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March 22, 2023

The Honorable Keith Perry
Chair of the Senate Education Appropriations Committee
406 Senate Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Delivered Via Hand Delivery and Email Only

Dear Senator Perry:

On behalf of the Florida Association for School Psychologists (FASP), we wish to thank you for including the increase to the student mental health allocation within your Chair's Budget Proposal as was also Recommended by Governor DeSantis. Increasing this allocation will mean that desperately needed student mental health programs will be expanded, assisting in truly saving some children while making the school climate better for all students. FASP and our members hope that you and the Senate will be able to maintain this funding throughout budget negotiations.

The impacts of COVID, school closures, isolation and loss of educational opportunities over the past several years have disproportionately impacted school age children. Reduced academic performance and increased incidence of serious mental health issues in our school age population have been at crisis levels and need strong attention. Making a \$20 million increase to these services in the schools will provide a meaningful enhancement to student services that will pay dividends for years to come.

FASP is a 63-year-old association of school psychologists from around the state. We hold as our mission to support the mental health service needs of children, and this budget proposal would certainly advance that mission.

Thank you for your strong support for student's mental health needs. We stand ready to support this item surviving the budget process. If we can help you in any way, do not hesitate to contact us using the information below, or feel free to reach out to our Tallahassee lobbyist, Bob Cerra at (850) 212-6233.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate von der Embse".

Nathaniel von der Embse, Ph.D., NCSP, Co-Chair
FASP Public Policy and Professional Relations Committee
Nate.vonderembse@gmail.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela Mann".

Angela Mann, Ph.D., BCBA, Co-Chair
FASP Public Policy and Professional Relations Committee
angelamann@gmail.com

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.