



Florida Association of School Psychologists 2023 Legislative Platform

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.

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 that the legislature 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.

Create Policies and Funding Sources to Train, Recruit, and Maintain School Psychologists in Florida: 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 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 training lines at universities, as well as 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 removing barriers to hiring school psychologists (e.g., district caps on the number of years that can be brought in from other states). School psychologists are necessary and valuable professionals to address the many critical issues facing Florida's 2.8 million PK-12 students and are the required professionals within statute to provide the evaluations for many of the disability categories under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). 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.

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, conversely, 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.

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 support 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.

Increase Access to Mental and Behavioral Health: FASP supports legislation that seeks to ensure students receive the social, behavioral, and mental health supports they need and 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 supports to the approximately 1 in 5 students who could benefit from these services. Research indicates that school is 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.



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FASP Outstanding Legislator Awardees

Representative Allison Tant	2022
Senator Lori Berman	2021
Representative Jennifer Necole Webb	2020
Senator Kelli Stargel	2019
Senator Kathleen Passidomo	2018

Legacy Award for Distinguished Service to Children

Senator Eleanor Sobel	2009
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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; mental health and behavioral supports for students and youth; suicide prevention; multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS); progress monitoring; supports for students struggling academically, emotionally, and behaviorally; and educational equity. For more information and resources, please contact the individuals listed under "FASP Contact" below.

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