

The 49th Annual Florida Veteran Affairs/Florida Association of Veteran Education Specialists (FAVES) Conference

“Stacking the Deck for Veteran Success by Doubling Down on Excellence”

June 1st-June 4th, 2026 | St. Pete Beach, Florida

Saturday May 30th, 2026 (Pre-Conference)

4:00-7:00	Pre-conference workday for Board Members (pre-registration workroom)
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Sunday May 31st, 2026 (Pre-Conference)

12:00-2:00	Board Meeting – Overview of Conference Responsibilities	Royal Tern
3:00-6:00	Early Registration – Dinner on your own	

Monday June 1st, 2026

General Session – Island Grand Ballroom

7:00-8:30	Registration continues – Full Breakfast (<i>Ticket Required</i>)	
8:30-8:45	Opening Remarks Colors Presented by Color Guard National Anthem Pledge	Mike Mitchell, President FAVES MacDill Honor Guard
8:45-9:00	Introduction FAVES Board	Mike Mitchell, President FAVES
9:00 -9:15	Introduction of SAA Reps	Betsy Wickham, Bureau Chief
	Introduction of Guest Speakers for the week	
9:15-9:45	Keynote Speaker	Thomas Wall
9:45-10:10	Service Award Announcement	Danyell, Luis R., and Sylvia
10:10-10:20	Break	
10:20-10:45	Constitution/Bylaws Review	Dr. Jan Del Signore & Luis T.
10:45-11:15	Student Veterans of America (SVA)	Cory Boatwright
11:15-11:45	Student Veteran Panel	Cory Boatwright
11:45-12:05	Sponsored Group “Helping Hands for Heroes”	Mike Mitchell
12:05-1:15	Lunch Provided – Money Jackpot Monday (<i>Ticket Required</i>)	

General Session – Island Grand Ballroom

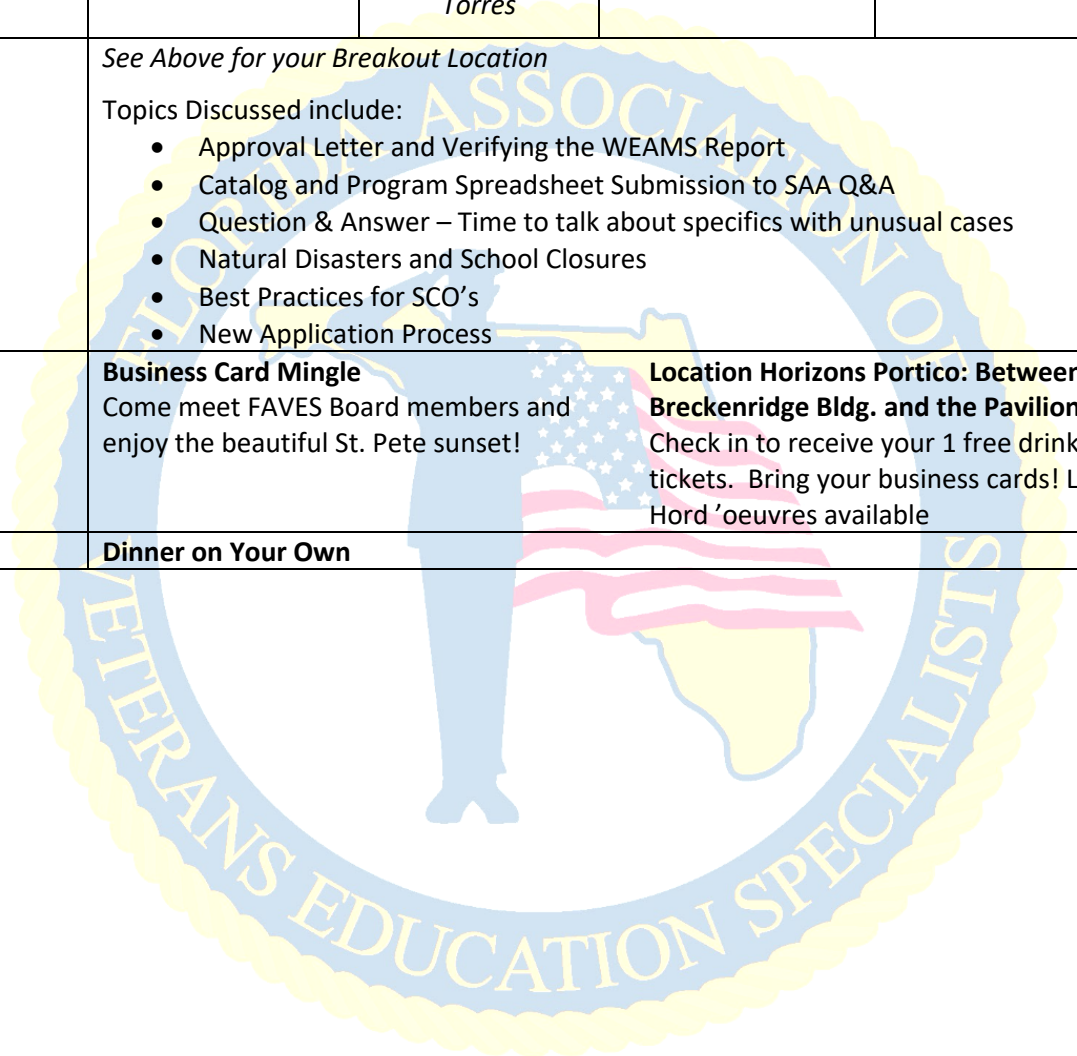
1:15-1:30	VA Name Game Kahoot’s with Prizes	Melissa Newell
1:30-3:00	SAA Updates	Betsy Wickham, Bureau Chief
3:00-3:30	Break – Snack Break (<i>Ticket Required</i>)	

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Monday June 1st, 2026

SAA Area Breakouts

3:30-5:00	<p align="center"><u>SAA Area North</u></p> <p align="center"><i>Long</i></p> <p align="center">Sondra Goodman</p>	<p align="center"><u>SAA Area South</u></p> <p align="center"><i>Sawyer</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Dale Towery, Madeline Mendez, & Doris Torres</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>SAA Area East</u></p> <p align="center"><i>Tarpon</i></p> <p align="center">Kelli Colborne</p>	<p align="center"><u>SAA Area West</u></p> <p align="center"><i>Indian/Bird Brad Gilkes and Ingrid Abernathy</i></p>
<p><i>See Above for your Breakout Location</i></p> <p>Topics Discussed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval Letter and Verifying the WEAMS Report • Catalog and Program Spreadsheet Submission to SAA Q&A • Question & Answer – Time to talk about specifics with unusual cases • Natural Disasters and School Closures • Best Practices for SCO's • New Application Process 				
6:00	<p>Business Card Mingle Come meet FAVES Board members and enjoy the beautiful St. Pete sunset!</p>		<p>Location Horizons Portico: Between the Breckenridge Bldg. and the Pavilion- Check in to receive your 1 free drink tickets. Bring your business cards! Light Hord 'oeuvres available</p>	
<p>Dinner on Your Own</p>				



Tuesday June 2nd, 2026

Breakout Training Series

7:00-8:30	Breakfast on your Own			
Rooms	<u>Bird/Indian Key</u> <u>126</u>	<u>Royal Tern 60</u>	<u>Tarpon/Long/Sawyer</u> <u>Key 318</u>	<u>Blue Heron</u> <u>85</u>
8:15-9:15	VR&E Counselor to SCO views in EM and Tungsten best practice –	Surviving as a One Person Veterans Resource Office Rose Marie Cobb - In-Person	Enrollment Manager – Shay Norton- Leonard – Virtual	From Optional to Operational: Building a Structured Engagement Model for Military Connected Students Mike Kepner – In-Person
9:25-10:25	Army Ignited and EDD – Glenn O’Brien & Darrel Ferdinand – In Person	SVA- Legislative Landscape – Tammy Barlet – In Person	VA Work Study Programs – Kevin J. White - Virtual	How to Leverage AI as an SCO? Danyell Mack & Matt Winstel – In Person
10:25-10:35	Break			
10:35-11:35	Bursar/Business office troubleshooting payment issues with DMC – Dawn Eggers & Julie Lawrence – In Person	How to Obtain Military Transcript & Review Kathy Lee Hunt – In Person	Computer Software Systems – Bring Your Laptop – TBD -Banner -Workday -VA Works -Salesforce -PeopleSoft In Person	VA S.A.V.E. – Four ways you can support a Veteran in Crisis –Melissa Dixon, LCSW-QS VA Bay Pines VA HealthCare System – In Person
School Troubleshooting Breakout Sessions				
11:40-12:10	IHL with NCD/NCD Troubleshooting Sondra Goodman & Ingrid Abernathy	IHL Flight & Vocational Troubleshooting Brad Gilkes & Madeline Mendez	Public IHL Troubleshooting Kelli Colborne & Doris Torres	Private IHL Troubleshooting Dale Towery
12:10-1:30	Lunch Provided – High Roller Tuesday (<i>Ticket Required</i>)			

Tuesday June 2nd, 2026

<u>Rooms</u>	<u>Bird/Indian Key</u> <u>126</u>	<u>Tarpon/Long/Sawyer</u> <u>Key 318</u>	<u>Blue Heron</u> <u>85</u>
1:30 – 3:00	Vocation & IHL Flight programs- Heather Cates - Virtual	NCD Programs – Chelsea Jackson - Virtual	Yellow Ribbon programs- Travon Ward Sr. – Virtual
3:00-3:30	Break - Snack Break (<i>Ticket Required</i>)		
3:30 – 4:30	Creating a Successful SVA Chapter Jay Alton – In Person	Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) Training – Andrew MacPherson, St Petersburg College – In Person	CSDDV & HDGAP – Shawn Haskin – In Person

The Annual Tuesday Night SIZZLE Social Reception

6:00 – 10:00 (Pavilion)

FAVES Has Gone Viva Las Vegas!

Join us starting at 6:00 PM for an evening of mixing and mingling while enjoying a full dinner. Then, as the lights dim, the dance floor comes alive from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM—get ready to light up the night! Talk with your Peers and Presenters while enjoying great food, entertainment, and refreshments.

This year's SIZZLE features a Las Vegas theme!

Come dressed in your favorite Vegas glam attire and get ready to light up the night in style.

A “Vegas Rat Pack” themed buffet will be provided, with live entertainment including, a dance area, free photo booth, caricature artists, gaming tables, and more!!! Professionals will mix drinks and a wide range of soda and other refreshments will be available for a \$ donation to the Helping Hands for Heros Organization, a 501c3 charity.

SIZZLE is free for all conference registrants, and FAVES members may bring up to one guest for free. All others must pay \$55 at the door to enjoy the festivities.

Adults only please. Trade Winds offers childcare at the expense of the parents.

Sponsored in part by "Visit St. Pete," The Trade Winds and FAVES

Wednesday June 3th, 2026

7:00-8:30	Breakfast on your own	
General Session – Island Grand Ballroom		
8:30-9:30	Debt Management: How to Prevent School Debt – In-Person	Dawn Eggers & Julie Lawrence – In Person
9:30-10:30	NAVPA Updates - In Person	
10:30-10:40	Break	
10:40-11:30	Veteran Readiness & Employment Updates - Virtual	Chantile Stovall, Acting Executive Director for Veteran Readiness & Employment Services
11:30 – 12:00	Constitution & Bylaws Voting & FAVES Membership Meeting (Voting) – In Person <i>Biz card mingle winner & Raffle Drawing</i>	Mike, Vice President FAVES & Dr. Jan Del Signore & Luis T.
12:00-1:15	Lunch Provided – Winning Wednesday (<i>Ticket Required</i>)	
1:15-2:15	Beach Chat - VA Central Office Updates Executive Director In-Person	Kenneth Smith, Executive Director VA Education Benefits
2:15-2:30	New Board Announcement & Results of Constitution & Bylaws Voting – In-Person	
2:30-3:30	SCO Training Requirements – Chelsea Jackson – Virtual	Chelsea Jackson
3:30-3:45	Break – Snack Break (<i>Ticket Required</i>)	
3:45 - 4:45	Compliance Surveys – Heather Cates - Virtual	Heather Cates
	Dinner on Own	

Thursday June 4th, 2026

7:00-8:30	Breakfast on your own	
General Session		
8:30-9:30	85/15 – - Virtual	Kate Caruso
9:30-9:45	Grand Prize Giveaway – Must be Present to win!	
9:45- 10:15	Florida Department of Veteran Affairs Updates – DJ Reyes	
10:15-10:45	Break (Reminder: Check out of Room!)	
10:45-11:45	Risk Based Survey and Supervisory Visits - Betsy Wickham - In Person	
11:45-12:00	Closing Remarks: Sandra Torres Pintos, Incoming President FAVES	Adjourn – Safe Travels Home
12:30-5:00	Board Meeting (Working Lunch) Old and New Board	Royal Tern
<u>Friday June 5th, 2026 (Post-Conference)</u>		
9:00-1:00	Board Meeting (Final Debriefing) (New Board)	

SCO Training Credits:

FAVES June 2025- SCO training requirements
FAVES June 2025-Enrollment Manager
FAVES June 2025-NCD programs
FAVES June 2025-Vocational & IHL Flight Programs,
FAVES June 2025-Work Study Programs
FAVES June 2025-Yellow Ribbon Programs

FAVES June 2025 – Legislative updates- VA Central Office
FAVES June 2025 – Compliance Survey
FAVES June 2025- 85/15
FAVES June 2025 Debt Management- How to prevent School Debt
FAVES June 2025 Risk Based Survey and Supervisory Visits

We look forward to seeing you at Island Grand a Tradewinds Resort!