

Florida Association of School Psychologists 2024 Legislative Platform



FASP Mission

The mission of the Florida Association of School Psychologists is to promote and advocate for the mental health and educational development of Florida's children, youth, and families and to advance the profession of school psychology.

Contact Us

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, educational data, grade retention, and student progression, the mental health of students and youth, suicide prevention, social-emotional learning (SEL), multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), progress monitoring and supports for students struggling academically, emotionally, and behaviorally, and educational equity.

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FASP SUPPORTS LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO:

Increase Access to Mental and Behavioral Health

Florida, like the rest of the country, is facing a youth mental health crisis. FASP supports legislation that ensures students receive the social, emotional, and mental health supports that they need, including evidence-based Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs from which all students can benefit. School psychologists, along with their professional colleagues (e.g., school counselors and school social workers), are the credentialed professionals within schools to provide much-needed mental and behavioral health support to the approximately 1 in 5 students who could benefit from these services. Research indicates that schools are the best place for students to receive mental health and behavioral support 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 student academic and behavioral data.

Recognize School Psychology as a Critical Shortage Area

Florida is facing a crisis in filling school psychology positions throughout the state. We are far below the 1 to 500 ratio of school psychologists to students recommended by the National Association of School Psychologists. Currently, Florida has a ratio of approximately 1 school psychologist to every 2,000 students. FASP advocates for more incentives for recruiting and retaining school psychologists, such as paid internships in each of Florida's districts and competitive salaries to prevent losing school psychologists to neighboring higher-paying states. In addition, identifying school psychology as a critical shortage area in the Florida Statutes to allow service-based loan forgiveness and/or tuition reimbursement would provide school psychologists the same benefits that other professionals in critical shortage fields have. 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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FASP Outstanding Legislator Awardees

2023
Senator Keith Perry

2022
Representative Allison Tant

2021
Senator Lori Berman

2020
Representative Jennifer Necole Webb

2019
Senator Kelli Stargel

2018
Senator Kathleen Passidomo

2017
Representative Gayle Harrell

Legacy Award for Distinguished Service to Children

2009
Senator Eleanor Sobel

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 where student and staff safety and welfare are concerned. 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 that continue to utilize this ineffective and disproportionate practice.

Address Data Elements Related to School-Initiated Baker Acts

Currently, Florida's school districts are required to report the number of Baker Acts initiated on school property and/or during school-related activities annually to the Florida Department of Education. FASP asks the legislature to mandate additional fields to be included to enhance transparency, support to students, and systems change. These needed data elements include Baker Acts by race, grade, gender, disability/504 status, primary ESE exceptionality (if applicable), and outcome. In addition, FASP advocates for school psychologists to be included as professionals who can initiate a Baker Act at school, when necessary, as a response to a child in crisis.

Support Policies and Legislation Which Affirm the Rights of ALL of Florida's Students

FASP advocates for the educational equity and rights of all students and opposes legislation and policies that discriminate against students, their parents/guardians, and educators based on gender identity and gender preference. The LGBTQ+ population remains one of the most marginalized groups in Florida and is at increased risk for suicidal ideation and other negative outcomes. In alignment with their professional ethics and standards of practice, school psychologists remain steadfast in ensuring that schools remain a welcoming environment for all students and their families and that discriminatory practices which alienate students based on race, religion, gender, gender preference, sexual identity, and any other factor not be tolerated. Furthermore, FASP supports policies and practices that are aimed at decreasing racism and discrimination of any kind, particularly those which affect children and youth in schools.