

Legislative Update from FASP Legislative Chair, Joshua Lutz :

As many are aware, both Houses of the state legislature passed their version of SB 6. Both bills have made many people very uncomfortable and are not good bills. These BILLS are LEADERSHIP bills, so they will move through the legislative process and will be sent to the governor. It is possible that the Governor could veto this legislation and the House and Senate would have to start over next year, with a new governor. Everyone should note that this election cycle the Governors race will be a very important race regarding the direction Florida will take on ALL issues in the future, especially EDUCATION. Nearly everyone involved with Education has had voiced their opposition to these bills, the DOE has supported this legislation as a way to support Race to the Top. We must also know that SB 6 does not take effect until 2014 so the rhetoric is that there is time to fix the stuff that will not work. There are no dollars within these bills that would support these very expensive ideas within the legislation. Also most if not all of the Florida papers have articles that have documented this BAD legislation (SB 6). Bob and John Cerra, our FASP lobbyists, have worked very hard to monitor and raise our objections to many issues in the legislation; unfortunately we must wait and see how this bill runs its course. If you have any question please do not hesitate to contact John Cerra @ cerraj@comcast.net.

Additionally, during the recent CEES conference in Tallahassee, representatives from FASP met with state representatives and legislators to express our concern and **opposition** to this bill. Unfortunately it has passed through the House and Senate committee process and will likely pass both bodies without much change with the current language proposed. Once the bill leaves the House and Senate the fate will rest with the Governor. FASP recommends that concerned members contact the Governor's office directly to urge his veto of this legislation. The governor's contact information can be accessed at http://www.flgov.com/contact_form. While emails are acceptable, hard letters and phone calls may get more attention and are more difficult to ignore/delete.

We also need to encourage our teacher friends to do this as well. If the governor does sign this FASP will be ready to help school psychologists on instructional pay scales develop and advocate for separate salary schedules. While this bill may not directly affect all school psychologists, it will at some point as we deal with the fallout with our teachers.

In other news, there was initially some concern with SB1902/HB 1319 which proposed to make some drastic changes in the Florida Retirement System. As of March 31, 2010, these bills have **not** been scheduled in any committees of reference and appear to be "stalled" at this point. FASP is continuing to monitor these issues to make sure that if they recur we will be able to address them. Remember that all bills relating to retirement only affect new hires and employees who have not vested in the FRS. If you are a vested member of the FRS this legislation would not have effected you retirement
FASP is against this bill in its current format

HB 0081/ SB2616: Relating to Use, Prevention, and Reduction of Seclusion and Restraint on Students with Disabilities in Public Schools – With the support of CEES, FASP and others, HB 81 was heard in committee and was amended in a manner that most if not all of our concerns have been addressed, the bill now has a new number and the language has been included in HB 1073 which relates to children with disabilities. Within the HB 1073 bill there is one area of concern that Bob Cerra addressed staff and the sponsor to help clarify which professionals can create a behavioral plan, right now the bill addresses only certified behavioral analyst, they have understood our recommendation to include school psychologists as a professional who can also provide this plan. We will work to make sure that school psychologists are able to provide this much needed service to the children.

SB 0434/ HB 1061:Relating to Suicide Prevention Education: FASP supports this bill. This bill is still hung up in committee and might have the ability to break through to the floor within the coming weeks. If it is not successful this year we anticipate that both sponsors would re-file the legislation and we will work to move it in the future.

Finally, FASP is looking for volunteers to help with the following tasks:

- Updating our position paper on Corporal Punishment
- Updating our position paper on the use of High Stakes Testing

We also need help to develop position papers on the following:

- Use of suicide prevention programs and screening
- Use of research based interventions
- Use of ABA by licensed school psychologists
- Best Practices in working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Best Practices in counseling students at the individual level

If there are any questions and to volunteer to help with the projects above, please contact me at jalutz74@gmail.com

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