



Florida Association of School Psychologist's Statement Regarding Recent Tragic Events and Loss of Lives

July 12, 2016

The Florida Association of School Psychologists wishes to express solidarity and our deepest sadness for the tragic loss of lives across our country. It has been one month since Florida was struck by the massacre at the Pulse Orlando Nightclub which left 49 victims dead and 53 injured. While our thoughts continue to be with the friends, families, and communities affected by this senseless act of violence that deeply affected the LGBTQ and Latino communities, our sorrow has grown further following recent fatal events involving two black males in Baton Rouge and St. Paul, and 5 law enforcement officers in Dallas.

We join the nation in mourning and outrage over violent acts against members of the human race that are fueled by bias, hate, and intolerance. We are also determined to be part of the solution as our country looks for ways to make a difference moving forward. The Florida Association of School Psychologists realizes the accumulation of events may leave children, families and communities traumatized and confronting physical and/or social-emotional challenges. As school psychologists, we are in a pivotal position to not only provide mental health support to Florida's children and families, but also to engage in a series of actions to help create a society that accepts and values our individual differences. The Florida Association of School Psychologists is resolute in our ongoing efforts to:

- Promote policies which ensure the dignity, safety, and access to opportunity of all children, regardless of their race; ethnicity; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; immigration status; socioeconomic status; primary language; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity; mental, physical, or sensory disability; or any other distinguishing characteristics.
- Strive to ensure that current and future school psychologists have and maintain skills to support the diverse strengths and needs of children and families.
- Provide professional development activities on cultural competency, tolerance, social justice, and diversity.
- Advocate for effective evidence-based and innovative educational and mental health services.
- Advocate for a culture of inclusion and safety in schools.
- Promote programs which encourage legislators, teachers, parents, and school administrators to create welcoming school environments free of bullying and harassment.
- Strive to ensure school psychologists are provided professional development activities in critical areas such as suicide and violence prevention, threat assessment, consultation and comprehensive problem-solving, and prevention and intervention services for all students

The Florida Association of School Psychologists urges other professional organizations, community groups, and any member of the American society to join forces with us to build a better world for our youth and future generations through education, communication, legislation, and appreciation for human life. Together we can be the change agent toward meaningful progress of acceptance and tolerance of all mankind.

History & Mission: First organized in 1957, the Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP) is one of the largest state school psychology associations in the nation. The mission of the Florida Association of School Psychologists is to promote and to advocate for the mental health and educational development of Florida's children, youth, and families and to advance school psychology in the state of Florida for the benefit of all students.