

FASP MISSION

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 the profession of school psychology.

FASP Outstanding Legislator Awardees

2021 – Senator Lori Berman

2020 – Representative
Jennifer Necole Webb

2019 – Senator Kelli Stargel

Legacy Award for
Distinguished Service to
Children

2009 – Senator Eleanor
Sobel

The Executive Board of the Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP) can provide expertise and timely information to members of the Florida legislature and staff on a number of topics including general education, exceptional student education, grade retention and student progression, mental health of children and youth, suicide prevention, social emotional learning (SEL), multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS), progress monitoring, and supports for students struggling academically, emotionally, and behaviorally. For more information and resources, please contact the individuals listed under “FASP Contacts” below.

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INCREASE ACCESS TO MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

FASP supports legislation which seeks to ensure that students receive the social, emotional, and mental health supports that they need. School psychologists, along with their professional colleagues of school counselors and school social workers, are the qualified and credentialed professionals within schools to provide much needed mental and behavioral health supports to the approximately 1 in 5 students who could benefit from these services. School psychologists provide services to prevent mental and behavioral health issues, as well as interventions once issues arise, including crisis intervention and threat assessments. Furthermore, school psychologists create healthy school climates which are the most effective way of ensuring school safety. Research indicates that schools are the best place for students to receive mental health and behavioral supports because of equity and access for all students. In addition, FASP respects student privacy issues as clarified in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and supports legislation that affirms this right regarding mental health, Baker Acts, as well as for student academic and behavioral data.



INCREASE IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL WIDE DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

FASP stands with the Florida Association of School Administrators in opposition to the ineffective practices of suspension and expulsion, except in cases in which school safety is compromised. Florida removes more children from school for disciplinary reasons than any state in the nation and is a leader in the School to Prison Pipeline. Students with Disabilities and Black students are disproportionately negatively impacted by this exclusionary practice. School psychologists are highly trained in classroom and school-wide strategies such as Positive Behavioral Supports and are well versed to intervene with districts, schools, and students to improve student behavior, provide alternatives to suspension and expulsion which can improve academic outcomes, and help create safe schools. Similarly, FASP opposes the use of corporal punishment in the Florida districts who continue to utilize this ineffective, disproportionate, and harmful practice.

EXTEND AGE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Florida currently mandates that children through age 5 can receive educational services for students identified with Developmental Delays (DD) as addressed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. Federally, this classification and right is extended through age 9. FASP supports legislation that would extend the age that children can be classified as Developmentally Delayed so that children can receive the interventions, supports, and progress monitoring needed to be successful before

dismissal of services or classification under a different (and perhaps unnecessary) disability category when these critical decisions are made for children at too young of an age.

RECOGNIZE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY AS A CRITICAL SHORTAGE AREA

Florida is facing a crisis in filling school psychology positions throughout the state in order to achieve the 1 to 500 ratio of school psychologists to students as recommended by the National Association of School Psychologists. Currently, Florida has a ratio of approximately 1 school psychologist to every 2000 students. FASP advocates for more training lines at universities, and incentives for recruiting and retaining school psychologists. These incentives include paid internships in each of Florida's districts, competitive salaries to prevent losing school psychologists to neighboring higher paying states and identifying school psychology as a critical shortage area in statutes so that school psychologists can benefit (as do other professionals in critical shortage fields) from loan forgiveness and/or tuition reimbursement. School psychologists are necessary and valuable professionals to address the many critical issues facing Florida's 2.8 million students. FASP urges Florida's legislators to enact legislation to proactively address critical shortages so that school psychologists can efficiently and effectively address the academic, behavioral, and mental health needs of Florida's students and schools.



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