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PLS Responds to Revised K-12 Education Law

No child left behind. National policymakers put some muscle behind this mantra with their approval of the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in January 2002.

The revised ESEA promises billions of additional federal dollars for K-12 schools—along with increased flexibility in how the funds can be spent. The revised law will also increase pressure on schools to prove that they're helping all students to meet high academic standards.

Dr. Susan P. McKee, president of Pace Learning Systems, Inc., notes that the company has been closely monitoring changes in federal policy. "We are fully prepared to help schools and systems in their efforts to leave no student behind."

Pace Learning Systems are targeted to meet students' individual needs, and have proved to be highly effective in helping students who struggle. The systems provide constant feedback on student progress, a feature that educators have praised for years.

Demanding Adequate Progress

The revised ESEA requires annual statewide testing in reading and mathematics for all students in grades 3-8 by the 2005-6 school year. By 2007-8, schools must add testing in science at three points in students' K-12 careers: once in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12.

Test results will be broken down in terms of student race/ethnicity, gender, income, disability, and English proficiency to ensure that schools are helping all groups to make adequate academic progress.

Schools and systems that are unable to make adequate progress will, over time, face consequences intended to help them to restructure and improve their teaching approaches. Also, students attending such schools will be able to transfer to other public schools in their districts. Students at schools in the second year of school improvement will have the option to apply Title I funds to private- or public-sector tutoring services.

Increased Flexibility & Other Major Changes

School systems will now have the ability to transfer up to 50 percent of funds within major ESEA programs. States will also have more flexible use of up to 50% of their state activity funds.

This increased flexibility is intended to allow more strategic use of federal funds, in order to meet specific local challenges. States and systems can opt to transfer this money into the Title I program, which serves the nation's most disadvantaged children. However, no funds may be transferred out of this program, since Title I efforts play a central role in "leaving no child behind."

Also, competitive Local Flexibility Demonstration Programs will allow a limited number of school systems to consolidate all non-Title I federal aid in order to meet local goals. A similar program will be available at the state level.

The revised ESEA also reveals a heightened federal commitment to improving reading instruction, teacher quality, and bilingual education.

from the top

Pacesetter

Purpose

To inform educators of new product developments from Pace Learning Systems and to highlight exemplary educational programs. To update educators on current trends in assessment, curriculum, and instructional design.

Pace Learning Systems, Inc.
3710 Resource Drive
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

205-758-2823

800-826-7223

FAX: 205-758-3222

e-mail:

info@pacelearning.com

Web site:

www.pacelearning.com

Editor

Braden Phillips-Welborn

Graphic Artist

Marcia A. Smith

Contributors

Deanna Crosson

Susie Smith

Paul Nichols

About the Pacesetter

The Pacesetter is published two times each year.

Subscription rate: \$6

Send manuscripts, stories, and pertinent information to the Editor.

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A letter from the President Susan P. McKee, Ph.D.

Dear Friends:

In 2002, Pace Learning Systems celebrates a landmark anniversary, our 25th year of service. We attribute our success to our willingness to learn—we are constantly refining our existing learning systems to meet educators' needs. That's why our customers are so loyal—like your students, PLS is always improving.

Exciting changes are ahead for our company. We're enthusiastic about working with the newly-created PLS Customer Advisory Board, composed of experienced educators who will provide us with guidance. (See page 6 for a partial list of Customer Advisory Board members).

We're looking forward to the changes made possible by technological advances. The fourth rendition of our learning software, PaceWare® 4.0, will run on both local and wide area networks. (See page 4.) We are also developing a more sophisticated web-based version of PaceWare®, which has a tentative release date of 2003.

Finally, we're excited about honoring your success through the new Pace Learning Systems Scholarship fund. PLS will provide scholarships of \$500 to five students who have made significant progress with our learning systems. Each educational program that sponsors a winning recipient will receive a \$500 PLS product voucher.

Join us in celebrating our silver anniversary by learning more about the new scholarship program at www.pacelearning.com. This new program exemplifies PLS's belief in learning through success. By working together, we can help to ensure that no student is left behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan P. McKee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

success stories

Richard Rojas

As an instructional assistant in the GED/VESOL laboratory at a southeastern community college, Richard Rojas uses PaceWare® on a daily basis. He knows the software and its features. He knows his students—their fears, hopes, and obstacles. How does he know all this—long-held computer savvy and decades of experience in teaching adult learners? No way. Richard Rojas knows because he's been there.

In January 1999, Richard Rojas walked onto his college's campus as a 51-year-old former high school dropout, anxious about earning his GED.

Rojas met his goal, thanks to his own perseverance, inspirational instructors, and PaceWare®. He followed his GED with college study. He will soon graduate with an associate's degree.

The details of Rojas's life underscore the extraordinary nature of his accomplishments. Rojas flew to America without his parents at the age of 12 as part of the Pedro Pan program, which transported over 16,000 students from Cuba to the United States in the early 1960s.

Eventually, Rojas's parents were able to join him, but his father died within a year of arriving in America. Rojas, discouraged by his father's death, found it difficult to adjust to the pressures of school. He dropped out after the ninth grade, running away to California.

Years passed. Rojas raised a family, eventually moving to the Southeast. He struggled with a serious illness throughout the 1990s, until a nonprofit organization stepped in to provide the healthcare he needed. "In January 1999, I stopped making funeral plans," Rojas noted, "and started believing I'd live to see my five-year-old granddaughter's wedding."

While Rojas had successfully provided for his children, he knew that he had not adequately prepared for his own future. As a fluent speaker of both Spanish and English, he sought a position as a court interpreter. However, he learned that the position required a GED.

"I knew I had to get that GED," Rojas recalled. He learned of a new GED-VESOL program at a nearby community college. The program used PaceWare®. Soon, Rojas found himself seated in front of the first computer he'd ever touched, learning how to click a mouse.

"I was a computer-illiterate 51-year-old who had not been in school in 33 years. I was terrified," he remembered. He remembers being surprised by the user-friendliness of PaceWare®. He was motivated by knowing how much progress he had made during each session.

Rojas made rapid academic gains. "I began the program in January of 1999. By April, I had passed the GED test and was holding a diploma. By August, I was sitting in my first college class."



Richard Rojas

Rojas's graduation from the new GED program wasn't the end of his experience with PaceWare®. In December 1999, he was hired as a tutor in the GED laboratory. In 2001, he became an instructional assistant, and he currently serves as the night-time manager for the lab.

The GED/VESOL preparation program continues to use PaceWare®. As an instructor, Rojas appreciates being able to monitor the progress of each individual student who is using the software.

Upon receiving his associate's degree, Rojas plans to continue his own education by pursuing a bachelor's degree in educational administration. He hopes this will lead to a career in adult education.

Rojas's enthusiasm for learning is contagious. "When I find a student who has potential, I try to

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PaceWare® 4.0 To Be Released

For years, educators nationwide have relied on Pace Learning Systems for effective, up-to-date tools that help them to reach struggling learners. By mid-2002, Pace Learning Systems will release PaceWare® 4.0, a new generation of this educational software.

Like previous versions, PaceWare® 4.0 focuses on helping students to learn through success. The software aims to meet each student's individual needs, encouraging steady progress. PaceWare® 4.0 addresses five content areas: Reading, Language, Basic Math, Advanced Math, and Employability Skills.

PaceWare® 4.0 offers numerous advantages over previous versions:

- Introduces new security features at the administration-level, teacher-level, and assistant/substitute/student-level
- Allows more simultaneous users (capability to support up to 200 users)
- Provides mastery tests that change test item order with each new administration
- Increases database stability and reduces the chances of data loss
- Improves networking performance

The software's user-friendliness is also enhanced by several new features:

- Offers consistent maneuverability through lessons in all content areas by grouping all operation buttons in a lesson at the lower right-hand corner of the screen
- Eases re-entry to lessons and tests by returning students to the lesson frame or test item they left off previously
- Permits use of a keyboard or a mouse when students are answering test questions

Other new features of PaceWare® 4.0 include enhanced reporting, tracking, and archiving of student information.

PaceWare® 4.0 requires a Microsoft Windows 32-bit operating system for the client, or student, portion of the application. Educational institutions may use their own servers or an intranet environment for traditional client/server based operations. For the server portion of the application, the institution may choose from Microsoft Windows NT or Windows 2000, Linux distributions, Solaris, or HP-UX. Sites with Citrix and/or Microsoft Terminal Servers may opt to deliver PaceWare® 4.0 via the Internet.

PLS Explores Internet Delivery

For decades, educators have struggled to reach students whose jobs, health, or family responsibilities conflicted with institutional schedules and locations. Increasingly, educators look to technology as a tool for meeting these challenges.

Florida adult education professionals are exploring possible solutions with an innovative pilot project. The Demonstration Project for Florida's Online Delivery Systems involves Internet-based instruction for GED preparation.

This effort, spearheaded by the Florida Workforce Development Department and the Adult Education Program, began with the creation of a taskforce including representatives from corrections, adult education, community colleges, vocational preparatory instruction, and workforce development. The task force's objectives include:

- Determine the feasibility of offering GED preparation via the Internet
- Explore available software
- Identify the logistics of implementing Internet instruction on a large scale.

Four national software companies are collaborating with the task force: Pace Learning Systems, NovaNet, SkillsTutor, & Plato. Educational facilities were matched with these companies, and each company has provided free software and technical support for 150 of the 600 users involved in the project. Student success rates and teacher feedback are being tracked by an objective evaluator.

Florida sites that have been matched with Pace Learning Systems are using the Beta version of PaceWare® 4.0, the first version of Pace Learning Systems software that can be delivered over the Internet.

According to Dr. Susan P. McKee, Pace Learning Systems views the project as a mutually beneficial partnership with adult education professionals and students. "We expect high rates of success for students who are using PaceWare® 4.0. We also know that this will be a learning experience for us. We are always striving to make our software more user-friendly."

PLS plans to kick Internet-based efforts into high gear with the 2003 release of PaceWare® 5.0, which will be totally Internet-driven. PaceWare® 5.0 is expected to enable even more educational institutions to surmount the barriers of time and place. Subscriptions for home-based learners will be available, and institutions will be able to purchase PaceWare® 5.0 for use on their own server systems.

PaceWare® 5.0 will support a Microsoft Windows 32-bit operating system as well as MAC/OS 9 and higher, Linux, and BEOS. PaceWare® 5.0 will run on virtually any Microsoft or UNIX server hardware platform and modern operation system, as well as IBM OS/400 and OS/390 operating systems which have been updated to Java 2 Enterprise Edition.

If you would like to share teaching strategies, PaceWare® tips, ideas for using PLS products, or other insights, complete the online form at www.pacelearning.com/ps2401.html, or call us at 800-826-7223, ext. 37.

new strides for pacesetters

PLS Customer Advisory Board

Our newly-formed Customer Advisory Board will provide PLS with advice about how we can better help you reach struggling students. The feedback of these experienced educators will guide us in improving our products and services. PLS Customer Advisory Board members will offer their expertise on an unpaid, voluntary basis.

Mrs. Candace Burch
Region I Education Program Manager
River Junction Work Camp
Chattahoochee, FL
Program: Adult Corrections

Ms. Maria Maggio
Curriculum Supervisor
Monroe City Schools
Monroe, LA
Program: Alternative, Testing, Remediation

Mr. Jim Keeley
Director, Juvenile Institutional Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Dillsburg, PA
Program: Juvenile Corrections

Dr. Joyce Sellers
Superintendent
Tuscaloosa County Schools
Tuscaloosa, AL
Program: K-12

Mrs. Jean King
Director
Rankin County Adult Learners
Brandon, MS
Program: Adult Education

Mr. Wade Smith
Director
Mountain Education Center
Blairsville, GA
Program: Alternative

Ms. Renee Klosz
VPI Manager
Lindsey Hopkins Technical Center
Miami, FL
Program: Adult Education

Mr. Bob Swanson
Director
Tullahoma High School
Tullahoma, TN
Program: Alternative

Dr. Tim Lull
Superintendent
Opp City Schools
Opp, AL
Program: K-12

Ms. Patti Thomas
Director
Harrison Alternative School
Harrison, AR
Program: Alternative

Interested in being part of the PLS Customer Advisory Board? If so, contact Shelly Justice at (800) 826-7223, ext. 42.

"My students react positively to PLS products, which cover relevant material and push students toward success. As a customer, I appreciate the excellent support and service that Pace Learning Systems offers." -- Renee Klosz

"I believe that PLS offers an educationally sound program for students who have found the traditional route to be difficult. Our students using PLS products have learned that they can learn."

-- Maria Maggio

"PLS products are useful in a corrections environment. They are ideal for one-room schoolhouse situations in which all grade levels are gathered together, because they help you select the materials each individual student needs."

-- Candace Burch

Revised Education Laws *continued from page 1*

Providing Additional Resources

The injection of billions of dollars into the nation's schools began immediately upon approval of the law. Federal education funding under the revised ESEA amounts to over \$22.1 billion for fiscal year 2002 (which began in October 2001), an increase of 27 percent over 2001 funding.

The Title I program of the ESEA, which focuses on fostering academic success among America's most disadvantaged students, will receive \$10.35 billion under the 2002 budget, an increase of some \$1.6 billion over last year. Furthermore, the Title I funding formula has been altered to benefit schools that have high concentrations of disadvantaged students.

Richard Rojas *continued from page 3*

encourage them to work towards getting a college education. I remind them how I could've been making great money for 33 years, instead of struggling financially. I remind them how important it is to work for a decent retirement. So far, 10 to 12 of the students I have encouraged are now enrolled in college."

Rojas points to the inspiration of his instructors and to PaceWare® as key factors in his success. "I think PaceWare® is wonderful," he noted, "maybe because I was able to use it even though I didn't know anything about computers."

Nothing Teaches Like Success

Increased federal investment in our nation's schools promises to yield exciting results. However, the revised ESEA will be only as powerful as the educators who meet its challenges. For 25 years, Pace Learning Systems has served teachers who are dedicated to leaving no student behind.

"Our nation's educators have never had time for guessing games," Dr. Susan McKee notes. "Federal pressure to reach every child only intensifies the importance of proven practices. Pace Learning Systems recognizes this pressure. We want to help by continuing to offer products that identify and target struggling students' individual needs, then meet those needs. We know that nothing teaches like success."

If you would like to receive future issues of *Pacesetter* by e-mail, please complete this form and mail to PLS, 3710 Resource Dr., Tuscaloosa, AL 35401. You can also reply by sending the information via e-mail to info@pacelearning.com.

Name _____ E-mail _____

Institution _____

Address _____

To request that we send *Pacesetter* to a colleague, send this information to us at PLS, 3710 Resource Dr., Tuscaloosa, AL 35401, or via e-mail to info@pacelearning.com.

Colleague's Name _____

Institution _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Calendar of Events

Look for a PLS representative at the following conferences and workshops this spring.

Conferences

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| March 1 - 3, 2002 National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASPP) Atlanta, GA | June 4 - 7, 2002 Florida GED/Adult Secondary/VPI Symposium Cape Canaveral, FL | Myrtle Beach, SC June 23 - 28, 2002 South Carolina Summer Leadership Institute Myrtle Beach, SC |
| March 6 - 8, 2002 Florida Educational Technology Conference Orlando, FL | June 6 - 7, 2002 Mississippi Adult Education--South Natchez, MS | June 23 - 26, 2002 Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) Birmingham, AL |
| March 25, 2002 Palm Beach Technology Conference Boynton Beach, FL | June 10 - 12 Improving Schools Biloxi, MS | June 23 - 26, 2002 Arkansas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (AASCD) Hot Springs, AR |
| April 10 - 12, 2002 North Carolina Association of Adult and Continuing Educators Atlantic Beach, NC | June 12 - 14, 2002 Texas Association of Secondary School Principals Austin, TX | |
| May 8 - 11, 2002 Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Charleston, SC | June 13 - 14, 2002 Mississippi Adult Education--North Mayhew, MS | |
| May 2002 (date TBA) Region VIII Correctional Educators Conference TBA | June 13 - 14, 2002 Alabama Adult Education Conference Birmingham, AL | |
| | June 13 - 15, 2002 South Carolina Adult Education | |

Schedule a workshop or training session for your school or institution. Call 800-826-7223 for details!

“Nothing Teaches Like Success”

Pace Learning Systems, Inc.
3710 Resource Drive
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401-7059

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