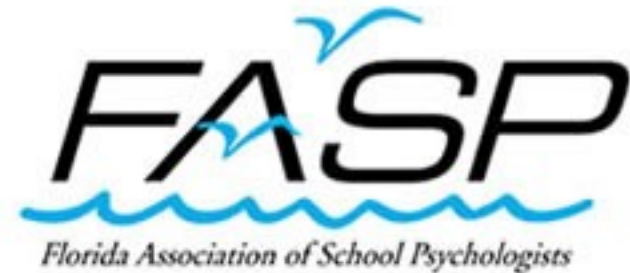


## FASP Outstanding Legislators Awardees

1999 Senator Lisa Carlton  
2000 Representative Gustavo Barriero  
2001 Senator Anna Cowin  
2002 Senator Walter “Skip” Campbell  
2003 Representative Lorraine Ausley  
2003 Representative Suzanne Kozmas  
2004 Representative Rafael Arza  
2005 Senator Evelyn Lynn  
2005 Representative Eleanor Sobel  
2006 Representative Joe Pickens  
2007 Senator Carey Baker  
2007 Representative Joe Pickens  
2008 Representative Nick Thompson  
2009 Senator Stephen Wise  
2010 Representative Bill Heller



## 2012 Legislative Platform

### Legacy Award for Distinguished Service to Children

2009 – Senator Eleanor Sobel

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First organized in 1957, FASP is one of the largest state school psychology associations in the nation. Although the vast majority of members live, work, or attend school in Florida, FASP also has members in 16 states and four foreign countries.

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

FASP Web Site: [www.fasp.org](http://www.fasp.org)

## FASP Priority Issues:

### Provide Reasonable Access to Services for Students

#### BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

School psychologists are certified/licensed professionals with specialized training in both psychology and education. School psychologists collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. School psychologists have an integral role in helping schools to implement Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) initiatives, to reduce disproportionality in Exceptional Student Education, and to draw down federal IDEA/Medicaid funds. Nationally, the recognized school psychologist to student ratio is 1 to 500-700, while in Florida the ratio of school psychologists to students is approximately 1 to 1800. Historical program cuts made to all public education in the state will make the ratio much worse unless the Legislature provides the strong leadership necessary to reverse this trend. Without access to the comprehensive services that school psychologists provide, children's academic and behavioral difficulties may go unrecognized and remain as barriers to successful learning and school completion. Furthermore, school psychological services are instrumental in helping Florida's schools to meet the high standards of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and IDEA 2004.

#### ACTION NEEDED

Provide funding for school districts to hire additional school psychologists as a cost-effective means to improve student performance and to strengthen the quality of Florida's schools. Moving toward the nationally recommended School Psychologist to-student ratio of 1:500-700 will assist Florida in meeting the high standards of NCLB and IDEA 2004.

### Alternatives to Retention and Social Promotion

#### BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Retention is mandated for most children who score poorly on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) at certain grade levels. However, retention and "social promotion" are frequently discussed as the only two options for these struggling learners. Research clearly indicates that neither retention nor social promotion is an effective method for assisting children with academic difficulties. Rather, more emphasis should be placed on preventing the failure from happening and on implementing evidence-based interventions for those who are falling behind. Early identification plays a critical role in preventing school failure, as does the universal application of scientifically validated curriculum and instruction. Children who continue to struggle will require intensive, empirically-supported interventions. Retaining or socially promoting a student in the absence of these interventions is costly and ineffective.

#### ACTIONS NEEDED

Effective, evidenced-based interventions should be mandated instead of grade retention or social promotion.

### Performance Pay

#### BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Florida has created several performance-based/merit pay plans over the years. Other pay plans or merit programs have come and gone without providing any demonstrable results for improving student performance. Attempts to implement performance pay should be evidence-based and monitored for efficacy or a similar fate will result.

#### ACTION NEEDED

Implement proven, evidence-based strategies to increase student performance and teacher quality, including systems that reward effective teaching across all components of the school setting using multiple indicators, including a value added model and not a single measure of performance.

### FASP Supports Legislation Which Promotes-

#### Access to a Full Continuum of School Psychological Services in Educational Settings

- Promote increased access to school psychological services for all children, not just those in special education or those in public schools.
- Promote increased access to Medicaid funding for behavioral health services.
- Ensure that all those who provide school psychological services are appropriately credentialed.
- Support continued high standards of credentialing of school psychologists by the Florida Department of Education.

#### Prevention and Intervention Services

- Implement suicide prevention programs in every Florida public and charter school.
- Replace corporal punishment in all Florida schools with interventions that have been proven effective in promoting desirable behavior.
- Increase early identification of and treatment for students' mental health problems.
- Assist students and their families with their mental health needs during difficult economic times by ensuring access to affordable mental health services.
- Provide support for families and community initiatives to promote readiness for kindergarten.
- Encourage interagency collaboration to address mental health needs of children and families.
- Give priority in funding to programs which are researched-based and which demonstrably improve collaboration between parents and schools.

#### Safe Schools and Safe Communities

- Fund additional student services personnel to implement violence prevention and school safety programs in every public school.
- Form cooperative violence prevention teams which include school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors.
- Promote constructive alternatives to external suspension and expulsion for all students.
- Provide interventions to increase school attendance and to improve graduation rates.

#### Access to School Psychological Services in the Private Sector

- Continue exceptional standards of legislative regulation of school psychologists under Chapter 490, F.S. to maintain a high degree of professionalism, safety, and cost effectiveness for the public.
- Promote insurance laws which provide third party payments for school psychological services.
- Provide for licensed school psychologists to become Medicaid providers.
- Provide for licensed school psychologists to become qualified evaluators for the Department of Children and Families.
- Clarify that licensed school psychologists who have requisite training are qualified to be court appointed as child custody evaluators.
- Provide parity in insurance coverage for mental health services.