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MEMORANDUM

O October 25, 2002
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TechMIS Subscribers

FROM: Charles Blaschke

SUBJECT: Special Report, Funding Alert, Washington Update and State Profile Updates

The TechMIS Special Report of October 11, 2002, regarding a summary of the September NAFEPA conference has been updated and is enclosed. While the acting director, Jackie Jackson, felt that final Title I regs would be available as early as mid-November, it may be later, particularly if there is a shift in the majority in either the Senate or House as a result of the November election. The NAFEPA spring legislative conference will be held in April in Washington, D.C., and could provide a good opportunity for exposure and networking for some TechMIS subscribers.

The revised News Alert, also sent out earlier, is also enclosed. This explains why the vast majority of the districts that receive the largest increases in Title I funds this year received a much smaller percentage of their Title I funds in July than they expected. Once the districts receive their remaining funds, which for some could be as high as 80-90 percent of their total, they should begin purchasing products and services.

The Washington Update includes a number of items:

- A new NCES survey on Internet access finds that significant progress is being made in high-poverty schools' use of broadband connections and Internet-accessible computer:student ratios, much of which can be attributed to the E-rate initiative.

- Secretary Paige denies that the University of Oregon list of assessments for Reading First is an official USED approved list, as we questioned in the [September TechMIS Washington Update](#).
- Recent articles and polls suggest growing opposition to certain No Child Left Behind provisions, suggesting changes will be made through waivers or technical amendments, or through the regulatory process after the November elections.
- Pro-school choice advocates are deriding public schools for placing obstacles before parents to minimize their exercising choice options under Title I, as reflected in the entire October issue of [School Reform News](#).
- The November House and Senate elections could result in several scenarios, one of which suggests some good news.
- Review process for “whole school” models under way for possible selection for Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Act grantees. However, review of supplemental products will not be considered with HOTS and other such products being deleted from the catalog of school reform models.
- New ESEA provisions affecting English language learners suggest an early reality check is needed to minimize the major future problems, based upon data gathered by Course Crafters Inc.
- Unfair “government competition” with software publishers appears to be thriving under the Bush Administration, much more so than under the Clinton Administration.
- New survey finds that 12-17 year-old students believe online learning needs more instructional activities relating daily life to what is learned.
- New TEACH law will expand “fair use doctrine” to take into account digital distance learning which will be welcomed by educators; however, increased protection measures may present a problem for them.
- New survey by Congressional Democratic staff shows 45 of 50 states are projected to cut \$6.7 billion in state funds for this school year, using inflation and enrollment increase adjustments which “camouflage” an increase of actual K-12 spending of \$4.7 billion.
- The influential Progressive Policy Institute recommends alternative means of Federal support for renovation and infrastructure upgrades while modifying the QZAB program initiated by the Clinton Administration, indicating that many states will have millions of dollars which have been yet to be issued to districts.

- School and Libraries Division of USAC issues new list of eligible services under E-rate which should be reviewed on the USAC website by most TechMIS subscribers.
- The Student's Bill of Rights Act of 2002 (S. 2912) would require that disparities be removed among wealthy and poor schools and districts in terms of resources, including access to similar levels of technology.

In preparing the individual state profile updates, we contacted appropriate state officials on issues relating to Title I and Reading First, as well as a couple of items also covered in Title I Reports. While some of the state information reflects highlights of articles in Education Technology News or Education Week, most of the state and other information was gathered directly from new reports and their authors. Interviews were conducted with USED officials, key House and Senate committee staff persons and Washington education lobby groups regarding Title I and other policy and regulations. Numerous meetings on relevant topics were attended in late September and October by TURNKEY staff.

Several trends appear to be occurring among the states including:

- An increasing number of states, under the threat of lawsuits, are instituting official or unofficial policies relating to ensuring that students and staff with disabilities have access to technology, similar to the Section 508 technology accessibility standards which went into effect at the Federal level or a year ago. (See Missouri update)
- SEA officials have been fairly effective in reducing the number of schools targeted for improvement, especially those failing for three consecutive years, thereby reducing the demand for supplemental services in certain states. On the other hand, in some states, such as Georgia, a large number of approved supplemental service providers are districts that do not want Title I funds to flow outside the district to third-party supplemental service providers.
- With only a few exceptions, State Reading First applications which have been approved thus far follow the April USED Reading First nonregulatory guidance in terms of the range of reading approaches and alternative assessment instruments; applications from some states that have been approved are on their websites along with lists of the districts and schools which are eligible to apply for Reading First subgrants (which, for the most part, will not be funded until next spring or summer).
- Lack of consistent and clear guidance from USED on implementing No Child Left Behind, Title I, and other major provisions continues to create uncertainty among most Title I SEA officials which, in turn, is reflected at the district level continuing varying degrees of market paralysis. However, release of 70-90 percent of withheld Title I funding during the second week of October should be a precursor to the beginning of the major Title I purchasing cycle.

Also attached is our recently revised TechMIS agreement.

If anyone has any questions contact me directly.