

2015-2016 Mid-Year Report FSBA Federal Relations Subcommittee

Chair: Beverly Slough

Vice Chair: Isaac Simmons

Members:

Brenda Carlton

Kathleen Gordon

Patty Hightower

Pam LaRiviere

Nora Rupert

Terry Wright

Dates of meetings and events:

September 29-30, 2015 – FSBA Federal Issues & Advocacy Conference

October 15, 2015 – Discuss and Adopt 2016 FSBA Federal Platform

Main actions taken/accomplishments to date:

FSBA's Federal Issues & Advocacy (FIA) Conference was held September 29-30, 2015 in Washington, D.C. Florida school board members and state and district staff members participated in meetings with senior staff of the White House Domestic Policy Council, U.S. Department of Education, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, House Education and the Workforce Committee, and members of Florida's Congressional delegation. The main topics of discussion were the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and federal education funding and related implications of sequestration.

While FSBA's positions on these issues were well received, there was little progress on these issues until mid-November when a Conference Committee was appointed to draft a compromise between the Senate and House versions of the ESEA Reauthorization – S. 1177 and H.R. 5. House and Senate education committee leadership and staff had hammered out an initial Conference document – titled ESEA Framework – as a starting point for Conference Committee negotiations. Conferees met to consider any revisions to the ESEA Framework and later adopted it with amendments. The final Conference bill carries the Senate's bill number – S. 1177 – and is titled the Every Student Succeeds Act. A summary of the Act is available on the FSBA website and it includes commentary by NSBA. The next step will be approval by each chamber, which is likely to happen in early December – possibly while FSBA is in Tampa for the Annual Joint Conference.

While details are still sketchy since the bill language has not been made available, this is, generally, a very good product, with few, if any, of our major issues of concern in evidence – i.e. the bill contains no provisions for Title I portability and maintains Maintenance of Effort provisions. However, it is not perfect and concerns may arise as rules and regulations are developed to implement the bill's provisions. Even so, the bill and the conference process are a model of inter-party and inter-chamber cooperation.

Upcoming activities:

NSBA's Advocacy Institute scheduled for January 24-26, 2016. Registration is now open for this informative conference and we urge all school board members to consider attending. Information and registration links are available on the FSBA website.