



# FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S DESK

August 28, 2025

Teachers,

As we kick off the 2025–2026 school year, I want to highlight the incredible partnership at the heart of Florida's continued success: teachers and parents working side by side to put students first. Florida's educators are among the very best, and parents across the state consistently step up to support them, ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education.

As Florida's Commissioner of Education, I am committed to two main priorities: student academic success and school safety. Florida's students thrive when classrooms are focused, families are engaged and instruction is grounded in academic rigor and strong support.

I look forward to seeing how we build upon last year's success.

Sincerely,  
Anastasios Kamoutsas

**CELEBRATING THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR**



## TEACHER RECOGNITION

This summer I had the privilege of selecting Mark Harrison from Union County as the 2026 Florida Teacher of the Year. The Florida Department of Education also recognized the following educators and school employees.



**MARK HARRISON**

2026 Florida Teacher  
of the Year



**JOSEPH MIKULSKI**

2025 Florida Principal  
of the Year



**DR. BRYAN ALVARÉ**

2025 Florida Assistant  
Principal of the Year



**KELSIE RODRIGUEZ**

2025 School-Related  
Employee of the Year

## LETTERS TO DISTRICTS

Since I have taken on the role as Commissioner, I have sent several letters to district superintendents to provide to you, our teachers across the state. In case you missed one of my letters, I have provided brief descriptions and links to the letters below.

### TEACHER SALARY INCREASE ALLOCATION

You play a vital role in the success of our students and the continued strength of our state. In recognition of your impact, Governor Ron DeSantis has dedicated historic and sustained funding to increase your compensation with nearly \$6 billion invested. Unfortunately, many teachers' unions continue to delay these compensation increases. I encourage you to contact your local union representatives and demand they get you the dollars that have been appropriated to you, immediately.

### TEACHER BILL OF RIGHTS

In Florida, all students have a right to learn in a student-centered learning environment where Florida's state academic standards are the foundation for learning. This memo serves as a reminder of your rights, specifically regarding student discipline in the classroom.

### CHAMPIONING PARENTAL RIGHTS

Over the past several years, Governor Ron DeSantis has led the way in championing and prioritizing parental rights in education. Florida does not merely recognize parental rights – we protect, celebrate and continue to expand them. As school districts and public charter school teachers, we encourage you to create a collaborative relationship with your parents. The data show that children are more likely to succeed when their parents are involved in their education.

### PRIORITIZING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Lee and Manatee County School Districts have taken the bold step of incentivizing high-performing teachers with greater compensation to work at low-performing schools. They are using the full flexibility provided to them in Florida law to prioritize teachers and increase student achievement. I applaud these districts for ensuring our best teachers are supporting our students who are struggling the most. Sadly, the teachers' union is pushing back instead of supporting student achievement and immediate pay incentives for teachers.

## 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.

### THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL

*by Anne Frank*

This is a powerful, firsthand account of a young Jewish girl's life in hiding during the Nazi occupation. Both heartbreaking and inspiring, Anne's words offer a timeless reminder of the strength of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable hardship.

Recommended for grades 6-8.

