

## NEWS

For Immediate Release

TESOL Contact: John Segota  
+1 703-518-2513  
jsegota@tesol.org

Barry Pilson  
+1 703-518-2512  
bpilson@tesol.org

### TESOL International Association Members Hold Over 140 Meetings on Capitol Hill

*Alexandria, VA* (12 July 2017) – [TESOL International Association](#), the largest professional organization for English language teachers in the United States, held its [2017 TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit](#) 18–20 June. The event drew a record crowd of 110 English language professionals from 30 states to the U.S. capital to discuss numerous policy issues affecting English learners and English language teachers. On the final day of the summit, participants went to Capitol Hill for meetings with their legislators in the House and Senate to advocate for issues such as increased funding for key provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and passage of the BRIDGE Act, a bipartisan immigration reform bill. By the end of the summit, TESOL members had visited the offices of more than 140 Senators and Representatives.

The 2017 summit featured a variety of speakers, presenting on a number of key issues in the TESOL field, such as adult English language education, immigration reform, and national K–12 English learner initiatives. Giving the summit keynote, recently appointed Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director José Viana and Deputy Director Supreet Anand, of the [Office of English Language Acquisition](#) (OELA) at the [U.S. Department of Education](#), gave participants a full update on current OELA initiatives and progress reports for English learners across the nation.

In addition to OELA, representatives from the [Office of Career, Adult, and Technical Education](#) at the U.S. Department of Education, as well as the [Student & Exchange Visitor Program](#) at the [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#), each presented updates from their respective offices. The Summit also included presentations from the [American Federation of Teachers](#), [National Skills Coalition](#), and [Migrant Legal Action Program](#). Diane Staehr Fenner, author of “[Advocating for English Learners: A Guide for Educators](#),” gave a luncheon keynote highlighting the leadership skills needed to advocate for English learners during challenging times.

Following a full day of productive meetings on Capitol Hill, participants gathered one last time to cap-off the summit and share their congressional meeting experiences. Recounting her experiences from meeting with her California representatives in Congress, Danielle Pelletier enthusiastically said, “I’m hooked! I’ll be back next year. . . . I was amazed at how accessible Congressional offices are. This whole experience made me feel like I was being really helpful and participating in our democracy by sharing my story with [my elected officials].” Continuing the theme of civic responsibility, Brian Lemos of Colorado noted, “Walking away today gave me a

renewed sense of hope in our country’s participatory government and its system of checks and balances.”

TESOL gratefully acknowledges and thanks its strategic partner the [American Federation of Teachers](#) for their continued sponsorship of the TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit, as well as [Corwin Press](#) for providing complimentary copies of Staehr Fenner’s book to participants.

The TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit is held each June in the Washington, DC, area. For more information and highlights from this year’s event, please visit the [Advocacy & Policy Summit webpage](#).

***About TESOL International Association***

For more than 50 years, [TESOL International Association](#) has been bringing together the 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 12,000 members representing more than 160 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 learning programs, its international Convention, 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](#).

###