

# On Capitol Hill

## NSSEA Signs on to AEP Government Relations Partnership By Bill Singhaus

It is with great excitement that I wish to update you regarding your NSSEA Legislative Task Force's ongoing government relations program. I want to keep all members informed about our activities as well as current legislative issues.

In past Essentials publications we reviewed recent activities of the Legislative Task Force, defining the role and objectives of our group as well as our participation in the Association of Educational Publishers (AEP) Summit Capitol Hill. While in Washington D.C., the task force met, drafted and presented to your Board of Directors these recommendations for furthering our legislative initiative:

- Build Alliances with complementary organizations that are able to represent the needs of our diverse membership.
- Be a conduit to assess legislative issues

**THE TASK FORCE WILL FOCUS ON THE POTENTIAL ELIMINATION OF THE TEACHERS' \$250 TAX DEDUCTION, WHICH MAY HAVE A DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MANY OF OUR MEMBERS.**

to determine if they affect NSSEA members.

- Be a source for research initiatives that affect the marketplace.
- Increase the networking and knowledge base of the legislative process in order to influence outcomes.

At NSSEA's Fall Leadership Conference in Savannah, GA, the Board took action to: "Endorse all the recommendations of the Legislative Task Force. Ask them to continue identifying specific issues/opportunities to act on behalf of the members, making ad hoc recommendations to the Board on actionable items including fund-

ing requests. Increase member communication on the issues being addressed and how they are affected by them."

In our pursuit of alliances with organizations that have common interests, we have recently gained approval to enter into a formal government relations partnership with AEP. The AEP Government Relations initiative is designed to add legislative and public policy issues directly impacting the supplemental publishing industry. AEP's effort is led by a full time government relations director and includes targeted public policy consultants in Washington DC, and alliances with other strategic partners. Such alliances enhance the capacity of partners to affect favorable outcomes on key issues while minimizing the required investment for each party. Federal policy items currently being monitored by AEP include:

- The reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and its key provision, the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS).
- The 2007 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as No Child Left Behind, Scientifically – Based Research (SBR) requirements and issues related to Reading First.
- Federal Funding for Education
- Proposed US Postal Service rate increases.

As a Partner in the AEP government relations effort NSSEA and its members will receive:

- Access to the AEP Government Relations Plan.
- Ongoing Legislative tracking and updates through AEP online.
- Member access to the legislative section of AEP website as well as web briefings, position papers and marketing materials.
- Research on issues of concern such as the SBR requirement.
- Participation in ongoing Government Relations Committee meetings.
- An active role in the development of public policy positions.
- Developing relationships with policy-makers, legislators and/or Department of Education officials.

- Sign-on opportunities for letters and other activities that will increase the visibility of participating groups.

In addition, NSSEA will once again sponsor the Legislative Day held in conjunction with the AEP Summit in Washington, DC. Stay tuned for more details on how to participate in this key legislative event in June 2007.

In addition, the National Association of Wholesalers-Dealers, having a structured and funded legislative affairs group, welcomes our participation with their group and we will meet in the near future at their NAW Executive Summit in Washington, D.C. to identify joint opportunities.

There are two key issues our Task Force will continue to focus on over the coming months. First is the potential elimination of the teachers' \$250 tax deduction if Congress continues to fail the renewal of this important tax deduction for educators' out-of-pocket classroom supply expenses. This may have a direct economic impact on many of our members. Our 2006 Retail Market Awareness Study included a task force designed survey portion that sought teacher responses regarding their spending on classroom supplies in context with the tax credit. We will utilize this valuable information and communicate its importance in Washington.

Another important issue is the re-authorization of the landmark "No Child Left Behind". The re-authorization is in motion on Capitol Hill as both Senate and House committees work to draft revisions in this legislation. As this re-authorization process continues, NSSEA will work side-by-side with AEP and others to reshape key elements of NCLB.

We are an important participant in our country's educational system. The issues facing education need our input and influence. We must advocate our positions to assist with shaping and improving education and the economic markets, of which we are a part, that serve education. I appreciate everyone's support and look forward to bringing you future updates.

If you should have any questions, comments or wish to provide input regarding the legislative issues our association face, please feel free to contact me.

Bill Singhaus is Executive Vice President of Marsh Industries. Reach him at [wdsinghaus@marsh-ind.com](mailto:wdsinghaus@marsh-ind.com).