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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Anastasios Kamoutsas
Commissioner of Education

July 14, 2025

Dear Florida Parents,

As Florida's Commissioner of Education, and as a father myself to four beautiful daughters, I am deeply committed to creating safe, high-achieving schools where every child can succeed. I believe that the most powerful influence in a child's life is the role of the parent. That's why Governor Ron DeSantis has prioritized parental rights and signed House Bill 241 (2021) into law. Moreover, the Heritage Foundation ranked Florida #1 for Education Freedom for the third year in a row, and the Center for Education Reform ranked Florida #1 on the Parent Power Index for the fourth year in a row. Additionally, Florida ranked #1 on the EdChoice Friedman Index and ranked #2 for Education overall by U.S. News & World Report. As Commissioner, I will always continue to fight for and safeguard parental rights. You know your child best, and when parents are informed and included in the educational process, students succeed.

As we begin the 2025-2026 school year, I want to share how proud we are of Florida's students, teachers and families. Because of your support and involvement, Florida continues to advance achievement and academic growth. These results aren't just numbers; they represent real opportunities for our children.

At the heart of this success is you – the parent. You are your child's first teacher, and your voice matters. Whether helping with homework, attending school events or making decisions about your child's education, your participation is essential.

That's why I want to take a moment to remind you of some of the rights you have as the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a Florida public school. These rights aren't just written into law – they're rooted in the shared belief that families must be central to every meaningful decision in a child's learning and development. When families and educators work together, there is no limit to what our students can achieve.

You have the right to expect instruction that:

- Encourages individual responsibility, effort and merit.
- Does not assign guilt or blame based on a student's background or the way God created them.
- Is objective and factual.
- Aligns with Florida's state academic standards and protects students from being made to feel inferior or uncomfortable because of their race, sex or religion.
- Builds resiliency.

As your child progresses through his or her school day, below are some important areas we would like you to be aware of and request that any concerns you experience be reported to the Florida Department of Education.

- Pursuant to Florida law, every Florida school must begin the day with a one-to-two-minute moment of silence. Students may use this time quietly and thoughtfully, and we encourage you to talk with your child about how they might use that time in a meaningful way. 2
- You can also expect transparency in the instructional materials and training used in your child's classroom. By focusing on core academic subjects and rejecting indoctrination in the classroom, Florida has become a standard-bearer for educational excellence.
- Florida law requires schools to ensure that restrooms and changing areas are designated for exclusive use by boys or girls. Schools may also provide single-user or unisex options. These protections help maintain privacy, dignity and safety for all students.

Parents have a number of additional rights, as summarized below:

- The right to direct your child's education, upbringing, moral and religious training.
- The right to choose the educational setting that is best for your child – public, private, religious or home education.
- The right to review your child's school records at any time.
- The right to make medical decisions for your child and access their medical records.
- The right to give written consent before:
    - Your child's biometric data (like fingerprints) is collected or stored.
    - Any DNA or blood samples are taken, unless required by law or court order.
    - Audio or video recordings of your child are made, with exceptions for school safety, instruction, activities or identification cards.
- The right to be promptly notified if any government or school employee suspects a crime involving your child.
- The right to be told if there is any change in your child's physical, emotional or mental health support at school.
- The right to receive notice of any health services offered and choose whether or not your child participates.
- The right to transparency in instructional and library materials:
    - Elementary schools must post, in a searchable format on their websites, a list of all materials in school libraries and reading lists.
    - The Florida Department of Education must publish and regularly update a list of all materials removed or discontinued due to objections.
    - Each school board must have a process that allows parents and residents to object to specific instructional materials and ensures those objections are addressed and resolved.
- The right to ensure classroom instruction and school practices align with state law:
    - Classroom instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in grades prekindergarten through grade 8. If such instruction is provided in grades 9 through 12, it must be age appropriate or developmentally appropriate and consistent with state standards.
    - Public kindergarten through grade 12 employees and contractors must not be required to use preferred pronouns or titles that do not align with a person's biological sex.
    - Students may not be asked to share their preferred pronouns or penalized for choosing not to.
- The right to report a concern to your school principal and, if not resolved, escalate it to your district.

- If still unresolved, request a neutral Special Magistrate to review the issue and recommend a resolution.
  - These apply to:
    - Student welfare concerns related to health, safety or well-being.
    - Instructional or library materials you believe are inappropriate.

Parent Resources:

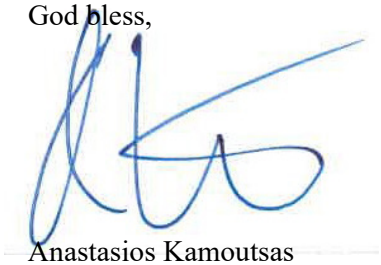
We would like to share with you some resources that are available to you as parents on our Parental Rights page located at https://www.fldoe.org/ParentalRights/.

- The Attorney General's Office of Parental Rights, where a parent may file a complaint related to violations of the Parent's Bill of Rights.
- To file a complaint of educator misconduct, please contact the Office of Professional Practices Services at the Florida Department of Education by emailing ParentalRights@fldoe.org.
- Florida law requires the implementation of a Special Magistrate process to support families by protecting parent's rights and giving them additional assistance with certain disputes that are not timely or satisfactorily resolved by a Florida school district. The link above provides information for parents seeking appointment of a Special Magistrate to resolve certain disputes.

As we begin this school year together, know that we are here for you and respect your role as the parent in the educational process. We are cheering for your child, supporting your family, and committed to ensuring every classroom in Florida is a place where every student is challenged and inspired to achieve his or her full potential.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. Let's make the 2025-2026 school year our best yet.

God bless,



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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
Charter School Leaders

FROM: Anastasios Kamoutsas

DATE: July 14, 2025

SUBJECT: **Reminder of Florida Parental Rights and Protections in Education**

Over the past several years, Governor Ron DeSantis has led theway in championing and prioritizing parental rights in education. Through bold leadership and legislative action, the essential role of parents in shaping their children's educational experience has elevated. Florida does not merely recognize parental rights – we protect them, celebrate them and continueto expandthem. Today, parents have more opportunities than ever to be informed, involved and empowered in theeducation of their children. As school districts and public charter schools, we encourage you to create a collaborativerelationshipwith your parents. The data show that when a student's parents are involved in his or her child's education, they are more likely to succeed.

This memo provides a clear reminder of key parental rightsand responsibilities underFlorida law. Along with this memo, I am also including a letter that districts and charter school leaders must immediately distribute to all parents of students enrolled in Florida's public schools.

Parents' Bill of Rights.

House Bill (HB) 241 (2021) created Section (s.) 1014.04, Florida Statutes (F.S.), Parental rights. Florida law guarantees that all parental rights are reserved to parentsof minorchildren, withoutobstruction or interference from the state or any governmental or educational institution. Key parental rights include:

- Educational Rights:
  - Directing their child's education and care.
  - Directing their child's upbringing, including moral and religious training.
  - Choosing their child's educational setting, including public, private, religious or home education programs.
  - Accessing and reviewing all school records related to their child.
- Health and Privacy Rights:
  - Making healthcare decisions for their child, unless otherwise prohibited by law.
  - Accessing all medicalrecords of their child, except in limited circumstances involving law enforcement investigations.
  - Providing written consent before:
    - Biometric scans are made, shared or stored.
    - Audio or video recordings of their child are made, with exceptions for safety, instruction, school activities, security or identification cards.

        - DNA or blood records are created, stored or shared, except as required by law or court order.
    - Notification Rights:
        - Receiving prompt notification if a state or governmental employee suspects a criminal offense against their child, unless reporting to law enforcement or child welfare would be impeded.
    - Additional protections:
        - State and school employees may not encourage or coerce a child to withhold information from theirparents. Violations of this provision mayresult in disciplinary action.
        - Parental rights under this law are broad and extend beyond the rights specifically listed in the statute. These rights may not be limited or denied unless expressly required by law.

Parental Rights in Education Act.

HB 1557 (2022) amended s. 1001.42, F.S., Powers and duties of district school board. Parents have the fundamentalright to make decisions regarding the upbringing andcontrolof their children. Key provisions of the Parental Rights in Education Act include:

- Requiring district school boards to adopt procedures for notifying a student's parent if there is a change in the student's services or monitoring related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportivelearning environment for the student.
    - The procedures must reinforce the fundamental right of parents to make decisions regarding the upbringing and control of their children by requiring school district personnel to encourage a student todiscuss issues relatingto his or her well-being with his or her parent or to facilitate discussion of the issue with the parent.
    - The procedures maynot prohibit parents from accessing any of their children's education and health records created, maintained or used by the school district, as required by s. 1002.22(2), F.S.
- Providing that school districts maynot adopt proceduresor student support forms that prohibit school district personnel from notifying a parent about his or her student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being, or a changein related services or monitoring, or that encourage or have the effect of encouraging a student to withhold from a parent such information.
    - School district personnel may not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvementin critical decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.
    - School districts may adopt procedures that permit school personnel to withhold such information from a parent if a reasonably prudent person would believe that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment or neglect, as those terms are defined in s. 39.01, F.S.
- Establishingthat classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards.
- Requiring each school district, at thebeginning of the school year, to notify parents of each health care service offered at their student's school and the option to withhold consent or decline any specific service.

  - Parental consent to a health care service does not waive a parent's right to access his or her student's educational or health records or to be notified about a change in hisor her student's services or monitoring.
  - Before administering a student well-being questionnaireor health screening form to a student in kindergarten through grade 3, a school district must provide theparent the questionnaire or health screening form and obtain permission of the parent.
- Requiring each school district to adopt procedures for a parent to notify the principal, or his or her designee, regarding specific concerns at his or her student's school about practices and procedures under s. 1001.42(8)(c), F.S., andthe process for resolving thoseconcerns within seven calendar days after notification by the parent.
- Requiring school districts to adopt procedures to resolve concerns that remain unresolved by the principal; requires resolution within 30 days.
- Requiring each school district to adopt policies to notify parents of the procedures required if a concern is not resolved by the school district.

Additional Bills Supporting Parental Rights in Education.

HB 1069 (2023) again amendeds. 1001.42, F.S., Powers and duties of district school boards ensuring that parents continue to havethe fundamental right to make decisions regarding theupbringingand control of their children. Key provisions of this bill include:

- Expanding that classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in prekindergarten through grade 8, except when required by ss. 1003.42(2)(n)3. and1003.46, F.S. The law clarified that if such instruction is provided in grades 9 through 12, theinstruction must be age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards. The law also explicitly stated that this provision applies to charter schools.
- Providing that a person's sex is an immutable biological trait and that it is false to ascribe to a person a pronoun that does not correspond to such person's sex.
- Providing that an employee, contractor, or student of a public K-12 educational institution may not be required, as a condition of employment or enrollment or participation in any program, to refer to another person using that person's preferred personal title or pronouns if such personal title or pronouns do not correspond to that person's sex.
- Providing that an employee or contractor of a public K-12 educational institution maynot provide to a student hisor her preferred personal title or pronouns if such preferred personal title or pronouns do not correspond to his or her sex.
- Providing that a student may not be asked by an employee or contractor of a public K-12 educational institution to provide his or her preferred personal title or pronouns or be penalized or subjected to adverse or discriminatory treatment for not providing his or her preferred personal title or pronouns.

House Bill 1467 (2022) amended s. 1006.28, F.S., to increase transparency around school materials. The bill introduced new requirements, such as the online posting of school library media center and reading list materials, as well as a state-maintained list of materials removed due to objections. In addition, the bill reaffirmed parental rights by requiring each district school board to adopt a policy that outlines the process for parents toobject to specificinstructional materials and ensures those objections are addressed and resolved. Key provisions of this bill include:

- Requiring that each elementary school publish on its website, in a searchable format, a list of all materials maintained in the school library media center or required as part of a school or grade-level reading list.

- Requiring the department to publish and regularly update a list of materials that were removed or discontinued as a result of an objection.

Safety in Private Spaces Act.

HB 1521 (2023) created s. 553.865, F.S., referred to as the Safety in Private Spaces Act. The law requires certain entities, includingeducational institutions, to provide restrooms and changing facilities for exclusive male or female use, or offer unisex options. The law allows limited exceptions for entry into opposite-sex facilities and establishes trespass penalties for unauthorized entry.

To implement the law, the State Board of Education (SBE) amended Rule 6A-10.086, F.A.C., requiring:

- Restrooms designated for male or female use, or unisex restrooms per s. 553.865(3), F.S.;
- Changing facilities designated for male or female use, or unisex changingfacilities per s. 553.865(3), F.S.;
- Student codes of conduct updated in accordance with s. 553.865(9)(a), F.S.; and
- Disciplinary procedures for employee violations per s. 553.865(11)(a), F.S.

Moment of Silence in Public Schools.

HB 529 (2021) amended s. 1003.45, F.S., requiring a moment of silence. The law requires the following:

- Each public school teacher is required to provide one to two minutes of silence at the start of each school day.
- Teachers may not suggest how students should use this time.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss with their child how this time may be best used.
- Students are expected to respect the participation of their peers during the moment of silence

Principles of Individual Freedom.

HB 7 (2022), Individual Freedom, amended s. 1000.05, F.S., and reinforces parents' rights by ensuring that classroom instruction, required topics, instructional materials and professional learning align with the following protections for students:

- All persons are equal before the law and have inalienable rights. Instruction and materials must reflect that:
    - No person is inherently racist, sexist or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex.
    - No race is inherently superior to another race.
    - No person shouldbe discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability or sex.
    - Meritocracyor traits such as a hard work ethicare not racist but fundamental to the right to pursue happiness and be rewarded for industry.
    - A person, by virtue of his or her race or sex, does not bear responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex.
    - A person should not be instructed that he or she must feel guilt, anguish or other forms of psychological distress for actions, in which he or she played no part, committed in thepast by other members of the same race or sex.
- Instruction must be objective and free from indoctrination. Topics such as slavery, racial oppression and segregation must be taught objectively, but instruction may not promote concepts that violate these principles.

- Parentshave a right to transparency and access. Instructional materialsand professional development must align with these principles and are reviewed by the Florida Department of Education. Parents must have access to review all materials used in the classroom.
- Health education and life skills must promote individual responsibility. Content must not promote adverse treatment or assign guilt based on race, color, sex or national origin.

Superintendents andcharter school leaders shouldtake great care in understanding all of the rights that parents have in Florida. You should also ensure that all of your employees know and understand parental rights in Florida. Again, superintendents and charter school leaders must promptly distribute the attached letter to parents. Thank you for your continued leadership in ensuring that Florida's parents remain informed and engaged in the education of their children.

AK/pob