



FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S DESK

April 2026



Teachers,

As we approach Progress Monitoring (PM) 3 on the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking, I am reminded that student success is never the result of one effort alone. It is built through consistent, meaningful partnerships between our teachers and families.

This year, that partnership has been on full display across Florida. Teachers, your expertise and evidence-based instruction continue to guide students forward. Parents, through encouragement and engagement, you are helping to reinforce those lessons in powerful ways. Together, you are creating the conditions for students to not only succeed but thrive.

With the PM3 window opening May 1, now is the time to continue that strong collaboration. Simple actions, such as making sure students are well-rested, prepared and encouraged, have a lasting impact. Just as importantly, maintaining high expectations and consistent support through the final weeks of school will help students close the year strong.

Thank you for the role you play in this shared work.

Sincerely,
Anastasios Kamoutsas

FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM MONTH

This month, we proudly celebrate Florida College System Month and recognize the impact of our Great 28 state colleges – the primary gateway to postsecondary education and a driving force behind Florida's economic growth.

Florida continues to lead the nation in higher education, workforce education, graduation rates, affordability, and talent attraction. These results reflect the state's commitment to providing students with high-quality, affordable pathways to success.

In 2024-25, more than 100,000 secondary students earned college credit through dual enrollment at Florida College System institutions. This saved Florida families nearly \$95 million in tuition and fees, reducing student debt and accelerating their path to college.

Thanks to Governor Ron DeSantis' ongoing investments in expanding career pathways and strengthening campus safety, our colleges are delivering strong outcomes for students. Since 2019, Florida has invested more than \$12 billion in workforce education, helping students gain the skills needed for in-demand careers.

[FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM MONTH](#)

FCDI STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Florida's top student debaters recently took center stage at the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative (FCDI) State Championship, showcasing the knowledge, confidence and leadership skills that define our state's commitment to civics education. This year's championship welcomed a record 748 middle and high school students, nearly doubling participation from last year.



BUILDING GREAT CITIZENS

Students competed across 11 speech and debate categories, demonstrating excellence in critical thinking, public speaking, and respectful discourse. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Debate highlighted the importance of engaging thoughtfully on complex issues while defending the principles that shape our nation.

This year's top honors went to Gavyn Purvis, who earned the Ronald Reagan Presidential Debate championship title along with a \$50,000 scholarship and a trophy named in honor of Charlie Kirk.

Through initiatives such as the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative and the Florida Debate Initiative, student participation has expanded to more than 330 teams across every school district, with nearly 3,000 students participating this year and over 1,400 volunteer judges supporting competitions statewide.

[FLORIDA CIVICS AND DEBATE INITIATIVE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP](#)



During National Apprenticeship Week, April 26-May 2, Florida highlights its leadership in expanding apprenticeship pathways. This effort showcases innovative, industry-driven models that align workforce training with real employer needs. As part of this effort, I visited Ring Power Corporation's Diesel Engine Apprenticeship Program campus to see firsthand how industry-driven training is preparing students for high-skill, high-wage careers. This innovative model aligns workforce training with real employer needs and demonstrates the power of public-private partnerships. Programs like this can be scaled statewide to strengthen Florida's workforce pipeline and ensure students are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in critical industries.

[FLORIDA'S APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS](#)

RESILIENCY

Each month, the Resiliency Florida initiative features one of the 11 key Resiliency Characteristics as the Characteristic of the Month. This creates a structured, year-round approach to building resiliency skills. Each monthly toolkit is available for download and designed for parents, teachers, and school leaders to provide ready-to-use resources to support conversations and skill-building both in school and at home.



[SIGN UP NOW!](#)

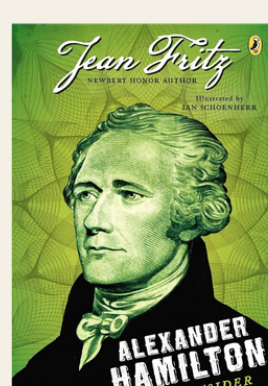
SUGGESTED READING

Literacy skills developed during formative years are essential for students to succeed both academically and in life, and reading comprehension develops as students engage with interesting and meaningful books. Teachers and parents are encouraged to recommend this book to students.

Alexander Hamilton: The Outsider

By Jean Fritz

Alexander Hamilton: The Outsider by Jean Fritz tells the story of a young immigrant who rose from being a teenager to become one of America's Founding Fathers. Through determination, intellect, and a strong sense of purpose, Hamilton overcame challenges to shape the nation's financial system and future. This engaging account highlights themes of perseverance, ambition, and civic responsibility, showing how one individual's drive and ideas can make a lasting impact on history.



Recommended for grades 6-8