

Leaders

A Newsletter for Florida School Board Members

Florida's Jane Gallucci installed as NSBA President, 2006-2007

Former FSBA president Jane Gallucci was installed in April as the 2006-2007 president of the National School Boards Association, the first time in 20-plus years that someone from Florida has served in that position.

"It's a tremendous honor, not only for Jane, but also for all school board members in Florida. Jane has served on Pinellas County's school board with distinction for 10 years and as our state president," said FSBA Executive Director Wayne Blanton. "I know she will do a dynamite job as NSBA president just as she did as our president six years ago."

With the theme, "Snapshots of Success, the Real Story of Public Education," Ms. Gallucci thinks school board members need to be more aggressive in getting public education's story out.

"We're allowing the media to tell our story and that has to change," she said. "We have loud voices and we need to use them to communicate to



Former NSBA president Joan Schmidt, right, Fairfield, Mont., congratulates her successor, Jane Gallucci, Pinellas County School Board, during the NSBA conference in Chicago.

the public the miracles that happen in our public classrooms every single day, every single minute."

Ms. Gallucci, FSBA president in 2000 and a Pinellas County School Board member since 1996, was NSBA's secretary-treasurer prior to becoming president-elect last year, then president. She has served on several NSBA committees and chaired its Policy and Bylaws, Executive Director Evaluation and Constitutional and Bylaws committees. She has also been actively involved with NSBA's Federal Relations Network.

Before moving to Florida, she had also served on a New Jersey school board in 1978. She has a B.A. in psychology and a master's degree in family therapy and guidance. She had worked as a science teacher and

a music teacher before being offered a job as an elementary school guidance counselor in Pinellas County.

Besides a good contingent of FSBA members present at her installation as NSBA president, her 86-year-old mother, Marie Narvid, her husband of 34 years, Bob, her sisters Bunny and Noel, and son, Edward, were also on hand. Her other son, Andrew was there for part of the ceremonies, but had to return to his job.

"Kids are my passion," she said. "My mission as president is to tell positive stories wherever I go."

In her acceptance speech during the NSBA convention in Chicago, she noted: "I want to leverage the presidency of NSBA for all of us. I want to empower us to become more than one member with one vote. I want us to collectively stand up against all the odds."

She wonders "what would happen if we all spoke at the same time with one voice? What would happen if we all told the world about the success of our public schools? Who creates our image? Is it those who know the most about what's going on in our schools? No, it's the media. It's the naysayers and detached politicians who all claim to be experts because, they attended public schools. Frankly, I am tired of reading these headlines."

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Leadership Calling

Send us your Snapshots of Success!

In line with new NSBA President Jane Gallucci's theme for her term—Snapshots of Success, the real story of public education—we would like to feature in each issue of *Leaders* some of the positive things happening in our public schools.

Just send us an email briefly outlining positive things that are occurring at the schools in your district. We'll scan the newspapers, but as Ms. Gallucci pointed out (see story, page 1), we can't always rely on the media to get the word out.

Please send your submissions to FSBA Executive Director Wayne Blanton (blanton@fsba.org) with a copy to *Leaders'* editor Andy Williams (andyw313@earthlink.net).

List the name of the school, the event or other positive occurrence you're highlighting and who we can contact if we need further information. Some examples: Did your district have an increase in the number of A-graded schools? Did one of your high schools achieve its highest graduation rate to date?

As Ms. Gallucci, a Pinellas County School Board member, pointed out, it's up to us to get out our "real story."

Poll shows voters do not like vouchers

A recent poll commissioned by the *St. Petersburg Times* newspaper shows that a majority of Floridians do not like private school vouchers.

Here's the question that was asked by pollsters: "Some people say that state funds should only go to public schools. Others say the State of Florida should pay for private schooling if the public school a child attends is failing. In this situation, would you be for or against giving state funds to private schools?" Sixty five percent were against and 35% favored that statement. Four percent had no opinion.

The poll also found that 42% say the FCAT has hurt education in Florida while 37% say it has helped; 68% said teacher bonuses should not be tied to FCAT results; and 57% said schools should not be rewarded based on how well they do on the FCAT.

E-Comp Advisory Committee named

To provide a "sounding board" to Education Commissioner John Winn on teacher e-compensation implementation, the commissioner has named a 24-member E-Comp Advisory committee" made up of superintendents, a school board member, teachers, principals, school administrators and other educational professionals.

Members are to advise Commissioner Winn on ways to provide districts with implementation flexibility, assist in providing answers to questions not addressed in the rule regarding E-Comp, and share ideas to improve teacher evaluation systems across the state.

The school board member is Stephanie Kraft, Broward County. Ten of the committee members are teachers. The five superintendents include: David Miller, Wakulla County; Mary Ellen Elia, Hillsborough County; Don Gaetz, Okaloosa County; Roger Dearing, Manatee County; and Bill Montford, Leon County.

Max Schmidt, executive director, Florida School Labor Relations Service, and Dr. David Mosrie, CEO of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents, are also on the committee. For a complete committee list, or to learn more about Florida's E-Comp plan, go to www.floridaecomp.com.



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Day in Legislature attracts many FSBA members

Indicative of the legislative issues facing school board members this year was the



FSBA President Jack Lamb, Hillsborough County School Board, asks a question and answers a session with Senator Lynn.

attendance at FSBA's annual Day in the Legislature in April. It was one of the best-attended yet, nearly standing-room only.

Besides reviewing funding, class size and teacher performance pay, one of the session's highlights was a discussion with two key legislative leaders: Sen. Evelyn Lynn, R-Ormond Beach, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, and Rep. Joe Pickens, R-Palatka, chairman of House Education Appropriations.



FSBA Legislative Committee Chairman Sheila Costigan, Leon County School Board, welcomes Representative Pickens to the association's breakfast on the conference's final day.

Gallucci new NSBA president

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But she doesn't want to be considered a "Pollyanna. I know we have problems in our schools...serious problems. Issues we are addressing every day. The bad news will take care of itself. But we need balance and we need reminders every day that we are improving, that we are changing, that we have heroes and success stories that make us proud.

"In order for people to support public education," she added, "they need to see that it's working. People will jump on board a race boat heading toward the finishing line before they

will jump on a sinking ship...They will join a winning team, not a losing team. We need to have a success mentality, not a survival mentality. I am asking you, as your president, to stand up for public education. Speak up for public education."

She said it was time the public see education's "Snapshots of Success. By the end of this year, you will be tired of hearing me say it. But the public won't be tired of it."

Some of those successes: Americans are becoming more educated; more students are attending college; more young children are attending full-day kindergarten; high school stu-

dents are taking more challenging curriculum; more students with disabilities are in regular classrooms; student achievement is up in math; younger students are showing gains in reading; SAT scores are up, despite more test-takers; teachers are better educated; schools are safer than ever.

"People believe in us," she said, noting that "72% would rather reform the current education system than create an alternative system. Let's remind people of our successes, even as headlines scream of failures. Because in survey after survey, when you ask people: How do you get your most reliable information about public education, they say: from other people. It's from parents, neighbors, teachers, students, and, yes, my friends, from school board members."

What do people remember most? Not statistics. "They remember stories. So let's tell them our stories, tell them our Snapshots of Success."

(Note: portions of this story were derived from an article published by NSBA.)



New NSBA President Jane Gallucci delivers her "Snapshots of Success" acceptance speech during the national organization's conference in Chicago.

From the Executive Director

By WAYNE BLANTON

FSBA: Working for you

“

What does FSBA do for me?” It’s a question I get asked occasionally

Let’s review some of the events in which FSBA has been involved over the past year:

Co-Teaching: This has been one of our biggest efforts. After the State Board of Education adopted a rule barring school districts from using the co-teaching option in order to comply with the class size requirements, FSBA attempted to work with the State Board and Department of Education in an effort to head off this decision. When that failed, we solicited—and received—support from several school districts when we prepared a legal action challenging the State Board decision.

We were, in fact, all ready to go to court when legislative leaders asked us to hold off. We were assured that our problem with the co-teaching decision would be handled legislatively. In other words, a bill would pass allowing our districts to once again utilize the co-teaching option. Such language has been included in several bills. If none of them pass, we still have the legal option available to us.

The constitutionality of vouchers, or sending state, taxpayer money to private schools: This goes way back to when the Opportunity Scholarship program was first passed by the Legislature during Gov. Jeb Bush’s first term. It was part of his A+ education package. We, along with other education groups, including the Florida Education Association, jumped on that one the minute it became law. While it went through several courts, including the circuit and appellate courts, it was up to the Florida Supreme Court to make the final decision and that wasn’t forthcoming until earlier this year.

That took a lot of time and effort, but we were successful. The Legislature is still trying to legalize vouchers, even looking at the possibility of a constitutional amendment. But if recent polls are any indication, voters do not support vouchers, which means a constitutional amendment probably would fail.

Upcoming Events

June 14-16

FSBA Annual Spring Conference
Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, Tampa

July 26-29

NSBA Southern Region (Hosted by Alabama)
Sandestin

Nov. 28 - Dec. 1

FSBA Joint Fall Conference
Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, Tampa



WAYNE BLANTON

FSBA’s Master Board Program:

Designed for school board members and superintendents, 55 school

districts have participated in this popular voluntary program since its inception in 1992. Currently, 31 school districts hold the Master Board distinction. By the end of the 2005-2006 fiscal year, 39 districts will have participated in the MB Program. The program is listed as a “best practice indicator” in the Best Financial Management Practices Self-Assessment Instrument adopted by the Commissioner of Education. It features a skills-based curriculum to strengthen the leadership team’s ability to work effectively, efficiently, and collectively as a governance group while maintaining a focus on student learning and factors contributing to the success of schools. The MB Program also provides the leadership team with an opportunity to discuss and improve or enhance those important interpersonal issues which are essential to functioning as a team. If your district hasn’t yet become involved in this valuable training program, I urge you to contact Karen Denson in the FSBA office for further details.

Legislative updates: Not only do we keep you apprised of what’s happening in Tallahassee—through *Leaders* and our web site (www.fsba.org), but we hold regional meetings throughout the state following the conclusion of each legislative session. Our first meeting this year will be May 16 at the Columbia County School Board office in Lake City followed by a May 17 meeting at the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium office in Chipley. Other meetings will follow.

Conferences: Two key meetings each year happen in June and late November, early December. The first is our annual three-day spring conference, followed about six months later with our joint annual four-day fall conference. Both are held in Tampa and feature workshops, table top discussions and presentations from key educators.

Task Forces: Our latest was one dealing with constitutional accountability and featured a bi-partisan group of educators, business leaders and former legislators and cabinet members discussing and issuing a final report on what Florida’s Constitution says about education funding and its priority in the state. That task force joined a couple others we’ve conducted over the past few years, one dealing with teacher retention and another with school safety.

Finally, remember this: Don’t ever hesitate to let us know your needs, or how we can better serve you.

Dr. Blanton is executive director of the Florida School Boards Association.