targeted to hit Federally-funded Early Childhood programs in March. Roughly \$187 million of the \$5.2 billion Child Care and Development Block grants that support subsidies to child care and extended day programs through the states would be cut. Head Start, with its almost \$8 billion that provides preschool and early care for poor children and families, would experience a \$653 million cut to its programs. Depending on how the cuts are allocated, this reduction in funds could mean up to 100,000 children and families could lose access to the program services.

The projected budget cuts, initially slated for January 2013, have been pushed back to March. This change in schedule, and the potential that ensuing negotiations will somehow not be as dramatic, has impacted the Obama Administration’s schedule for releasing guidance to Federal administrators on how to implement the approximately eight percent across-the-board cuts.

For schools with Title 1 funds and programs for children with disabilities, cuts are not likely to take place until July 2013, as these

Federal programs are advanced funded within the budget cycle.

Early childhood educators are waiting to see how budget discussions proceed in other areas -- for example, physical and mental health. Cuts here could also seriously affect services to children who are enrolled in Head Start.

Sixty-Five Percent of Title I Schools Are Schoolwide Programs, Which Are Best Opportunities for Most Firms

In a recent *TitleI-derland* blog (January 1st), Chuck Edwards highlights the continued growth of Title I schoolwide programs to almost 65 percent of all Title I schools in 2009-10. The remaining 35 percent are "targeted assistance schools" where Title I funds can be used to serve only Title I eligible students. As we have argued over the last several years, increased opportunities for most TechMIS subscribers exist in schoolwide programs, not only because of increased flexibility to serve all at-risk students, not just those that are Title I eligible, but also as schoolwides are allowed to use not only Title I but other Federal and state funds in a more flexible manner through co-mingling. Some other key points that Edwards highlighted include:

- With the rise in poverty over the last several years (e.g., the percentage of children in school districts with more than 20 percent poverty rose from 31 percent to 49 percent between 2007 and 2011), more schools reach the conventional 40 percent threshold and, once a school has been designated as schoolwide, it remains as such regardless of poverty rates as

long as the school is eligible for Title I funds.

- Under the Secretary's waiver authority, USED has allowed more schools with less than 40 percent poverty to be designated as schoolwides, and under Ed Flex waivers (provided for Colorado, Delaware, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Texas, and Vermont) states can provide similar waivers. Two years ago, former Texas Commissioner Robert Scott indicated that he could convert Title I to a block grant by allowing all Title I schools to become schoolwide programs as Texas is one of the Ed Flex states).
- Under the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program, all Tier I and Tier II schools must operate as if they were designated as schoolwide programs.
- Under the state waiver guidance, ESEA Flexibility allows all schools identified as Priority or Focus Schools to operate as schoolwide programs.

The bottom line is that the concept of schoolwide programs is quickly meeting the goal envisioned by its major proponent during the 1990s, Education Committee Chairman Representative Bill Goodling (R-PA) (a former district school superintendent) who argued that schoolwide programs should become Title I block grants at the school level where the "rubber hits the road."

Head Start Re-Competition Delayed Until Spring and Family Engagement Framework Published

Recent efforts by the Office of Head Start to implement the 2007 Head Start Act accountability requirements that promote the replacement of grantees that are not providing quality services to enrolled children has put Head Start, the largest Federally funded preschool program in the news again. According to the Education Week's Early Years blog, Secretary Sibelius's response to the Congressional inquiry from the House Education and Workforce Committee shared several details about the Head Start Recompetition process. For the 132 grants currently required to re-compete for funding, 500 applications were received from community-based organizations, school districts and nonprofits. In addition, 1,300 individuals seeking to be reviewers submitted resumes, two professional references, and a writing sample. These reviewer applicants went through a three-tiered vetting process which included an in-depth review of their application, resume and writing sample, reference check, and the applicant's successful completion of the intensive, two-day Federally-conducted OHS Grant Reviewer Training. As a result of completion of this application and training process, approximately 460 qualified non-Federal reviewers were selected to evaluate the grant applications.

Note that the award announcements originally scheduled to be made in late Fall have been pushed back to the Spring when DHHS promises to give more details about successful Head Start replacement grant applicants. At that time, every Head Start provider that loses funding will be replaced

by a new provider or by providers in that area. These replacement grantees will transition from the existing providers so that children and families continue to receive services.

Further detailed information is provided in a recent New America Foundation brief, [Reforming Head Start: What 'Re-competition' Means for the Federal Government's Pre-K Program](#). The paper explains the inner workings of the new grant-making system -- known as 're-competition' -- and discusses Head Start's role as states and the Federal government work to build a higher-quality system of publicly funded early learning programs.

Maggie Stevens, the report's author, describes the Federal pre-school program, currently serving 960,000 children with a budget of \$7.8 billion, from a context of Head Start's history and limitations. Head Start children come from the most vulnerable families:

- the median family income is \$22,714 (the latest figures available, 2009);
- a family income is a criteria for enrollment eligibility in Head Start; families must have incomes at or below 100 percent of the Federal poverty level (\$23,050 for a family of four in 2012) or meet other criteria, such as being foster parents or having children with special needs; and
- 75 percent of Head Start children's parents are working full-time. In some cases, families at 130 percent of the poverty level may be eligible to enroll their children if spots remain in their local programs after

all interested families at 100 percent of poverty have registered.

On December 10, 2012, New America Foundation, in collaboration with the Joan Ganz Cooney Center, published *Pioneering Literacy in the Digital Wild West* as part of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. The report acknowledges the great potential for technology to help infants and toddlers acquire and improve basic literacy skills, but points out that many of today's products that make the claims of benefits to improve basic reading skills have scant research evidence to support this. There is limited evidence of the effectiveness of any of these devices or technology-enabled products. The report contends that much more research needs to be conducted on how to make apps, games, e-books, and websites meant to improve basic reading skills useful to parents, teachers, and children.

Parent/Family/Community Engagement Frameworks

In October 2011, the Office of Head Start published, as part of its integrated approach to school readiness for young children birth to five, a framework that conceptualizes parent and family engagement as central to children's success in school and life (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/sr/approach/pfcef>). At a recent (December 2012) meeting, Education Secretary Arne Duncan joined support for the strong role parents and families play in influencing their children's academic outcomes. Karen Mapp of the Harvard School of Education unveiled another draft framework as a way to conceptualize and expand the work of the Department of Education's support of family engagement (http://www.ed.gov/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Family_Engagement

[nt DRAFT Framework.pdf](#)).

Clearly the notion of the important role of parents and families as foundation to children's learning and development is becoming a central emphasis of Federal education discussions and possibly future funding initiatives.

School choice often emerges in discussions of the relationship of family engagement to students' school success. In a December 11, 2012 webcast, Brookings announced the publication of the 2nd Annual Choice and Competition Index. Governor of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal, was on hand with Grover Whitehurst (Director of the Brown Center on Educational Policy) to illuminate the foundational elements of the Index and the implications this process has for continued implementation and progress in Louisiana's education system. Several arguments were advanced for the opportunity to promote parental school choice including:

- Parents want it; middle class parents exercise choice by buying a more in a specific school district
- Equity is reflected in offering opportunities to choose to all families;
- Competition improves school performance; and
- Choice promotes the innovation necessary for continuous quality improvement.

The Governing Board of the Partnership for Assessment of Reading for College and Careers (PARCC) Has Approved Two Draft Policies for Comment Which Could Narrow Eligibility of Students with Disabilities to Receive Assessment Accommodations in the 23 PARCC States

As reported in the *Curriculum Matters* blog on [Education Week](#) (December 21, 2012) Lindsay Jones, Senior Director at the Policy of the Council for Exceptional Children, has said she “anticipates that the PARCC policies, if adopted as currently worded, would narrow the pool of eligible students in some PARCC states. But it could expand that pool in others.” She also praised the portion of the draft policy that requires students to receive “research-based interventions” in reading in order to be eligible for a test accommodation in that subject. Jones also noted, “That will influence the IEP process, the teachers in the room, and hopefully the schools, to reinforce the need to provide those research-based interventions.” The IDEA regulations, published in 2006, strongly encouraged the use of research-based interventions determine whether a student has a specific learning disability or a reading problem. This concept was reinforced by a requirement that districts identified for disproportionality set aside 15 percent of their IDEA funds to be used for coordinated early-intervening services or response-to-intervention approaches.

The requirement in the PARCC draft policy should increase the demand for RTI approaches and could possibly become more important than proposals by the National Center for Education Outcomes and the RTI

network to codify definitions of RTI and otherwise ensure quality implementation of RTI approaches to be used for at-risk students prior to their being placed in special education programs. More information about the proposed policy on accommodation eligibility is available on the PARCC website where the PARCC Technical Working Group on Accommodations and Accessibility will be receiving comments on these policies.

First American Institute for Research Waiver Guide Focuses on English Language Learners, Highlighting Promising Practices Which Should Be Used in Waiver States

The American Institute for Research First waiver guide, entitled “Supporting English Language Learners: A Pocket Guide for State and District Leaders,” is based on an analysis of the 34 state waiver plans approved by USED and lays out critical steps states and districts must take for English language learners under waiver guidance.

The first principle in the Guide calls for college- and career-ready expectations, including building academic language skills of ELLs and providing professional development to all teachers including those in content areas. The guide encourages that “multiple pathway” options be available, such as credit for some ESL coursework and increasing instructional time for language and academic content development.

Under the second principle, Differentiated Recognition Accountability, and Support Systems, according to the *Learning the Language* blog on [Education Week](#)

(December 10th), the Guide emphasizes that the only applicable accountability provisions are for Title I, which focuses on academic progress, rather than language development progress as does Title III. The Guide recommends that states include the progress of ELLs as defined in Title I, not Title III, and that former ELLs who have exited the program be reclassified as proficient.

Learning the Language notes that there is “much more to get out of this guide,” which we feel should be helpful to TechMIS subscribers and their staff who approach districts in waiver states in which, at the district level, there has not been a close degree of coordination between the Title I and Title III officials.

The AIR guide is upfront by indicating it did not address the fourth principle under the waiver conditions -- to evaluate and revise administrative requirements -- which they note is not directly related to student supports. The differences between Title I and Title III in the area of supplement-not-supplant is not addressed and could present a major problem in many districts; perhaps this is an area that TechMIS subscribers who are knowledgeable about these differences might want to address in approaching the district officials responsible for ELL programs in order to develop a “consultative sales” approach.

The guide is available at:
http://www.air.org/files/ELL_Pocket_Guide_1.pdf

Miscellaneous (a)

Likely trends in the charter school movement could have implications for many

TechMIS subscribers over the next year. The *Charters & Choice* blog on [Education Week](#), along with most other observers, feel charter school growth will continue nationwide and tensions with traditional public schools will also grow. Regulation and funding issues will be uppermost among these tensions, with “legal punches and counter punches to continue in states that adopt new voucher programs and look for voucher supporters to craft laws aimed at hewing to the language of their individual states’ constitutions” according to *Charters & Choice*. As Common Core assessment dates close in, the question of whether students participating in voucher school scholarships will have to take state assessments will grow as indicated by Indiana's large-scale voucher program.

Another important issue, which will continue to grow, is who will have major oversight in deciding whether to close low-performing charter schools. Officials at the National Association of Charter School Authorizers have said that parents should be the final arbiters. And, finally, will traditional public schools become more serious in entertaining the adoption of innovative practices in charter schools, ranging from intense tutoring (as in the case of Houston Independent School District, see October 2012 [Washington Update](#)), to online courses, support, and professional development tools and practices.

Miscellaneous (b)

An Indiana conservative Republican, Todd Rokita (R-IN), is to head House K-12 policy subcommittee which wielded significant power when headed by former chairman Mike Castle (R-DE), who influenced ESEA

policy, the reauthorization of IDEA, and was instrumental in providing many opportunities for publishers by expanding response-to-intervention (RTI) approaches. Representative Rokita, formerly Secretary of State of Indiana, has reportedly said, according to the *Politics K-12* blog on Education Week, "I'm excited to serve as Chairman of this subcommittee with oversight over K-12 education where we'll have the opportunity to take what we learned in Indiana to Washington and also to ensure that states like Indiana have the flexibility and help they need to deliver top quality education for students and families." In the past he has supported the "A+ Act" which would allow states to "opt out" of Federal accountability measures, supported making English the official language of the U.S., and supported legislation to eliminate USED's staff and programs. He has supported charter schools, a major policy push in Indiana, and some other measures supported by former Governor Mitch Daniels and former State Superintendent Tony Bennett. It is not clear whether he supports Common Core and other reform initiatives advocated by Bennett who is now the Secretary of Education in Florida. He might possibly be as influential in Federal policy formulation as Bennett was when he headed the "rump" Chiefs for Change, which "broke" with the Council of Chief State School Officers more than a year ago. It is interesting to note in a recent *Curriculum Matters* blog, a bill has been introduced in the Indiana legislature to withdraw from the Common Core Standards which former Superintendent Tony Bennett supported and is scheduled for committee hearings in January, as noted in the State Profile Updates.

Miscellaneous (c)

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities anticipates a higher priority being placed on improving college graduation rates, according to the *College Bound* blog on Education Week (January 9th). Thirty-three states have expressed interest or are currently implementing performance-based funding systems, up from fewer than ten states just two years ago. The emphasis is on producing graduates rather than increasing enrollment, thereby linking state money to student outcomes. In light of budget crunches facing colleges and universities, the Association argues that attention will "shift to getting the most students through school with existing dollars." This new priority will mean "...public colleges will maintain admission standards that promote student access and use more intensive retention strategies that increase the likelihood of student success." Other new priorities noted by the Association will include improving college readiness with more rigorous standards and reforms in remedial education.

As a footnote, a later *College Bound* blog cited a report from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education that reported, by 2019-20, 45 percent of public high school graduates will be non-white, up by more than seven percent over the class of 2009. A rapid increase in the number of Hispanics completing high school has been projected.

According to a recent USED report, college enrollment will grow over the next decade by 15 percent, compared to about 45 percent between 1996 and 2010. The number of associate degrees awarded in community colleges will increase by 21 percent and a

similar increase is projected in bachelor's degrees by 2021-22. The total number of high school graduates is expected to increase by just two percent by 2021-22, while private schools expect a small decrease. Between 1996 and 2009, the number of high school graduates increased by almost 30 percent.

Miscellaneous (d)

As we have previously reported, districts/schools receiving Impact Aid funding will probably feel the earliest effects of sequestration should it occur in March. In anticipation of this, a survey was conducted involving 334 schools in August; findings indicate that almost a third began planning or such cuts for the 2012-13 school year. Sixty-four percent delayed maintenance or technology purchases; 54 percent eliminated non-instructional staff positions; 46 percent boosted class size; 44 percent eliminated instructional staff and 35 percent reduced professional development activities, according to Education Week (December 10th). Those districts that did not build in reductions in early planning or hesitated to lay off staff, simply reduced spending generally, or drew down rainy day reserves. According to John Forkenbrock, Executive Director of the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS), the sequestration would not result in a massive layoff in January as a result of early planning, but, "That doesn't mean it's not going to have an impact, it is going to be really tough." The AASA analysis, which was included in our December Washington Update, found that sequestration would have the greatest effect on districts receiving large amounts of Impact Aid as a percentage of their operating budgets, followed by

education service agencies. Almost 50 percent of Impact Aid districts have half or more minority enrollments, with 64 percent having ELL populations of 30 percent or more.

Miscellaneous (e)

After the most recent Race to the Top-District competition winners were announced in December, scopes of work, outlining detailed planned activities and budgets, for the four-year grant period must be approved by mid-February/early March. The 16 winners were awarded a total of \$400 million. An Education Week analysis last August found that, among the winning states in Round 1 and Round 2, less than a third of the total grant amounts had actually been awarded to districts and that some winners, such as Hawaii, had been put on high-risk status for not meeting the terms and conditions in their scope of work. The same amendment process provided to states during the first three rounds will also be followed with the 16 winners under the district Race to the Top competition. As the *Politics K-12* blog on Education Week (December 18th) noted, the list of amendments for previous Race to the Top winners is "quite long" and grantees are "still struggling" to keep up with all of their promises as many had trouble finding enough qualified staff and capacity to implement statewide initiatives.

Opportunities for TechMIS subscribers with appropriate products and services will likely be included in the final scopes of work and budgets (and amendments) for the 16 winners, which eventually will be posted. Subscribers with personal contacts with the 16 winning entities should rely heavily on

this means of communicating with and obtaining knowledge about potential opportunities which will likely exist during the initial implementation phase, after the final scopes of work are approved.

Miscellaneous (f)

Congressional Research Services (CRS) veteran Wayne Riddle, in the December 18, 2012 *TitleI-derland* blog, traces the history of the Secretary's waiver authority (Section 9401) and its evolution since 1994 ESEA reauthorization. He predicts: "Given the status-quo results of the 2012 election, current trends of control over the major ESEA policies are likely to continue for at least the next two years. In the meantime, the new accountability policies in the waiver states will be implemented, making them more difficult to change in the future and developing a constituency in a majority of states for their continuation." Riddle argues that, without question, Secretary Duncan's state waiver initiative has been by far the most extensive use of Secretary's waiver authority Section 9401 and by definition the greatest usurpation of Congressional prerogative in making legislative changes; however, he predicts that, in the long term, waiver policies are very vulnerable because they are not permanent and have a maximum life of four years. As he states, "Any future Secretary of Education, especially one from a different party, has been provided an excellent example of how to make major changes in ESEA accountability policies without the nuisance of having to get them approved by Congress. Until Section 9401 is revised to limit the Secretary's authority to waive some of the most critical policies, future secretaries may

use this authority to quickly move policies in a very different direction." Late last year, I asked former Secretary of Education Richard Riley who was given the waiver authorization in the 1994 ESEA reauthorization, if he ever thought the Secretary's waiver authority would ever be used as Secretary Duncan has done. He smiled and nodded when I mentioned that his Deputy at that time, Dr. Mike Smith, who was also a key Duncan advisor four years ago, stated that in 1994 they had not been able to get everything they wanted in the ESEA reauthorization, but they did get the Secretary's "waiver authority" which has been exercised more and more beginning with former Secretary Spellings under the Bush Administration and now Secretary Duncan.

Miscellaneous (g)

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Inspector General has released an audit report which found USED procedures for monitoring the National Charter School Program has been inadequate and lacked procedures to track Federal funds to States and charter schools which received approximately \$940 million between 2008 and 2011. The three states which were the subject of the audit -- Arizona, California, and Florida -- received \$275 million between August 2008 and September 2011, with nearly \$182 million going to California. GAO "determined that OII [USED's Office of Innovation and Improvement] did not effectively oversee and monitor the Charter School Program grantees and did not have an adequate process to ensure SEAs conducted effective oversight and monitoring over subgrantees." Monitoring was inadequate in areas of

correcting deficiencies and ensuring appropriate approaches for selecting charter schools to monitor, and did not adequately review SEA and non-SEA grantees' fiscal activities. As reported in Education Daily, there are currently about 5,600 charter schools in 41 states, serving more than two million students -- an increase of about 75 percent over the last five years. The OIG report was more critical of monitoring and auditing procedures used by the California SEA which currently has 1,065 charter schools in operation; it has a cap limiting growth to 100 per year.

The expansion of charter schools, as a means to provide flexibility in return for accountability, promotion of innovation and adoption of best charter practices for public schools and expanded parent choice, received support from both Presidential candidates and Congress over the last several years. For more information on the report go to: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/auditreports/fy2012/a02i0002.pdf>

Miscellaneous (h)

According to a new report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, entitled "Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates," the national college completion rate is higher than reported by other sources, including USED. These sources tend to focus on colleges rather than the students, reflecting only institutional success in retaining full-time students who start and finish at the same place. The Clearinghouse report is based on data from 3,300 colleges and universities and follows students through transfers between colleges and other

pathways to completion. According to the Clearinghouse report, when nontraditional patterns of enrollment are considered, the national completion rate jumped to 54 percent from 42 percent, and, among full-time students, 75 percent earn a degree or certificate within six years. As noted in The Chronicle of Higher Education (November 15th), the Center's figures are not as "alarming as the figures that state and federal policy makers have decried." The Clearinghouse received a grant from the Lumina Foundation to gather the data and provides various instances of the "flow" of students not being reported by other sources. For example, one in five students who completed a degree did so after transferring and 15 percent of students who started at a two-year college finished within six years at a four-year college, and of those, nearly two-thirds did so without first earning an associate degree. The Chronicle article concludes that, because a Federal "unit-record system to track students" raises privacy issues, "...the National Student Clearinghouse may be poised to fill that role." Earlier this month, Clearinghouse officials briefed the Senate and House Education Committee and indicated the desire to work with USED to disseminate annual statistics about college completion.

Miscellaneous (i)

The Gates Foundation has awarded more than \$5 million in Next Generation Learning Challenge grants to improve college readiness and completion through the use of blended learning. The latest wave of 13 new grants brings the total to 78 awardees of \$30 million since 2010. According to Education Week's blog *Marketplace K-12*, "...the winners are heavy on charter schools,"

despite a significant drop in funding for charter schools by the Gates Foundation in recent years. Some of the winners are:

- Aspire (Memphis, TN) with a focus on science and math curriculum; this will be part of Tennessee's Achievement School District;
- Foundations College Prep (Chicago, IL);
- Intrinsic Schools (also in Chicago);
- Generation Schools Network (Denver, CO) focusing on school turnarounds; and
- Matchbook Learning (Tennessee), a national school turnaround and management organization also working with Tennessee's Achievement District.

Miscellaneous (j)

The 2012 High School Dropout in America survey conducted by Harris Interactive found that the most important reasons which prevented adults ages 19 to 35 from finishing high school were absence of parent support or encouragement (23%), becoming a parent (21%), lacking credits needed to graduate and missing too many days of school was the next highest rated reason for dropping out (17% respectively), being bullied and did not want to return and having to work to support family was the most important reason for 12% respectively. About half of dropouts had looked into getting a diploma or GED, but a third found a major reason for not doing so was not having enough time or it cost too much (26%). As the *College Bound* blog on EducationWeek.org reports, students often do not want to return to the same school they left and are looking for flexible options

such as the Boston Public Re-engagement Center where students can retake up to two courses previously failed, try online credit recovery, or attend night school or summer school. Entering students are assigned adult mentors. Dropout rates have been reduced by more than one-third during the last five years, according to *College Bound*.

Miscellaneous (k)

During the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, a draft framework -- not standards -- was released to guide states as they rework their own standards in social studies. As reported in the *Curriculum Matters* blog on EducationWeek.org, the "Vision for the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Inquiry in Social Studies State Standards" addresses four dimensions of informed inquiry including developing questions and planning investigations; applying disciplinary concepts and tools; gathering, evaluating, and using evidence; and working collaboratively and communicating conclusions. The framework will only guide, not prescribe necessary social studies content. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the primary mover of Common Core State Standards, emphasized that the intent of the framework is to assist districts and states upgrade their respective standards in social studies and that it is not a set of standards; rather it is a "common resource." The CCSSO, which is working with more than 20 states, and the NCSS will likely release the common resource "sometime next year."

Miscellaneous (l)

On December 21st, Secretary Duncan announced seventeen new 2012 Promise Neighborhood winners bringing total Promise Neighborhood funding over three years to nearly \$100 million intended to help over 50 communities representing more than 700 schools. More than 1,000 national, state, and community organizations have partnered with Promise Neighborhood grantees including non-profit partners included in the \$60 million total funding for the third Promise Neighborhood competitive grant round are ten planning grants totaling more than \$4.7 million and seven implementation grants totaling nearly \$30 million. The remaining funds will be provided as the second year funding to five implementation grantees awarded in 2011. The seven implementation grantees, which received planning grants in 2010 or 2011, include: Boston Promise Initiative (\$1.5 million); Chula Vista (California) Promise Neighborhood (\$5.0 million); Five Promises for Two Generations (Washington D.C.) (\$1.9 million), Indianola (Mississippi) Promise Community, (\$6 million); Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood (\$6 million); East Lubbock (Texas) Promise Neighborhood (\$3.3 million) and Mission (California) Promise Neighborhood (\$6 million).

The Promise Neighborhood Initiative not only offers opportunities for firms with social, health, behavioral, interventions and support activities for parent and community engagement, but also provides a test bed from which other grantees of funds under Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants, and other flagship programs can adopt new such interventions. The Promise Neighborhood is also perhaps the safest of

all Duncan/Obama flagship education initiatives in that it enjoys at least moderate bipartisan support in Congress, second only to the Teacher Incentive Fund program.

Miscellaneous (m)

The National Student Clearinghouse and Department of Veterans Affairs will be implementing a tracking and reporting system on eligible veterans' progress under the new GI Bill which could provide a useful database for firms targeting this particular niche market which includes about two million veterans who can receive annual tuitions of about \$18,000 including up to \$1,200 annually for tutoring. The Clearinghouse tracks individual student graduation rates better than basing such rates on individual college reports which most recently shows actual student reported graduation rates are much higher than reported by colleges (see related [TechMIS Washington Update](#)). According to *Inside Higher Education* (January 10th), about 2,500 postsecondary institutions will be participating. Both the Veterans Administration and veterans advocacy groups have expressed concerns that spotty reports on high veteran dropout rates would likely fall into the hands of those in Congress wishing to reduce education benefits funding for veterans. Therefore, Department of Veterans Affairs moved fairly quickly to develop the new reporting system and database which could provide useful information to firms targeting the veteran's postsecondary niche market in topics ranging from subjects in which veterans have greatest instructional needs to counseling and other services.

Miscellaneous (n)

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which over the last two years has been one of the most vocal critics of the Common Core Standards, has dropped its opposition; but it does not necessarily support implementation of the standards. According to the *State Ed Watch* blog on EducationWeek.org (November 20th), ALEC's legislative board of directors, on November 19th, voted "not to adopt the resolution opposing the common core." ALEC stated that it will remain "neutral on the common core...but will continue to oppose any efforts by the federal government to mandate curriculum." ALEC has been a conservative think tank for state legislatures and includes groups such as the Goldwater Institute in Phoenix and the Boston-based Pioneer Institute.

Miscellaneous (o)

A new report from the National Center for Education Statistics has found that the percentage of students who reported taking college remedial courses increased slightly from 2003 to 2008 in public four-year schools, open admission colleges, associate's degree and bachelor's degree

programs, and humanities and business management major areas. A larger percentage of students who attended four-year public institutions reported that they enrolled in remedial coursework compared to those who attended four-year private not-for-profit institutions, and a larger percentage of first-year undergraduates in associate degree programs reported enrollment in remedial courses than were first-year undergraduates in certificate or bachelor degree programs. While the report suggests that an increase in college readiness occurred between 2004 and 2007, "these analyses do not control for other policies or practices that may also affect the frequency of student self-reported remedial coursework enrollment." Hence, with all the recent policy changes under Common Core Standards, Race to the Top, and other initiatives, one should take with a "grain of salt" the above trends. The continuing changes in admission policies and increased emphasis on college readiness in programs such as SIG, among others, suggest that the percentage of enrollees having to take college remedial courses has increased and, in certain areas, significantly over the last two years.

Alabama Update

January 2013

Alabama's two-year college system has requested a \$478 million -- 29 percent -- increase in State funding for 2013-14. According to college officials, the request would restore the system to 2008 funding levels. A significant portion of the budget request would be used to implement *Accelerate Alabama*, the State's strategic economic development plan for attracting and retaining businesses. This includes incentives to companies for hiring students and allowing them to work while attending school.

Alaska Update

January 2013

The Anchorage Daily News notes that the Alaska State Board of Education has taken the first step toward incorporating “student learning data” into teacher evaluations. According to the State’s plan, starting in the 2015-16 school year, 20 percent of a teacher’s evaluation will be based on student performance and growth as measured by at least one standardized test. By 2018-19, “student learning” will make up 50 percent of the evaluation. The plan also gives local school districts more flexibility for defining “student growth” and for teacher professional growth. The change has been controversial with many teachers expressing concern about standardized tests that do not take into account out-of-classroom factors.

Arizona Update

January 2013

The Arizona Republic has estimated that the cost of implementing the Common Core State Standards in Arizona will be \$131 million over two years. State education officials expect Governor Jan Brewer and the State legislature to provide at least some of the money districts will have to spend for equipment, training, and other costs for implementing the Common Core. The Governor's office has indicated that she is unlikely to request the full amount from the legislature.

California Update

January 2013

Governor Jerry Brown hopes to reallocate school funding by targeting more funds to low-income students and English language learners. Rules limiting how school districts can spend money would be loosened which affects about 40 percent of the State and Federal funds which are part of the State's 70 categorical earmarked programs. The California Department of Finance found that, in 2012, 56 of those programs accounted for \$11.8 billion of the State's education budget. The reported goal, to provide more local control allowing flexibility in limitations such as class size, could be the most radical overhaul of the State aid formula funding in years.

Secretary Duncan has denied California a waiver to get out from under NCLB provisions largely because it wanted all of the flexibilities of a waiver but was not willing to accept all of the conditions other approved states agreed to meet, as reported in [Education Week's Politics K-12](#) blog. The sticking point was whether California was willing to evaluate teachers based in part on how well their students would do on standardized tests, a condition which has been strongly resisted by the State's powerful teacher unions. In an interview with the [San Jose Mercury News](#), Mike Kirst, President of the State Board, reportedly stated that, "We felt our application was approvable." Its initial draft "application" in June presented hard data justifying California's previous track record in the use of tutoring and other interventions over the last ten years to increase student performance. As *Politics K-12* noted, "It means the most populous state in the country, with the biggest congressional delegation, will be stuck with the outdated, much maligned No Child Left Behind as it is for the foreseeable future." Hence, more schools and districts are likely to fail to meet AYP proficiencies and will be under program improvement as in the past. Based on an interpretation of Kirst's comments, it would appear that USED's denial may also increase pressures from the California Congressional delegation, which is the largest in the House, for an earlier ESEA reauthorization, doing away with NCLB altogether and possibly allowing California to continue using its own system to measure academic success or allowing some districts which are willing to accept the waiver conditions to apply directly, which was

discussed in Education Week (January 16th).

A new report from Education Trust-West says that California's implementation of the Common Core State Standards is falling behind other states. The report, "Catching up to the Core," notes that, "In contrast to California, other states more quickly aligned myriad policies related to the CCSS, created coherent systems of professional development, and initiated collaborations with other states to benefit from economies of scale." Among the report's recommendations are communicating better with teachers, parents, and others in the K-12 community and taking a more active role in disseminating professional development materials and programs from local school districts.

Following new legislation to change the State's academic performance index state assessment measure for high schools, California Superintendent Tom Torlakson has proposed changing the State's testing regimen by no longer requiring end-of-course exams in high schools and some second grade tests in English and math according to Education Week's State Ed Watch blog (January 8th). Because the State's waiver request was denied by USED, California will continue to implement required NCLB tests, but drop non-NCLB tests in preparation for implementing Common Core assessments being developed by the Smarter Balanced consortium. Other recommendations by Superintendent Torlakson included considering adopting "matriculation" exams allowing middle and high school students to demonstrate subject mastery for employers and colleges.

According to Education Week, California is also in the process of revising its standardized tests to place a greater emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Intended to conform to the national Common Core State Standards, the new tests require deeper, more extended responses and, although largely scored by computer, will require some hand scoring. The revamped tests are scheduled to begin in the 2014-15 school year, pending legislative approval.

Connecticut Update

January 2013

A task force commissioned by Governor Dan Malloy has recommended formula changes to the almost \$2 billion of State funds provided to school districts. This could double or triple State aid to under-funded school districts such as Bridgeport and Norwalk. The formula would use new poverty data, such as free and reduced-price lunch enrollment, to measure poverty and would endorse magnet and charter schools as well as technical schools.

The Connecticut Mirror reports that, when Connecticut adopts the Common Core State Standards in 2015, student test scores are expected to drop significantly and the shift is expected to cost local school districts as much as \$123 million to update instructional materials, to provide technology for administering new tests on computers, and to train teachers in the new standards. According to a State study, 80 percent of Connecticut's existing English curriculum and 92 percent of its math curriculum are already aligned to the Common Core. Connecticut's approved waiver from the Federal No Child Left Behind Act says the State may work with an outside organization (Align) to determine how aligned each district's textbooks and other instructional materials are with the new national standards.

Florida Update

January 2013

Last year, Florida's state legislature mandated "value-added" evaluations. These were to be combined with traditional observations, student scores, and other data. According to Education Week (December 5th), Florida's first report on the new, controversial evaluations findings indicate that 22 percent of teachers ranked highly effective; 75 percent were rated effective, and barely two percent were told they need improvement. According to the report, about a quarter of Florida teachers were not included. The final report for the 2011-12 school year will be available in February. By the 2014-15 school year, these new data-driven evaluations of teachers will be tied to tenure and salary. With several years of poor evaluations teachers may be let go.

An Associated Press article in Education Week (December 26th) reports that Florida's adoption of Common Core Standards is not meeting the resistance that has occurred in other states and will be bolstered by the recent selection of former Indiana State Superintendent Tony Bennett as the new Education Commissioner. While the Florida Education Association has opposed both the Governor and GOP-controlled legislature on issues related to private school vouchers, class size limits, and use of student test scores for teacher evaluations, it supports the adoption of Common Core Standards. Although the adoption of the Common Core Standards has not met with much opposition, one can expect more opposition when the FCAT is replaced by the assessments being developed by the PARCC consortium for which Florida is the Fiscal Agent. Legislators are questioning how much it will cost to implement the assessments. The State plans to use Federal funds for the implementation. State Public Schools Chancellor Pam Stuart, who serves in the interim until Bennett arrives, has argued that approximately \$130 million of Federal funds will be available for teacher professional development and almost \$50 million for other aspects of the transition from FCAT to the new PARCC assessment. Some district superintendents question whether this funding will be enough and whether the planned implementation is moving too quickly before pilot test results are analyzed.

Hawaii Update

January 2013

Hawaii has completed approximately 90 percent of the activities associated with its \$75 million Race to the Top grant, which has been upheld even though it is officially having trouble implementing its teacher/principal evaluation plans. The Hawaii Race to the Top plan was front-loaded which increased the rate of early implementation of activities and then focused on the remainder of activities during the last two years. State Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, in an interview with Education Week's *Politics K-12* blog, communicated that the next two years would focus on supporting teachers and principals. One priority would be more professional development to implement the Race to the Top plan. Still missing is the State's approved teacher's contract, which includes the new teacher evaluation system currently being pilot-tested. Contract negotiations with the teacher groups have resumed.

Indiana Update

January 2013

According to [Education Week's Curriculum Matters](#) blog, Indiana Senator Scott Schneider, a Republican, has proposed legislation that would require the State to withdraw from the Common Core State Standards initiative. If the bill is approved, Indiana would be the first state to withdraw from the Common Core. It should be noted that Indiana's newly-elected education superintendent, Glenda Ritz, defeated the incumbent, Tony Bennett (who is becoming Florida's new superintendent) in part based on her questioning of the Common Core. Indiana's incoming Republican Governor, Mike Pence has given no indication of his position toward the issue.

A new report from the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University has found that students in Indiana's charter schools have out-performed those in traditional public schools. The study covered more than 15,000 students in grades 3-8 at 64 schools, paired with a control group matched for demographic and performance data. Charter school students made 1.5 more months of learning gains in both reading and math than their peers in traditional schools. The results were even more dramatic in Indianapolis where charter students had two more months of gain than their counterparts in traditional schools.

As reported in the [Education Week's Early Years](#) blog, the [Indianapolis Star](#) announced that the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) plans to launch a preschool effort that expects to enroll 1,400 four-year-olds in free, full-day preschool for the first time starting next Fall. This is one more way the district hopes to address the gap that young poor children face when they have not had a strong early childhood foundation and they start kindergarten far behind their peers. The preschool program was approved by the IPS School Board in October but has been expanded since to include more sites at more schools and at community organizations and private preschools that are partnering with the district. The first-year plan now calls for seven IPS school sites and six community partner sites. In addition, some existing classrooms at IPS schools will add space. The new initiative will cost about \$8 million annually and employ about 105 IPS

staff, including 51 teachers and 51 classroom assistants, next year. About three-fourths the funding comes from Federal poverty programs, some of which became available for all-day kindergarten thanks to new State funding approved by the legislature for kindergarten. Indiana is one of just eight states nationally that provides no state aid for preschool programs. But IPS officials believe more preschool will lead to academic gains. In fact, the district hopes to build on the success of its full-day kindergarten program. With full-day kindergarten in place, Eugene White, IPS Superintendent said, “the school district now sees about 75 percent of its incoming kindergarteners starting first grade with the basic skills they need, up from 50 percent before the program was in place. When preschool is fully implemented for all four-year-olds, the goal will be to have more than 95 percent of first graders ready for school.”

Indiana Higher Education Commissioner Teresa Lubbers has proposed using mentors for one-on-one guidance with traditional and non-traditional students in remediating skills before they graduate from high school so colleges are not burdened with remedial classes. These mentors would also help students focus on careers and degree programs. As reported in IndyStar.com, while the Commissioner has set a goal that the percentage of Indiana citizens with a college degree would increase to 60 percent by 2015, only three in ten currently complete bachelor’s degrees within four years and fewer than one in ten earn associate degrees within two years. The use of mentoring for one-on-one guidance was designed to get a greater return on investment, according to Lubbers.

Kansas Update

January 2013

A State audit has estimated that implementing Kansas' waiver from the Federal No Child left Behind Act will cost school districts in the State between \$34 million and \$63 million over the next five years. Most of these costs -- between \$32 million and \$60 million -- are attributable to implementation of the Common Core State Standards over two years. As reported in Education Week's State EdWatch, the audit estimates that \$30-\$50 million will be needed for new instructional materials and \$2-\$10 million for training teachers. The audit report notes that only 63 percent of Kansas teachers will need Common Core training and that there will be few technology costs because "nearly all Kansas student assessment tests are currently administered online."

Louisiana Update

January 2013

Louisiana's public schools are beginning a three-year shift to the Common Core State Standards. The shift will include changes to items on the standardized tests given each Spring to third-through eighth-graders and in end-of-course exams for high school students. The new tests will be more rigorous and will include more open-ended and written responses. State officials say the new standards will be fully integrated into the State's curriculum and testing by the 2014-15 school year.

Louisiana is considering a new school model that would allow students to build a custom curriculum from a range of courses offered by public institutions and private providers, according to Reuters. Known as *Course Choice*, the model would save money because classes provided by private vendors generally cost less (about \$800) per class than the cost of public schools (about \$1,300). The savings would be divided between the district and the State. Opponents of the plan are concerned that public schools will lose funding to private vendors and will be unable to provide a full range of academic classes and extracurricular activities. In late November, a State court has ruled that private providers could not be paid with State money intended for public schools. The State plans to appeal the ruling and is pressing ahead with portions of the approach this Spring.

Maryland Update

January 2013

The U.S. Department of Education has warned Maryland that \$37.9 million of the State's \$250 million Race to the Top grant is in jeopardy because it has not implemented its teacher/principal evaluation system as proposed in its RTTT application. According to Education Week's Politics K-12 blog, USED has expressed major concerns over: (1) the capacity of Maryland school districts to implement the evaluations; and (2) the State's shift away from using test data as a component of educator evaluations at the high school level. Maryland, under a new State Superintendent, is working to field test its teacher evaluation plan and to evaluate how it is working.

Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley has called on colleges and universities to use technology more to increase -- from 45 percent today to 55 percent by 2025 -- the percentage of adults in the State with college degrees or advanced certifications. Specifically, he challenged educators to use the Internet, online learning, and course redesign capabilities to broaden access to higher education. It appears that the Governor is placing the highest priority on increasing retention and college graduation rates for first-time college enrollees and their families, particularly those needing remedial courses. In several locations, experimental use of remedial/developmental courses which count in part toward college credit and graduation requirements are being implemented. According to the Baltimore Sun, U.S. Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter, stressed recent progress in online learning, including the use of open online courses which are increasingly being used in postsecondary institutions. Kanter is a former Los Angeles Unified School District K-12 Board of Education President and is founder of an education professional development company which grew into a major professional development player.

Michigan Update

January 2013

A Stanford University study has found that students in Michigan charter schools out-performed traditional schools gaining an additional two months more in reading and math. In Detroit charter schools, students gained about three months of additional learning over the academic year in math and reading more than their traditional regular public school students. The study compared charter schools and traditional public schools which were similar in terms of demographics such as race, reduced price lunch, English learner status, special education status, and other characteristics. The data analysis was focused on academic performance between 2005 and 2010. As reported in the *Charters & Choice* blog on Education Week, 35 percent of Michigan charter schools had significantly higher gains in reading than public schools, with only two percent significantly worse. In the area of math, 42 percent out-performed public school counterparts, while six percent of charter schools performed worse.

An Associated Press post in Education Week (December 26th) reports Michigan school enrollment declines, especially in the Detroit area, are driving districts into debt, forcing districts to make cuts to avoid greater financial disaster or a State takeover. Between 2008 and 2012, enrollment declined 17 percent in Macomb, Oakland, Wayne County School districts, while Highland Park enrollment declined 69 percent and Detroit dropped 29 percent. A total of 20 Detroit-area districts had double-digit enrollment losses. The declines are a result of lower numbers of live births in Michigan (down nearly 16 percent over the last ten years), and the economic slowdown, which has prompted some adults to leave the State taking their children with them. Overall, 51 out of 83 districts in the Detroit tri-county region lost students. Declines in enrollment cost Detroit area districts millions of dollars in State aid, requiring continuing cuts in programs and staff.

Minnesota Update

January 2013

In January, a plan developed by Minnesota Department of Education officials will be submitted to the legislature which would align high school assessments with college-readiness measures, provide for dual enrollments, and provide targeted interventions for high school students not ready for postsecondary education. According to Whiteboard Advisors Weekly (December 21st), “It would also better align students’ education plans with workforce needs.”

The Rochester, Minnesota school district is upgrading its technology with plans to purchase over 4,000 computers, 20 percent of which would be portable devices and mini laptops. The Board previously tried to use the funds to purchase thousands of iPads, but that component was not approved by the State Department of Education, which suggests that the source of funds included some Federal funding for interventions under initiatives such as Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants, or State waiver interventions for Priority Schools.

Nevada Update

January 2013

According to Whiteboard Advisors, the Nevada Teachers and Leaders Council has recommended a teacher evaluation framework which includes student growth (35 percent of the evaluation), reducing gaps (ten percent) and student proficiency (five percent), with the rest of the evaluation based on teaching practices and professional responsibilities. Portfolio reviews and student surveys would also be used. The evaluation system would be in place next school year. The State Board of Education will now determine how to select evaluators and train them to remain impartial.

New Jersey Update

January 2013

Education Week's Curriculum Matters blog notes that New Jersey has joined Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio in establishing a Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship program designed to increase the number of high-quality teachers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields, particularly in high-need schools. Evidence suggests that New Jersey colleges overproduce elementary teachers but underproduce middle- and high-school STEM teachers. Under the New Jersey program, fellows will receive \$30,000 stipends to use while earning masters degrees. They must then commit to teach in a high-need New Jersey school for at least three years. The program is supported by \$9 million in private grants from a number of foundations as well as the Educational Testing Service.

New Mexico Update

January 2013

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez is proposing a \$13.5 million reading skills development initiative for K-3, an increase over the \$8 million budget this year. About \$3 million would be used for early evaluations/assessments to identify students, and \$1 million for professional development, with the remainder to be requested for reading coaches and related services. Following the model used in Florida, where she once was a high-level education official, the Governor will also request that schools retain third-graders who cannot read proficiently before promoting them.

New York Update

January 2013

In his State of the State address, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo proposed a number of new initiatives to improve K-12 education in the State. Among the key elements of the Governor's education agenda are:

- expanded learning time by at least 25 percent through longer school days or calendars;
- expanded prekindergarten programs from 2 ½ to five hours per day, starting with high needs students;
- a master-teacher system through which teachers would serve as mentors for other teachers, and, based on student performance, could earn up to \$15,000 a year in additional pay; and
- more community schools that would provide healthcare and family counseling services.

As reported in the *State Ed Watch* blog on [Education Week](#), the New York Education Reform Commission has recommended that public K-12 schools extend the school day and use technology to facilitate the transition between high school and higher education. Currently, only 37 percent of the State's high school graduates are college-ready. The commission, which included State Commissioner John King and AFT President Randi Weingarten, also recommends using the Massachusetts Extended Learning Time initiative as a model for extended learning time, raising the minimum GPA for admission to teacher and principal preparation schools from 2.75 to 3.0, expanding alternative teaching certification programs, and instituting a "bar exam" for principals and teachers.

[Education Week's Digital Education](#) blog notes that the New York City school system is staging a competition -- called "The Gap App Challenge" -- to design apps and games that can help middle school students acquire math skills. The competition is part of the City's Innovation Zone program, begun in 2010-11, which tests innovative ideas for self-paced, customized learning. Supported by funding from private sources, the competition expects to make nine

awards this round totaling \$104,000.

Ohio Update

January 2013

According to Education Week, the reduction in State education funding over the last decade has resulted in fewer full-time teachers in Ohio's public school classrooms. State data show that the number of full-time public school teachers in Ohio schools has dropped from more than 115,000 in 2001-02 to about 109,000 in 2010-11 -- a six-percent drop. State officials see no sign that the trend will be reversed as State funding continues to fall, property tax revenues also decline, and voters are reluctant to approve new taxes in the midst of a struggling economy. Governor John Kasich has urged schools to pool resources in such areas as transportation, technology, and administration.

In late December, Governor Kasich signed into law HB555 which relates to the State's accountability requirements. Starting in the current school year, the State will give grades to districts and schools and next school year (2013-14) schools will be assigned an overall letter grade based on 15 measures (including graduation rates, standardized test scores, etc.). The performance profile for each school will incorporate value-added (or alternative) academic progress measures as part of a teacher evaluation. The new law also calls for regulations governing applications for online schools and specifies approvals only for applicants demonstrating experience and quality.

Oklahoma Update

January 2013

As reported in Education Week's Rural Education blog, Oklahoma has achieved success with its universal pre-K model for offering high quality services to a high number of youngsters. This national designation is based on an article in *The American Prospect*. It's noteworthy because Oklahoma, a rural, conservative state, has been able to enroll 74 percent of the state's four-year-olds, while being ranked ninth in terms of resources it spends. In particular, the article further explains the political challenges in expanding early education funding in the face of declining budgets and lower population growth in rural Oklahoma.

Washington Update

January 2013

The Seattle Times reports that the Washington State Supreme Court has ruled that the State legislature is not providing enough money for K-12 education as required by the January 2012 McCleary school-funding lawsuit. Faced with large budget deficits, State lawmakers, earlier this year, cut \$300 million in State K-12 funding. The Court has given the Legislature until 2018 to fix the education shortfall, but is requiring annual reports that “demonstrate steady progress.” It is estimated that the Legislature will have to fund \$2.5 billion during the early 2013 session -- \$1 billion to close the budget gap and \$1-1.5 billion to satisfy the McCleary decision.

West Virginia Update

January 2013

According to State Line, a new service on the New Center on States, recently deposed West Virginia Superintendent Jorea Marple plans to sue the State Board over her surprise November dismissal. Former Superintendent Marple has been a strong advocate for the use of technology and has spoken before some industry-sponsored conferences, including SIIA last March, as previously reported in our State Profile Update. Marple has sent a letter to the State Board requesting to be immediately re-instated, compensated for her damages, and cleared of any wrong doings or given a full hearing at which the Board would be required to present “competent admissible evidence” to support her firing.

The Reconnecting McDowell initiative has reported on progress on the multi-year effort to turn around one of the poorest districts in West Virginia. Broadband Internet services in all schools and 10,000 homes are now available. As Education Week (January 7th) reports, progress is being made in implementing family literacy centers, after-school programs, and a new juvenile drug court. Plans for the future include creating a teacher “village” and increasing recreational, dining, and shopping choices for residents of McDowell County.

Wyoming Update

January 2013

The Wyoming Senate has passed a bill which would remove the State Superintendent of Public Instruction as head of the State Department of Education and would transfer nearly all superintendent duties to a new office under the Governor, as reported in Education Week (January 15th). The Office of the State Superintendent would become largely ceremonial. While Wyoming is a small state, it has been virtually untouched by the economic recession nationwide with per-pupil expenditures increasing over the last decade. While it accepted some stimulus funding, as we have reported over the last several years, some of its ARRA “buckets” remained unspent in September 2012.