Food for Thought

Thanks for contributing to a wonderful celebration for Student Services Week this past February! There is so much depth to the work of school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses that it is impossible to do more than scratch the surface of topics and resources during a single celebration week!

What we can bring focus to, however, is our shared responsibility for the cooperative integration of learning supports within the multi-tiered system and in coordination with each other across the four disciplines.

I attended a conference session last year during which there was a discussion of evolving from a “competitive” motivation to a “cooperative” motivation in our profession for greater success. Our 32nd President, Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “Competition has been shown to be useful up to a certain point and no further, but cooperation, which is the thing we must strive for today, begins where competition leaves off.” If we acknowledge that competition is a possible factor that creates silos in our profession, then we might consider that shifting toward cooperation could assist us with dissolving those silos.

This is an ongoing discussion within our team. It helps us think differently and make progress toward our shared vision of a single comprehensive, fully integrated multi-tiered system of supports that meets the needs of the full range of learners. What kinds of thoughts and discussions are you and your teams having these days? Is there an undercurrent more on competition?...more on cooperation?...or a balance between the two? Do you think that an increase in cooperative integration of effort would result in better outcomes for students in your district? Or rather, do you suspect that integrated efforts would not really improve the outcomes for students? When opportunities to prompt these discussions with colleagues arise, we encourage you to ask probing questions and share your thoughts. It is through courageous professional dialogue that teams grow and improve, resulting in happier educators and more effective supports to students and their families.
Pinwheels for Prevention

In April, the state of Florida will kick off National Child Abuse Prevention Month by planting pinwheels across the state. Local businesses, schools, and other community partners will show their support by planting pinwheel gardens in front of buildings to bring awareness to child abuse and neglect. The pinwheel was chosen as a symbol to represent the right for children to have a chance at a healthy, happy, and full life free from emotional and physical harm.

Pinwheels for Prevention started in Georgia, Florida, and Ohio as a grassroots effort, and as a call to action, to develop programs and advocate for policies to reduce child maltreatment. This initiative has grown nationwide.

Celebrating Child Abuse Prevention Month is the perfect opportunity for student services personnel to bring awareness of child abuse prevention and intervention to school students and staff. Your school may want to consider planting a pinwheel garden in April. A toolkit is available online at the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida's website at https://www.ounce.org/CAP2012/2012_Toolkit.pdf.

April can also serve as a reminder to teachers, administrators, and other school personnel of their responsibilities as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. For example, a weekly email can be sent describing the physical and behavioral characteristics of a student who is a suspected victim of abuse and neglect.

Take Action

Visit the Pinwheels for Prevention website at https://www.ounce.org/CAPMonth.html for more information and featured events.
So You Suspect Abuse or Neglect; What’s Next?

As school personnel, you are obligated to report any reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a minor child or disabled adult. It is not your responsibility to investigate the legitimacy of the allegation; that is the job of Florida Department of Children and Families’ (DCF) Child Protective Investigators and/or local law enforcement.

When contemplating whether you suspect abuse or neglect, consideration of physical and behavioral indicators is appropriate. Indicators are observable conditions, physical injuries, and behaviors that suggest the likelihood of abuse or neglect.

Physical Abuse Defined:
Inappropriate or excessively harsh disciplinary action that is likely to result in physical injury.

Physical indicators may be
◊ pronounced patterned bruises;
◊ recurring injuries, especially on the face, back, buttocks, and thighs;
◊ bruises that are in multiple stages of healing; and
◊ unexplained burns (circular burns, immersion burns, rope burns).

Behavioral indicators when occurring in combination may be
◊ wearing long sleeves or pants in hot weather;
◊ aggression towards others;
◊ improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries;
◊ shrinking away if touched;
◊ appears apprehensive when other children cry; and
◊ acts afraid to go home.

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Emotional Abuse Defined:
Any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, or any other treatment which seriously impacts a child’s cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Physical Indicators may be
◇ sudden speech disorders such as stuttering; and
◇ lags in physical and social development.

Behavioral Indicators when occurring in combination may be
◇ overreactions to mistakes;
◇ extreme fear of any new situation;
◇ shows diminished cognitive ability;
◇ exhibits anti-social destructive behaviors;
◇ exhibits self-stimulating behaviors (sucking, biting, and rocking); and
◇ inappropriate response to pain (I deserve it).

Sexual Abuse Defined:
Inappropriate touching and sexual exploitation of a minor child.

Physical Indicators may be
◇ pain or itching in the genital area;
◇ wetting clothes; and
◇ foul odor.

Behavioral Indicators may be
◇ overly affectionate;
◇ sexual knowledge inappropriate for the child’s age;
◇ drawing sexually explicit pictures; and
◇ change in personality (becoming angry or withdrawn).

Other things to consider when assessing if indicators add up to reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect are
◇ frequency and occurrence of indicators;
◇ severity of indicators;
◇ patterns of behavior;
◇ medical condition;
◇ behavioral problems;
◇ mental, cognitive, or emotional problems; and
◇ developmental disability or physical handicap as it relates to the student’s ability to self-protect.

Many school districts have ESE students 18 years of age or older who may be medically fragile or have significant cognitive impairment. These students are also protected and should be considered when observing any of these indicators. These students are considered adults with disabilities.

As a member of the school’s student services team, you may be called upon to assist teachers and other school personnel when making a report to the Abuse Hotline. It is important to remember that the person who suspects abuse typically has the most information and is the best person to make the call. You may sit with that person and provide support; however, it is not appropriate to make the call for that person. In an attempt to keep the student from being traumatized, do not interview the student once the disclosure has been made to the teacher or other trusted adult.

Individual school districts have procedures in place for reporting suspected abuse and neglect. While it is important to know your district’s procedures, there are a few other important things to know.

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**Before You Call**

1. Have the child’s demographic information readily available.
2. If the call is at the end of the school day, be prepared to give location of student (i.e., afterschool care, home).
3. Have sibling information if available.
4. Make sure to have correct contact information for the parent.

**When You Call**

1-800-96ABUSE

◊ Identify yourself (name, position, phone number, and address of your school).
◊ Clearly state why you suspect possible child abuse or neglect.
◊ Describe your specific concerns for the child’s safety.
◊ Describe any apparent injuries, marks, bruises, or threat of injury.

School personnel do not have to seek approval from the principal, or other designee, to report suspected abuse and neglect. The report should be made immediately to the Abuse Hotline.

If local policy requires you to notify your principal, or a designee, it must not interfere with the legal obligation to report.

The person who makes the report may want to keep any information regarding the call to the Hotline; however no records should be kept in the student’s cumulative record folder.

**Take Action**

Download the Child Abuse Prevention Sourcebook for Florida School Personnel. It is full of important information that can be shared with school personnel. The Sourcebook is available for download at [http://sss.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/chiabuse2015.pdf](http://sss.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/chiabuse2015.pdf).
2016 Legislative Session Overview

Below is a brief overview of the final outcome of the State Board of Education's legislative priorities. The following bills passed both chambers.

Educator Professional Practices (HB 719) – Signed by the Governor

Major Components of the Bill:

◊ Reorganizes the membership of the Education Practices Commission.
◊ Allows the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) access to DCF child protective findings.
◊ Allows the Commissioner to issue a letter of guidance/caution in lieu of a Probable Cause finding.
◊ Establishes a system of public accountability and state approval of school leader preparation programs that align to adopted principal standards.

Minimum Term Funding (HB 7029)

Major Components of the Bill:

◊ Requires any school that operates for less than the minimum term that is not a double session school to only generate a FTE equivalent to the amount of instructional hours provided.
◊ Allows FDOE to determine an equitable method of funding for schools operating for less than the required hours under emergency conditions only.
◊ Eliminates language regarding double session schools, so that the number of sessions is no longer an issue, focusing on instructional hours.

Special Education Facilities Construction Accounts (HB 7029)

Major Components of the Bill:

◊ Sets a deadline in statute for school districts to request funding for a fiscal year to ensure the request has sufficient time to be reviewed by the State Board of Education.
◊ Precludes any school district from having more than one project ongoing at a time.
◊ Requires facility surveys to be cooperatively prepared by the district and FDOE. Beginning in 2016 requires surveys to be approved by FDOE to ensure cost efficient plans.
◊ Clarifies that any consultants used in the development of a plant survey cannot be an employee of the architect.
◊ Reduces from 1.5 mills to 1.0 mill the value of millage that a district must budget annually to satisfy the district’s participation requirement.

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School Choice (HB 7029 Choice)  
Major Components of the Bill That Passed:

◊ Requires charter schools that receive two consecutive school grades of “F” to be closed unless they meet one of two exceptions or are granted a waiver from the State Board of Education.
◊ Allows a charter school to provide enrollment prioritization to students who are currently attending or zoned for a public school that has received a grade of “F” or three consecutive grades of “D.”
◊ Allows charter schools to receive a proportionate share of the reading allocation with the approval of their reading plan and no longer require them to adopt the school district’s reading plan.
◊ All charter school applicants will be required to include with their application a list of all charter schools that they currently or previously operated, along with the school grades of those schools. This will give districts a full picture of their performance as they consider their application.
◊ Financial Stability – defines financial stability as it relates to charter schools being eligible for capital outlay funding.
◊ This will prohibit a school district from delaying Florida Education Finance Program payments to charter schools based on the timing of receipt of local funds.

Cradle to Career Pathway to...  
Economic Independence for People with Unique Abilities

House Bill 7003, Persons with Disabilities, was signed into law on January 21, 2016. This legislation creates:

◊ The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program to recognize business entities that employ individuals who have a disability, as well as entities that establish or contribute to organizations that support the independence of individuals who have a disability.
◊ A Financial Literacy Program for individuals with developmental disabilities to provide education, financial and health benefit programs and services; job training and employment opportunities; and information on the impact of earnings and assets on eligibility for federal and state programs to individuals with unique abilities and their families.
◊ The Employment First Act to enhance state employment options for people with unique abilities by requiring an interagency cooperative agreement, among specified state agencies and organizations, to ensure a long-term commitment to improve employment for individuals who have a disability.

For more information on the Cradle to Career Pathway to Economic Independence for People with Unique Abilities, visit http://www.flsenate.gov/Media/Topics/UniqueAbilities.

Nurse Licensure Compact  
(HB 1061)

The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC or compact) is a multi-state agreement that establishes a mutual recognition system for the licensure of registered nurses and licensed practical or vocational nurses. In 2015, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing adopted revised model...continued
legislation for the NLC and required any state entering the NLC to adopt the revised model legislation. The bill enacts the revised NLC and authorizes Florida to enter into the compact. These provisions take effect December 31, 2018, or upon enactment of the Nurse Licensure Compact into law by 26 states, whichever occurs first. The bill text and analyses are located at http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1061.

Emergency Allergy Treatment in Schools (HB 1305)

In 2014, the Florida Legislature amended the law governing insect sting emergency treatment by creating new and expanding existing provisions in s. 381.88, Florida Statute (F.S.), related to emergency allergy treatment. The law also created s. 381.885, F.S. Together, these laws are referred to as the “Emergency Allergy Treatment Act.”

◊ Section 381.88(2)(b), F.S., defines “authorized entity” as an entity or organization at or in connection with which allergens capable of causing a severe allergic reaction may be present. The term includes, but is not limited to, restaurants, recreation camps, youth sports leagues, theme parks and resorts, and sports arenas. The term also includes a school for the purposes of the educational training programs for recognizing the symptoms of a severe allergic reaction and the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector.

◊ This bill includes private schools in the definition of authorized entities for the purpose of acquiring a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors and administration of an epinephrine auto-injector. The law also applies the civil liability immunity protections in the Good Samaritan Act to private schools.

◊ The bill authorizes public and private schools to enter into arrangements with wholesale distributors or manufacturers to acquire emergency auto-injectors at fair market, free, or reduced prices for use when a student has an anaphylactic reaction.

◊ The bill removes the requirement that the school maintain epinephrine auto-injectors in a locked location. However, the bill requires that epinephrine auto-injectors must be maintained in a secure location. Subject to the Governor’s veto power, the effective date of this bill is July 1, 2016. The bill text and analyses are located at http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1305.

2016 Bill Summaries

All 2016 bill summaries, including summaries for Education Pre-K – 12, are posted on the Florida Senate web page at http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/BillSummaries/2016/.
Florida Postsecondary Disability Resource Centers

After applying for admission to postsecondary institutions and financial aid, it is important to advise students with disabilities, as they transition from high school, that if they wish to receive accommodations while enrolled in a Florida postsecondary institution that they contact the disability resource center.

Students must self-disclose their disability and present current documentation of their disability.

Below are resources to assist with the academic advisement of students with disabilities as they transition to postsecondary education and need to understand the documentation requirements in order to be considered for accommodations:

- State University System Disability Resource Centers
- Florida College System Disability Support Services

Compulsory School Attendance: Technical Assistance Paper Updated

The Compulsory School Attendance Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) has been updated to reflect the changes in attendance laws and replaces TAP FY-2010-48. One major change in the Florida Statutes is the inclusion of the Early Warning System. The Early Warning system is designed to identify students who may exhibit early indicators of potential truancy or show indications of becoming a dropout. Schools that include grades six, seven or eight are given specific indicators to monitor and a school-based team will determine appropriate intervention strategies for the student.

The TAP also clarifies how attendance is captured and recorded for virtual school students as outlined in the statutes. The TAP states how a virtual student’s attendance should be recorded and who is responsible for reporting and monitoring the student’s attendance. It gives guidance on how to account for attendance using various methods outlined in s. 1003.23, F.S. The TAP also discusses when attendance is reported to FDOE.

Myth: Attendance in Kindergarten doesn’t really matter for academic success.

Reality: Research shows that early absence predicts long-term negative consequences, such as reduced levels of school achievement, increased truancy, and increased risk of dropping out of school. Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten miss basic skills and are particularly at risk for these negative outcomes.

Visit http://www.readyfreddy.org/for-schools-and-communities/attendance/...continued
In addition, the Learnfare process as it relates to reporting attendance to the DCF was clarified. The process by which school districts receive the names of Learnfare participants, the school district response, and actions taken by DCF once the information is received is outlined in the TAP.

Myth: Since attendance is a family responsibility, we cannot do anything to address chronic absence.

Reality: Schools across the nation are starting to track chronic absence and are seeing better attendance. The first step is analyzing the data to find patterns that can inform the response.

Visit http://www.attendanceworks.org/about/why-it-matters/

The Children in Need of Services and Families in Need of Services (CINS/FINS) programs were updated with current contacts according to judicial jurisdiction. Links to additional information, such as the Automated Attendance Reporting Manual, are provided for your convenience.

2016 Healthy Schools Summer Academy

The FDOE 2016 Healthy Schools Summer Academy will be held June 22-23, 2016, at the University of Florida's Straughn Extension Center in Gainesville, FL.

The Summer Academy is a professional development opportunity for teachers of health education and physical education content with special emphasis on subject-area courses with integrated health education benchmarks. District administrators, school nurses, and all subject-area teachers are encouraged to attend this informative two-day event. Academy sessions will provide information and resources focusing on Florida standards, safe and supportive environments, educational technology, nutrition, physical activity, sexual health education, and subject-area integration of health education.

Online registration for the academy is $55 per person and can be accessed via the Healthy Schools website, http://www.healthychoolssummeracademy.org/, beginning Friday, March 11, and will close Friday, April 22, 2016.

For more information, please contact Michelle L. Gaines at Michelle.Gaines@fldoe.org or by phone at 850-245-0978.
Healthy Students–Promising Futures:

A joint Letter from the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services

To better coordinate health and education services for all students and their families, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services have released a new toolkit that details five high-impact opportunities for states and local school districts to improve student achievement and health at [http://www2.ed.gov/lead/safety/healthy-students/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/lead/safety/healthy-students/index.html).

In addition, recent guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services addresses expanded opportunities for states and local school districts to provide Medicaid reimbursable health services at and through schools to support healthy students. This guidance is being reviewed by the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, the state Medicaid agency, to determine what changes can be made to the Medicaid state plan to allow additional access to Medicaid reimbursement for services provided in school districts.

Additional information and resources related to Medicaid in schools can be found on the Student Support Services website at [http://www.sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/medicaid/index.html](http://www.sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/medicaid/index.html).

Graduation Requirements for Florida’s Statewide Assessments

According to Florida law, students must meet all academic requirements to earn a standard high school diploma from a public school. This means that students must pass required courses, earn a minimum number of credits, earn a minimum grade point average, and pass the required statewide assessments. Students who meet these requirements but do not pass the required assessments will receive a certificate of completion, which is not equivalent to a standard high school diploma. The State Board of Education determines the passing scores for statewide assessments.

New concordant and comparative scores will be established for the new assessments once a sufficient number of students have participated in both the new assessment and the alternate assessment(s) to conduct the concordant/comparative score study. Until these new scores are established, the current scores may be used by all students.

For additional information, please refer to the updated information in Graduation Requirements for Florida’s Statewide Assessments at [http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5663/urlt/GradRequireFSA.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5663/urlt/GradRequireFSA.pdf).
Upcoming Events

Florida School Health Association Annual Conference
May 4–6, 2016, Rosen Centre Hotel Orlando, FL. For registration information and an agenda visit http://fsha.net/conferences/.

2016 Family Café
June 10–12, 2016, Hyatt Regency Orlando, Orlando, FL. For more information visit http://www.familycafe.net/.

National Association of School Nurses Conference

American School Counselor Association Conference

Florida Association of School Psychologists Summer Institute 2016
July 13–15, 2016, Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, FL. For registration information, visit http://www.fasp.org/Events/Summer_Institute.html.

2016 State University System of Florida Admissions Tour:
August 30–Florida International University
August 31–Florida Atlantic University
September 1–Florida Gulf Coast University
September 2–University of South Florida
September 7–Florida State University (Panama City)
September 8–University of North Florida
September 9–University of Central Florida

Contact:
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Trivia Questions

Q-1. What are the four partnership disciplines of Student Services?

A-1: School Social Work, School Counseling, School Nursing, and School Psychology

Q-2. When should you call the Abuse Hotline if you suspect abuse or neglect?

A-2: Immediately

Q-3. Fill in the blank: April is __ month?

A-3: Child Abuse Prevention

Q-4. True or False: Student services personnel can make a call to the Abuse Hotline for a teacher.

A-4: False

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