



Press Release

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The Florida Association of School Psychologists Expresses Grave Concern about the Continued Evaluation of Students in Florida

Tallahassee, Florida - The Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP) recognizes the unprecedented circumstances in which school professionals around the state find themselves.. These times of uncertainty can create anxiety not only for students and families, but also for school and district staff.

Districts are facing difficult decisions about how to continue to meet federal requirements surrounding comprehensive evaluations of children who may need special education services. Unfortunately, this has meant asking school professionals to conduct face-to-face evaluations of students who may have disabilities that make them vulnerable populations. These evaluations require sharing of materials and close contact. We have grave concern that these types of evaluations place both the evaluator, the student, and their families at risk of contagions. Additionally, this is in conflict with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control has recommended that [schools limit interactions that require close contact.](#)

In addition to the serious health risk these practices pose, conducting piecemeal evaluations as many districts have suggested is in violation of best practice and a number of the state's rules around comprehensive evaluations. There are no norms for how children perform in the face of a pandemic. We strongly recommend that schools do not base or make decisions about a child's needs from limited information or on their performance in a time of crisis.

We strongly recommend that Florida districts and educators **halt the continuation or initiation of evaluations and eligibility decision- making specific to any newly initiated evaluations since the onset of the Governor's order to close schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Further, we asked that the FLDOE hold harmless the districts who choose to protect the health of school professionals, students, and their families and maintaining best practices in comprehensive evaluations by suspending evaluations. We further recommend that educators and school psychologists not be penalized in any way for the discontinuation of face-to-face education, intervention, or evaluations during this time. We strongly encourage districts to evaluate the ways in which they are allowing their personnel sufficient time to attend to their family duties in addition to their professional duties during this time when schools are closed in a manner that protects everyone's health and well-being.

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