



**Donald J. Payton, former Director of Governmental Relations
at Seminole State College, joins Ballard Partners**

TALLAHASSEE – Florida’s leading government affairs firm, Ballard Partners, today announced the addition of Donald J. Payton as a Senior Associate in the Orlando office. Payton has 35 years of experience working in the public policy arena with the majority of his time being focused in the education field. He will bring his expertise in education policy and appropriations to the Ballard Partners team.

“Don’s extensive background in education policy and the appropriations process will be a tremendous asset to the team at Ballard Partners,” said Brian Ballard, president of Ballard Partners. “Having lobbied in Illinois and Florida, Don’s knowledge of how government works makes him the ideal team member to assist our education clients with the issues that confront them.”

Payton served as the Director of Governmental Relations at Seminole State College for more than 10 years before retiring in December 2014. In that role, Payton developed and oversaw the implementation of the college’s governmental relations program at the local, state and federal levels. During his time at Seminole State College, Payton successfully obtained more than \$150 million in capital funding for the college, which enabled the construction of a new full-service branch campus and other facilities. He cultivated strong relationships with key legislators in the budget process and secured increases in state operating funding. Payton also served as Chairman of the Association of Florida Colleges’ Legislative Committee for two years and coordinated a comprehensive legislative and electoral strategy on behalf of the 28 institutions in the Florida College System.

“Education policy has been my passion for many years and I am excited for the opportunity to share my knowledge and expertise with the clients at Ballard Partners,” said Payton. “Brian and his team are the best in the business and I look forward to contributing to the incredible success they’ve already had.”

Prior to his position at Seminole State College, Payton was an Adjunct Instructor of Political Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield. Payton also served as a Senior Governmental Relations Executive and Legislative Liaison for a variety of agencies with the State of Illinois including the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and the State Board of Education. During his time with those agencies, Payton progressively moved up the ladder to manage the policy development process and oversee the governmental affairs program.

Payton has been honored with numerous awards and recognitions for his leadership and service to the education community. He received his Master of Arts in Political Studies from the University of Illinois and received his Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Public Administration from Illinois State University.

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Ballard Partners has been named by state and national publications as the leading government affairs firm in the Sunshine State. The Florida-based lobbying firm, with offices in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, West Palm Beach, Miami, Orlando and Tampa, combines extensive experience in government affairs with unwavering advocacy to maximize results for the clients they serve. Visit <http://ballard-partners.com> for more information.