

## **SIIA HOSTS SUCCESSFUL DC EDUCATION POLICY SUMMIT AND ADVOCACY DAY**

On March 8-9, some 35 SIIA members attended this year's SIIA Ed Tech DC Fly-In, taking advantage of the opportunity to learn about key federal policies as well as advocate for federal education technology investment. The event was generously sponsored by SIIA member Texas Instruments.

The conference began with SIIA members visiting over 40 Congressional education leaders to inform them of how education technology is critical to addressing the No Child Left Behind Act and ensuring the nation's competitiveness. SIIA partnered with CoSN and ISTE for this advocacy day, thus enabling industry-education teams to deliver the message about the important federal role. Combined, some 150+ ed tech stakeholders visited more than 150 Congressional offices.

With the President and Congress focused this year on ensuring the nation's competitiveness (educationally and economically) in the face of the "flattening of the world," SIIA was pleased to provide a forum for SIIA members to better understand these issues. Senator John Ensign (R-NV), a member of the Senate education committee and the Senate's high-tech champion, spoke to SIIA member executives about his National Innovation Act and the important role of e-learning in ensuring a 21st century educational system. A panel of leading STEM education advocates then explained what they expected to come out of the Congress this year, with most concerned that funding may not be there to match the goals and promises.

After the first day's program closed with a panel on the prospects and implications of the pending Higher Education Act reauthorization (which Congress has been very slow to finalize), SIIA joined with the Education Industry Association (EIA) for a reception and dinner, providing an excellent opportunity for networking with colleagues and guests from the DC education establishment. Newly appointed House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman Buck McKeon (R-CA) keynoted the evening and shared his education perspective and agenda, as well as his recognition for the role of industry in meeting educational needs and goals.

The final core component of the program the next morning included two panels on NCLB implementation and reauthorization. Key Congressional staff predicted only marginal amendments to the law, but even that change is expected to take at least another two years to move forward. All acknowledged the important role of technology in addressing NCLB goals and requirements, while suggesting limited federal funding as a challenge for NCLB and technology's role. A panel of analysts and advocates then discussed some of the law's challenges and opportunities, including debate on whether a national curriculum was part of the solution. The meeting concluded with an SIIA policy committee meeting, before a small group met with some key U.S. Department of Education officials, including newly appointed technology director Tim Magner.

For more information, review the Fly-In agenda at <http://www.siiia.net/education/flyin06/> or contact Mark Schneiderman at [marks@siiia.net](mailto:marks@siiia.net).