

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

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DC Hill Summit Empowers ESL Teachers and Administrators

Arlington, VA (2 July 2015) – Last week TESOL International Association hosted its annual Advocacy and Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., USA. Now in its 10th year, the event provides educators with an opportunity to learn grassroots advocacy techniques, receive updates on significant education policies impacting English language teaching, and meet with congressional leaders on Capitol Hill. In addition to the educational components of the event, attendees reap the benefits of building networks and alliances with one another.

The 2015 Advocacy and Policy Summit grew in attendance of both returning and new participants, resulting in 90 attendees from across the nation as well as a few from outside the United States.

“The growth of this program corresponds to an increasing need for better policies in English language teaching,” said TESOL Associate Executive Director John Segota. “In addition to advocating for policies that support TESOL educators and English learners, the TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit strives to equip teachers with advocacy skills that they can use in their schools and communities.”

The larger number of attendees meant more congressional meetings. The TESOL advocates met with approximately 125 congressional leaders and aids on Capitol Hill. A learning experience for English language educators, administrators, and their legislators, the meetings enabled the TESOL advocates to address important issues and provide policy recommendations that better support the field of English language teaching. Critical legislation discussed concerned the need for an increase in Title III funding, implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

“This opportunity to collaborate and annually meet with members of congress has proven to be very valuable to me, my school district and our affiliate,” noted Lori Menning of Wisconsin TESOL, who was attending the event for the fourth time. First-time attendee Joye Ryan-Jones of Arkansas expressed her motivations for attending: “As an ESL program specialist K–12 for the Springdale Public School district, I am primarily responsible for the advocacy and programming

of over 9,000 ELLs in our district. It is vital to keep abreast of all new policy and advocacy.”

The event keynote speaker was Dr. Libi Gil, Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director of the Office of English Language Acquisition at the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). In her presentation, she provided an update from her office on the current situation of English language learners in the United States. Next, Diane Staehr Fenner, author of [Advocating for English Learners, a Guide for Educators](#), provided an hour-long workshop on effective advocacy techniques. In the workshop, she asked attendees to discuss ways in which they can affect change in their schools and districts. Other speakers included representatives from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at DOE; the National Education Association; American Federation of Teachers; the Student & Exchange Visitor Program at the U.S. Department of State; and the Office for Civil Rights at DOE.

The event was sponsored, in part, by the [American Federation of Teachers](#), [Corwin Press](#), and [College Board](#).

For more information and photos from the event, visit [TESOL Advocacy](#).

About TESOL International Association

Founded in 1966, [TESOL International Association](#) is a professional community of educators, researchers, administrators, and students committed to advancing excellence in English language teaching for speakers of other languages worldwide. With more than 13,000 members representing 150 countries, TESOL fosters the exchange of ideas, research, and peer-to-peer knowledge, and provides expertise, resources, and a powerful voice on issues affecting the profession. Through professional development programs, its international conference, special interest groups, and publications, TESOL engages tens of thousands of professionals to collaborate globally and create a world of opportunity for millions of people of all ages who want to learn English. For more information, please visit www.tesol.org

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