

NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Representatives Activities and Responsibilities

The SLATE affiliate representative has the responsibility for **informing the SLATE Steering Committee about local political developments** which have a significant impact on the teaching of English, for encouraging membership in SLATE, for **keeping the affiliate up to date on SLATE news and advocacy issues and efforts**, and for **advising local decision-makers about NCTE policy**. These responsibilities can be carried out in the following ways:

- 1. Inform the SLATE Steering Committee about local education and censorship issues:**
 - a. Send an annual SLATE report describing local SLATE activities to NCTE, due May 1.
 - b. Send NCTE copies of bills pending in legislatures, articles on censorship challenges, and articles identifying local issues with significant impact on English teaching.
- 2. Acquaint others with SLATE:**
 - a. Distribute SLATE Starter Sheets to administrators and decision-makers in local area.
 - b. Include SLATE Starter Sheets or articles from the SLATE Newsletter in affiliate newsletters.
 - c. Organize a SLATE Committee within local affiliate.
 - d. Set up a display of SLATE materials at conferences and conventions.
 - e. Speak to groups about SLATE.
- 3. Advise local decision-makers about NCTE policies and positions:**
 - a. Get acquainted with NCTE resolutions, positions, and anti-censorship information, which are available on the NCTE website at www.ncte.org.
 - b. Invite local legislators and other decision-makers to local professional meetings.
 - c. Attempt to get a representative of the English language arts on the bargaining committee of bargaining agents (often teachers' unions).
 - d. Organize a local or area clinic focusing on how English teachers can improve communications with the public and their professional image.
 - e. Publish and explain NCTE policies in affiliate newsletters and publications.
 - f. Send letters outlining NCTE policies and positions to decision-makers who are considering a policy important to English teachers.
 - g. Make sure censorship challenges are reported to the NCTE censorship hotline (1-800-369-6283, ext. 3848) or on the NCTE website at www.ncte.org.
- 4. Initiate state-level legislation on key issues (e.g. censorship, class size):**
 - a. Find out what current legislation, if any, exists.
 - b. Seek models of good legislation from other states, and propose them to legislators.
NOTE: Model legislation is available from NCTE Headquarters on censorship challenge policy and class size.
 - c. Prepare an action plan that involves steps such as identifying a sympathetic legislator, setting up contact, etc. NOTE: NCTE headquarters can provide names of resource persons from other state affiliates that have initiated legislation via SLATE or other affiliate-based action. NCTE also has an Advocacy Handbook available upon request.
- 5. Recognize those who work for intellectual freedom by nominating them to receive the NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award** (forms available from Affiliate Office, NCTE, and due on May 1 of each year).

Suggestions for SLATE Activities

1. Recognize issues experienced in local classrooms -- those issues that are beyond individual control to remedy and which are not currently being resolved by the local district or administration, e.g., class size, too much time spent taking and preparing for tests. Check to see if others have similar problems and work with them to gather information on these issues (e.g., NCTE positions, SLATE starter sheets).
2. Make contacts with individuals in local schools, districts, affiliates, and eventually state so as to gradually develop a SLATE network.
3. If the local affiliate has a legislative committee or a lobbying agent, keep up to date on activities in the state legislature through that body or individual. If it doesn't, contact NCTE at slate@ncte.org or 1-800-369-6283, ext. 3634, for this information. Or, if another educational organization already has the machinery for a "legislative watch," cooperate with that body to achieve your ends. Remember that SLATE does not have to assume the responsibility for those jobs that others are willing to do. However, do keep the affiliate organization and SLATE apprised of legislative actions that are pertinent to language arts teachers.
4. Join the Education Advocacy Network by contacting NCTE at slate@ncte.org or 1-800-369-6283, ext. 3634.
5. Do establish and keep open communication lines with the State Department of Education so that the affiliate and SLATE can have current information regarding state educational activities and in order to suggest volunteers for state committees or to respond to issues.
6. Learn who the SLATE representatives are in contiguous or nearby states and communicate with them (call 1-800-369-6283, ext. 3634).
7. Learn current NCTE positions on issues. Know what resolutions were passed at the NCTE Annual Business Meeting in the last few years. Share the information with others through affiliate newsletters. All the NCTE resolutions and many position statements are available on the NCTE website at www.ncte.org.
8. Check the media for information that is important to English language arts teachers. See that colleagues are aware of the information. (For instance, have the librarian order copies of national commission reports and major studies of interest to language arts teachers or subscribe to one or more of the NCTE or other discussion lists or to an internet education news report.)
9. Provide suitable responses to the local media on educational issues that affect language arts teachers. (Request a copy of information on communicating with the public from NCTE.)
10. Provide the SLATE Steering Committee with suggestions for needed SLATE Starter Sheets, NCTE position papers, and NCTE resolutions.
11. Share news with others via the SLATE Newsletter. (Send news to SLATE Newsletter, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801 or slate@ncte.org)
12. Be a survey-taker. Survey local departments, districts, and the state on issues of concern to language arts teachers. Use the findings to devise position papers and resolutions that can be introduced at meetings of affiliates and NCTE.