

FSBA Federal Relations Subcommittee Report 2017-2018 Mid-Year Report

Chair: Beverly Slough
Vice Chair: Betsy Condon

Members: Marsha Andrews Jeannie Mathis
 Kristi Burns Christine Moore
 Charlene Edwards Ann Murray
 Rene Flowers Jerry Taylor
 Lori Hershey Susan Valdes
 Patty Hightower Caroline Zucker

Dates of meetings and activities:

August 23, 2017 – Subcommittee Discussion of Plan of Work (via GoToMeeting)
September 27-28, 2017 – Federal Issues & Advocacy Conference
October 26, 2017 – FSBA 2018 Platform Adoption Meeting

Main actions taken/accomplishments to date:

The Subcommittee met in August to review the work accomplished in 2016-2017 and to discuss various federal issues. The Subcommittee first reviewed the list of items that were listed as unfinished business and recommendations from the prior year, including:

- Production of a series of webinars or videos for FSBA members to provide background information as well as updates on what is happening in Washington.
- Ongoing planning of the Federal Issues & Advocacy (FIA) Conference scheduled for September 27-28, 2017.
- Continued monitoring of Florida's ESSA compliance plan and available opportunities to provide meaningful input.

The Subcommittee agreed to continue to pursue each of these items, with an emphasis on the production of informational webinars/videos on federal issues and procedures and on monitoring the Florida's ESSA compliance plan. The Subcommittee also discussed the upcoming FIA Conference and the NSBA Advocacy Institute.

In September, nine school board members and four state and district staff members traveled to the Washington, D.C. area for the FIA Conference. Attendees represented a good cross section of Florida school districts, including large, medium, and small school districts. Attendees included:

Bev Slough, FSBA Federal Relations Subcommittee Chair, St. Johns County School Board
Betsy Condon, FSBA Federal Relations Subcommittee Vice Chair
Tim Bryant, Okaloosa County School Board
April Griffin, FSBA President, Alachua County School Board
Lubby Navarro, Miami-Dade County School Board
Chris Patricca, Lee County School Board
Marta Perez, Miami-Dade School Board
Jerry Taylor, FSBA President-Elect, Suwannee County School Board
Ida Wright, FSBA Vice President, Volusia County School Board
Ruth Melton, FSBA Director of Advocacy Services
Vern Pickup-Crawford, Schoolhouse Consulting Group, Inc.
Iraida Mendez-Cartaya, Miami-Dade County Government Relations
Eva Regueira, Miami-Dade County Government Relations

During the Conference, attendees:

- Received an up-to-the-minute briefing on pending Congressional action re: education from NSBA;
- Met with 7 staff members at the US Department of Education (US-ED), including Secretary Betsy DeVos, to discuss Florida specific issues; and
- Met with representatives for both Florida Senators, a number of House members, and senior staff for the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

Some of the major issues that were discussed in these meetings included:

- Florida HB 7069 as it directly affects Title I funds and the use of those funds: US-ED was concerned about the inability of districts to decide how best to use their funds across all students eligible instead of targeted to one specific school.
- Federal Budget: We discussed a number of budget-related issues which was timely as budget talks were currently ongoing. Both chambers have left Title I funding status quo. Title II - Senate has left it in the budget, the President and House have removed it. We imparted how critical these funds are to our professional development for our teachers as there is no state funding allocated for this purpose. We also sought clarification as to Title II requirements if funding isn't allocated. US-ED loosely indicated that if there wasn't funding, they couldn't enforce requirements.
- ESSA: Attendees discussed the Florida plan which FDOE had only submitted the week prior. There are some major concerns across the board on the Florida plan so we expect pushback and more discussion forthcoming. It should be noted FSBA/FADSS workgroup feedback was not included at all in the final product FDOE submitted. Major issues surround Title III ESOL.
- Hurricane impacts on the State of Florida as they relate to education: shared that districts are still awaiting reimbursement from Matthew (learned that the money has been released by FEMA and is sitting at the state for disbursement); discussed impacts of 500 of the 600 shelters in the state for Irma were schools and implications; US-ED has a number of programs they are launching for assistance to schools impacted or those receiving impacted students; Requested assistance from Federal level to push FDOE to provide flexibility on counts for funding (since Commissioner Stewart has indicated she will be providing guidance on that to Superintendents first week of Oct.).

In October, the Subcommittee members participated in the FSBA 2018 Legislative and Federal Platform Adoption Meeting. The FSBA 2018 Federal Platform focuses on a number of federal issues including but not limited to federal funding, ESSA implementation, federal support for hurricane preparedness and recovery, early education, career and technical education, school choice, and undocumented immigrant children. The 2018 Federal Platform is attached with this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Slough, Chair, Federal Relations Subcommittee
Betsy Condon, Vice Chair, Federal Relations Subcommittee