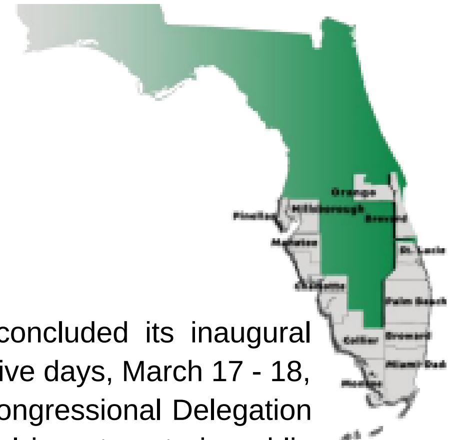

Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards (GFCSB)

2026 Federal Fly-In Report: Washington, D.C.

The Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards (GFCSB) recently concluded its inaugural Federal Fly-In to Washington, D.C. which took place over two very productive days, March 17 - 18, 2026. The focus of this visit was two-fold; first to introduce the Florida Congressional Delegation and their offices to the GFCSB and to advocate for strong, reliable federal investments in public education on behalf of the more than 1.5 million students across our 12 member districts.

Delegation Attendees

- **Caprice Edmond**, Chair, Pinellas County School Board & President, GFCSB
- **Dr. Sue Woltanski**, Board Member, Monroe County School Board & Chair, GFCSB Federal SubCommittee
- **Cindy Spray**, Chair, Manatee County School Board
- **Thomas Cerra**, Executive Director, GFCSB
- **Tabitha Fazzino**, Advocacy Director, GFCSB
- **John Sullivan**, Chief of Staff, Broward County Public Schools
- **Andrea Knowles**, Government Relations, Broward County Public Schools
- **Marquise McMiller**, Government Relations, Orange County Public Schools
- **Kristin Davis**, Assistant Superintendent, Hillsborough County Public Schools
- **Rita Solnet**, Federal Relations, Palm Beach County Public Schools
- **T.C. Wolfe**, New Century (Orange & Monroe Government Consultant)
- **Kortney Wesley**, Government Relations, Duval County Public Schools *(non-member district)*

GFCSB Federal Advocacy Platform & Priorities During the Fly-In, the delegation spoke with one voice to emphasize the importance of predictable and adequate federal funding. We firmly articulated our concerns regarding block grants, opposing any structures that lack accountability. We stressed that if funding is redesigned, it is critical to maintain guardrails to ensure intended student groups are served and our most vulnerable students remain protected.

Our advocacy centered on seven core priorities:

- **Fulfill the Federal Commitment to IDEA:** We urged Congress to establish a multi-year glide path toward full IDEA funding, ensuring predictable appropriations and supporting the IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 2598).
- **Prioritize K-12 Education Funding (Titles I-IV):** We robustly advocated for increasing and sustaining Title I funding for vital student interventions, stabilizing Title II to address acute educator shortages, protecting Title III for English Language Learners, and growing Title IV to sustain STEM, arts, and safe schools initiatives.
- **Invest in School Infrastructure:** We requested flexible capital grant programs to address urgent needs for HVAC upgrades, ADA accessibility, and hurricane resilience.
- **Support School-Based Mental Health:** We emphasized the need for sustained funding for mental health grants and support for workforce pipelines to attract professionals into schools.
- **Invest in School Safety:** We requested an expansion of DOJ School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP)/COPS grants for safety programming, personnel, and facility upgrades.
- **Prioritize Connectivity and Cybersecurity (E-Rate):** We advocated for protecting the E-Rate program for broadband and expanding eligible uses to include modern network cybersecurity.
- **Strengthen Disaster Preparedness & Recovery (FEMA):** We requested streamlined FEMA reimbursement processes and expanded, school-specific resiliency authorities.

Congressional Engagements

To advance these priorities, our GFCSB delegation participated in a robust schedule of meetings on both sides of the aisle with federal lawmakers and committee offices on Tuesday, March 17th, and Wednesday, March 18th. Across all our meetings, we made it a priority to formally thank the members and their staff for maintaining level funding for all major K-12 programs in the most recently adopted federal funding package and for including language that specifically requires the Secretary of Education to award formula funds “on the date such funds become available for obligation,” ensuring there would not be another surprise holdback as occurred June 30, 2025. We also urged a continued focus on ensuring that federal funds continue to flow to districts in a manner that ensures they are used for their intended purpose and are not otherwise diverted as we look to FY 2027.

Direct Member Engagements

We were honored to meet face-to-face with the following elected officials to discuss our platform directly:

- Senator Rick Scott
- Representative Aaron Bean
- Representative Vern Buchanan
- Representative Kathy Castor
- Representative Maxwell Frost
- Representative Carlos Gimenez
- Representative Jared Moskowitz

- Representative Darren Soto
- Representative Daniel Webster
- Representative Frederica Wilson

Staff & Committee Engagements

We also held highly productive meetings with the offices and committee staff of:

- Senator Ashley Moody
- Representative Mario Diaz-Balart
- Representative Byron Donalds
- Representative Lois Frankel
- Representative Anna Paulina Luna
- Representative Maria Salazar
- Representative Greg Steube
- House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
- House Committee on Education & the Workforce
- Senate HELP Committee (Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions)




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Federal Policy Briefing: Department of Education Transitions

A key takeaway from the federal update is that the US Department of Education (ED) is developing interagency agreements (IAA) with the Departments of Health, Labor, Justice, and the Interior to transition many of its functions to those agencies.

The first of these agreements is expected to be implemented in the spring, with the remaining agreements anticipated to be in place by July 1, the date distributions of federal educational funds are scheduled to begin. Monitoring of these functions will remain with the ED and will continue to be managed by their staff. It remains to be seen if during this transition, states will be able to adjust systems in time, or if this transition will result in delays in funding reaching school districts.

FY 2027 Budget Proposal (School Year 2027-2028)

The general consensus from those we spoke with on the House side seems to be that the Administration's FY 2027 budget proposal should be released late March or very early April; however, as has occurred in the past, this release may only be a "skinny budget," which provides limited detail and topline numbers with a detailed proposal to follow when a full budget is released later in the year. This is even more likely given it is an election year and therefore we would expect limited congressional action on spending bills until after the mid-terms or possibly early January 2027.