



## Get Involved!

### VOICES CARRY

**M**ake a back-to-school resolution to get involved! Whether at the building, district, state, or federal level, make a commitment to advocate for education technology. Not only is it fun and a great teambuilding experience, it's a great opportunity for professional growth and personal reward—as you will be channeling your passion for your profession to effect positive change!

The successes we are beginning to see in the states and U.S. Congress in support of education technology policy and funding can be attributed to the more active role ISTE members and affiliate organizations are playing in the advocacy arena. Many ISTE members took their first advocacy step during the last school year at various affiliate conferences, the ISTE State Advocacy Capacity Building conference, the Washington Education Technology Policy Summit, and NECC 2007. Here are some things ISTE members just like you have done over the past year.

The Educational Technology Action Network booth traveled to three state affiliate conferences. Attendees at ASTE, MICCA, and TCEA could stop by the ETAN booth and send an e-mail letter to their members of Congress. “The booth became an integral part of the ASTE conference,” said Mary Wegner, ETAN co-chair for Alaska and Coordinator of Educational Technology, Elementary for the Anchorage School District. “There was a buzz throughout the conference, with 75 percent of attendees sending a letter, but more important, it helped allay the uncertainty about advocacy for our ASTE members. They discovered it’s fun, meaningful, and easy to get involved!”

After attending ISTE’s State Advocacy Capacity Building conference in April, the Louisiana attendees returned to their state enthused and with a set of action steps and goals. “We met face-to-face with state representatives and senators at critical junctures to explain what the legislation would mean to their local constituents,” said Bill Morrison, chief technology officer in Rapides Parish. Thanks to Bill and his colleagues’ hard work and partnership with ISTE, the Louisiana State Legislature passed a \$25 million educational technology funding bill—the most technology funding in the past 10 years!

ISTE members gathered in Washington D.C. and attended the CoSN/ISTE/NACOL/SETDA Washington Education Technology Policy Summit. Attendees learned firsthand about the most pressing issues in education technology in Congress, and had the opportunity to go to Capitol Hill to meet with their congressional delegation. Attendees were teamed up with others from their state, armed with talking points, and prepped on how to conduct these meetings.

We wrapped up the year’s activities with a successful ETAN booth at NECC 2007. More than 750 NECC attendees stopped by the booth and sent letters to Congress in support of education technology. Volunteers at the booth had a great time networking with each other and supporting the cause.

I hope these stories inspire you to take the next step to becoming an ed tech advocate. Get involved with your state affiliate organization, join the advocacy committee—and if there isn’t one, start one! And remember, ISTE is here to partner with you and help you on your advocacy journey. For more details, visit <http://www.iste.org/advocacy>. ■

#### By Hilary Goldmann

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