

Update from Federal Issues and Advocacy Conference
9/29/2017

- Approximately 10 districts were represented ranging from very large to very small (Miami-Dade and Suwannee)
- Received an up-to-the-minute briefing on pending Congressional action re: education from NSBA
- Met with 7 staff members at Federal DOE including Secretary Betsy DeVos re: Florida specific issues.
- Met with representatives for both Florida Senators and a number of House members and members of the Committees on Education, Labor and Pensions as well as Education and the Workforce

Issues discussed:

- Florida HB7069 as it directly affects Title I funds and the use of those funds. Fed DOE 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 are currently ongoing. Both houses 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. Fed DOE loosely indicated that if there wasn't funding, they couldn't enforce requirements.
- ESSA - discussed the Florida plan which FL DOE 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 FL DOE 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; Federal DOE 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 State DOE 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.)