



4/12/23

The Honorable Kathleen Passidomo
President of the Florida Senate
409 The Capitol
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear President Passidomo,

On behalf of the Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP), I wish to thank you for your years of advocacy for student mental health. Our FASP members know that in your year as Chair of the Senate Education Appropriations Committee, you proposed the creation of the student mental health allocation, which was later adopted by the full Legislature as one of the primary responses to the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas tragedy. We hope that you will be able to keep this allocation alive as a separate line item in the budget for districts where the spending requirement will also continue, and the expenditures closely monitored.

A budget proposal in the House (HB 5101) would eliminate almost all allocations from the school funding formula, and the student mental health allocation would be one of those to be eliminated as a specified allocation. While spending requirements remain in the House Bill, the history of similar "block grants" is that spending does not increase in the future and eventually the spending requirement is lost as well. Keeping the allocation separate allows the Legislature to specifically increase revenue toward the mental health needs of students in the future. Maintaining the allocation as a specific entity while enhancing the funding by \$20 million as both the Governor and Senate have proposed will provide increased mental health services to students. These increased opportunities for children would be extremely helpful while students are recovering from the impacts of COVID in our state.

As a former Florida Association of School Psychologists Legislator of the Year, FASP recognizes your legacy and contributions to this important issue from previous sessions and asks for your assistance in keeping and enhancing the student mental health allocation this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paula M. Lewis', written in a cursive style.

Paula M. Lewis, Ed.D.
President
fasppres@gmail.com