

RIASCD INFLUENCE COMMITTEE REPORT ON LEAP
September 14-16, 2008
WASHINGTON, DC

Report on LEAP, September 14 thru 16, Washington, D.C.

RIASCD Board members Judy Paolucci, Betty Calise, Ken DiPietro, and Bill Fasano headed to Washington, D.C. for LEAP.

In the opening General Session, Donna Brazille, political analyst for CNN spoke on public policy and the upcoming presidential election. Her session was well received. The second general session featured Tina Dove, ASCD's new Hill contact. Tina spoke about legislative advocacy work and some of the ASCD tools to help groups organize.

The third general session featured Frank Luntz, a pollster and analyst for Fox news, spoke on words that work: it's not what you say, it's what people hear. Following this was a session on communications presented by ASCD staffer Barbara Michelman. She spoke about working with the media and the use of the ASCD Toolkit on communications.

On Tuesday morning the group headed to the Hill and spoke with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Congressman James Langevin, Congressman Kennedy aide Mike Harney, and Senator Reed aide Scott Gerson.

The conversations focused on:

1. NCLB where we asked that in the reauthorization of ESEA/NCLB they incorporate multiple indicators of achievement, flexibility in the application of sanctions and interventions for schools in need of improvement, and increased professional development opportunities and incentives for teachers and school leaders.
2. High School Redesign where we discussed the GRADUATES Act (S. 1920/H.R. 3763). This bill provides flexibility for schools to personalize education, engage students and enhance workforce readiness through learning inside and outside the classroom; create mentoring or student support programs as early as middle school; and use formative assessments to inform learning and teaching.

Although receptive, the Rhode Island delegation continues to support attention being paid to the middle level as well as the high schools.

Presently, the chair of the Influence Committee is working with Betty Brito on an activity with the Rhode Island legislative leaders after the November election to promote our advocacy efforts.

Submitted by Bill Fasano