

FSBA Federal Relations Subcommittee Report 2017-2018 Annual 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

February 4-6, 2018 – NSBA Advocacy Institute

Main actions taken/accomplishments this year:

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 ranging from very large to very small (Miami-Dade and Suwannee). 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 Committee and the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

Some of the major issues that were discussed in these meetings included HB 7069 as it directly affects Title I funds and the use of those funds, ESSA, hurricane impacts on the State of Florida as they relate to education.

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.

Shortly after the Annual Winter Conference, Andy Tuck, former Highlands County school board member and current member of the State Board of Education, requested FSBA's assistance in communicating with the U.S. government to request Hurricane Irma relief funding, particularly with regard to Florida's citrus/agricultural industry. We drafted and sent a letter to US House Speaker Paul Ryan, signed by President April Griffin, Executive Director Andrea Messina, and Federal Relations Subcommittee chair Beverly Slough. Similar letters were sent to six other state and federal officials (*a sample of the letter is posted with this report*).

In mid-December 2017, the US DOE notified Commissioner Pam Stewart that Florida's ESSA State Plan was being returned with comments for changes. The US DOE letter was circulated among the members of the Federal Relations Subcommittee. Commissioner Pam Stewart asked for and received an extension on the deadline to respond to the US DOE. Florida's ESSA State Plan was resubmitted on April 20, 2018. To date, Florida is one of six states that have not received final U.S. Department of Education approval (*the resubmitted State Plan is posted with this report*).

In February, a group of Florida school board members attended NSBA's Advocacy Institute in Washington, DC. We learned about NSBA's legislative priorities, including working on passage of DACA policy. Among the issues that were raised in regard to expiration of DACA was the fact that many teachers are in the US on DACA waivers, which, should the Act not be passed into law in some form, could result in the loss of many teachers from our classrooms. This is in addition to the stress our DACA students are experiencing due to the uncertainty of the process. The meeting as a whole was very informative, and the board members who attended are better informed as to how to address the federal issues.

As another outcome of FSBA's activities at the NSBA Advocacy Institute, FSBA was contacted by Florida U.S. Representative Stephanie Murphy regarding her efforts to secure funding and support in the federal Bipartisan Budget Act for students who had been displaced by Hurricane Maria and had sought refuge in Florida. FSBA worked closely with Representative Murphy and others on this issue and funding was secured in the Budget Act (*letters and email correspondence illustrating our involvement and success on this issue are posted with this report*).

In the wake of the tragic school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Congress began consideration of the reauthorization of the Secure Our Schools Program which awards grants to state and local governments for school safety purposes. FSBA provided input to the sponsors of the legislation and to NSBA to ensure that the legislation would provide federal funds for both operating and capital costs relating to school safety and security (*NSBA letter in support of the legislation is posted with this report*).

In addition to these specific events, throughout the 2018 Legislative Session, members of the Federal Relations Subcommittee participated in the weekly Legislative Committee conference calls and discussed state issues that were tied to federal activities including topics relating to hurricane preparedness and response, immigration issues, and school safety and security.

In recent months, the Subcommittee members have been involved in the planning of Thursday's General Session on *Understanding and Creating a Road Map for District ESSA Plans*.

Unfinished Business and Recommendations:

- We recommend that the members of the 2018-2019 Subcommittee undergo specific training during the summer to better understand the Congressional legislative and budget processes, ESSA, and expectations for their involvement in the Subcommittee.
- We recommend that the subcommittee members hold teleconference meetings at least quarterly or at the call of the chair.
- We recommend that the Subcommittee consider creating a blog on the FSBA website that will provide postings at least once a month.
- We recommend that the Subcommittee begin initial planning for the biennial FSBA Federal Issues & Advocacy Conference scheduled for the fall of 2019.
- We recommend that the Subcommittee continue to closely monitor the implementation of ESSA.
- We recommend that the Subcommittee closely monitor congressional elections and promptly send congratulatory letters to those elected or re-elected.

Respectfully submitted,

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