

Dear Faculty and Staff,

We understand that many of you have heard about the student walkout that occurred in a neighboring school district last week. We have received a letter from the Florida Commissioner of Education requiring that school districts be prepared for these type of activities. In times like these, we are especially grateful for the professionalism, leadership, and commitment our employees consistently demonstrate.

To help provide clarity and guidance, we are providing you with the Technical Assistance Memo below, and are attaching a copy of the letter from the Florida Commissioner of Education.

These materials are intended to support you in responding confidently and appropriately should any related situations arise. Please be sure to read and review these materials carefully.

OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

February 2026

Technical Assistance Memo

Employee Guidance regarding Student Protests, Student Safety, and Instructional Time

Purpose

The purpose of this Technical Assistance Memo is to provide guidance to all Okaloosa County School District (OCSD) employees regarding expectations for student supervision, the protection of instructional time, and staff conduct in situations involving student protest activity.

This memo aligns with:

- The February 3, 2026 letter from the Florida Commissioner of Education;
- [OCSD Board Policies](#) related to student conduct, supervision, and instructional expectations;
- [Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code](#) — *Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida*.
- [OCSD Student Code of Conduct](#)

Guiding Principles for Okaloosa County School District

OCSD Responsibilities

The District must ensure:

- Schools provide a safe and secure learning environment,
- Instructional time is protected,
- Students remain under proper supervision,
- Appropriate disciplinary measures are taken if employee or student conduct violates policy.

Responding to On-Campus Protest Activity

If protest activity occurs:

- Remind your assigned students that disruptions of the school day, including instructional time, may result in disciplinary action. In the event that a student(s) attempt to leave a classroom to participate in some form of protest or walkout, you might consider telling them, "I care about your safety and your learning, if you choose to leave class, I need you to know that you may face disciplinary consequences, and I will notify administration."
- Maintain calm and focus on safety,
- Notify the Principal or designee of concerns,
- Do not physically engage with protest groups,
- Follow all directives from administration or law enforcement.

Employee Responsibilities and Professional Conduct

OCSD employees are expected to:

- Maintain professional neutrality in the presence of students,

- Protect instructional time,
- Ensure student safety and supervision,
- Follow all district directives and legal requirements,
- Avoid promoting, encouraging, or facilitating protest activity during school hours,
- Follow the requirements of School Board Policy 06-39 regarding use of Social Media.

Under Rule 6A-10.081, FAC, Principles of Professional Conduct employees shall:

- Distinguish personal views from school or district positions,
- Not exploit the professional relationship for political or personal advocacy,
- Maintain honesty, integrity, and neutrality in professional duties,
- Ensure the learning environment remains safe and respectful.

OCSD Best Practice Expectations for All Employees

Protect Instructional Time

Employees must:

- Begin instructional activities promptly,
- Maintain student engagement,
- Verbally redirect attempts to leave class for non-approved activities,
- Report disruptions following school and district protocols.

Maintain Student Safety & Supervision

Employees must:

- Account for all students assigned to their supervision,
- Report immediately to the Principal or designee if students leave without permission,
- Never leave students unsupervised,
- Follow OCSD safety and crisis procedures.

Maintain Professional Neutrality

Employees must not:

- Share political advocacy or personal ideology with students,
- Encourage or support student participation in walkouts or demonstrations,
- Use classroom time or communication channels to promote an issue,
- Take actions that could be interpreted as endorsing protest activity.

Responding to Student Questions

Employees may:

- Provide neutral, factual information when appropriate to the curriculum,
- Refer students to administration for clarification.

Employees may NOT:

- Direct students to protest, walk out, or gather,
- Assist students with planning any protest activity.

Thank you again for the strong leadership and professionalism you bring every day.

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