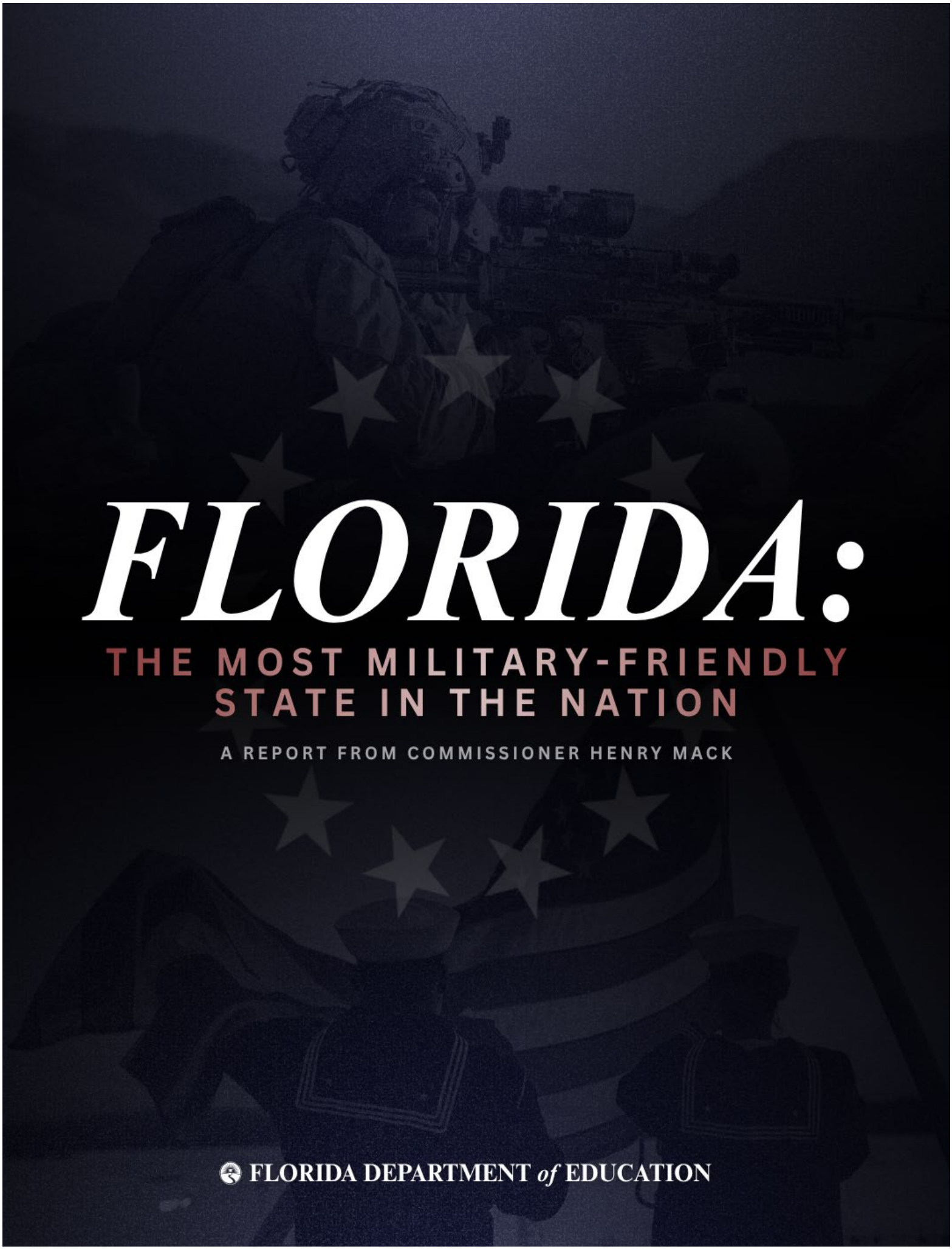


FLORIDA:

THE MOST MILITARY-FRIENDLY STATE IN THE NATION

A REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER HENRY MACK

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

Table of Contents

FROM COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION 2

Introduction 5

Public Education and Military Recruitment 6

Student Achievement 6

Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards 7

Florida's First-in-the-Nation Progress Monitoring System 7

FAST English Language Arts (ELA) PM3 10

FAST Mathematics PM3 11

High School Graduation Rate and College and Career Acceleration 12

Educational Options 14

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program 15

Family Empowerment Scholarship Program 16

Opportunity Scholarship Program 18

Charter Schools 18

Virtual Educational Options 19

Home Education 20

Public School Benefits & Accommodations for Military Families 20

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) 20

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps 20

High School Athletics 22

Eliminating "Transfer Penalties" 22

Ongoing Commitments to Military-Connected Children 22

Educator Recruitment and Retention 23

Florida Veterans to Teachers Program (FV2T) 23

Purple Star Teacher Leadership Program 24

Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans 24

Military Certification Fee Waiver 25

Military Educational Leadership Pathway 25

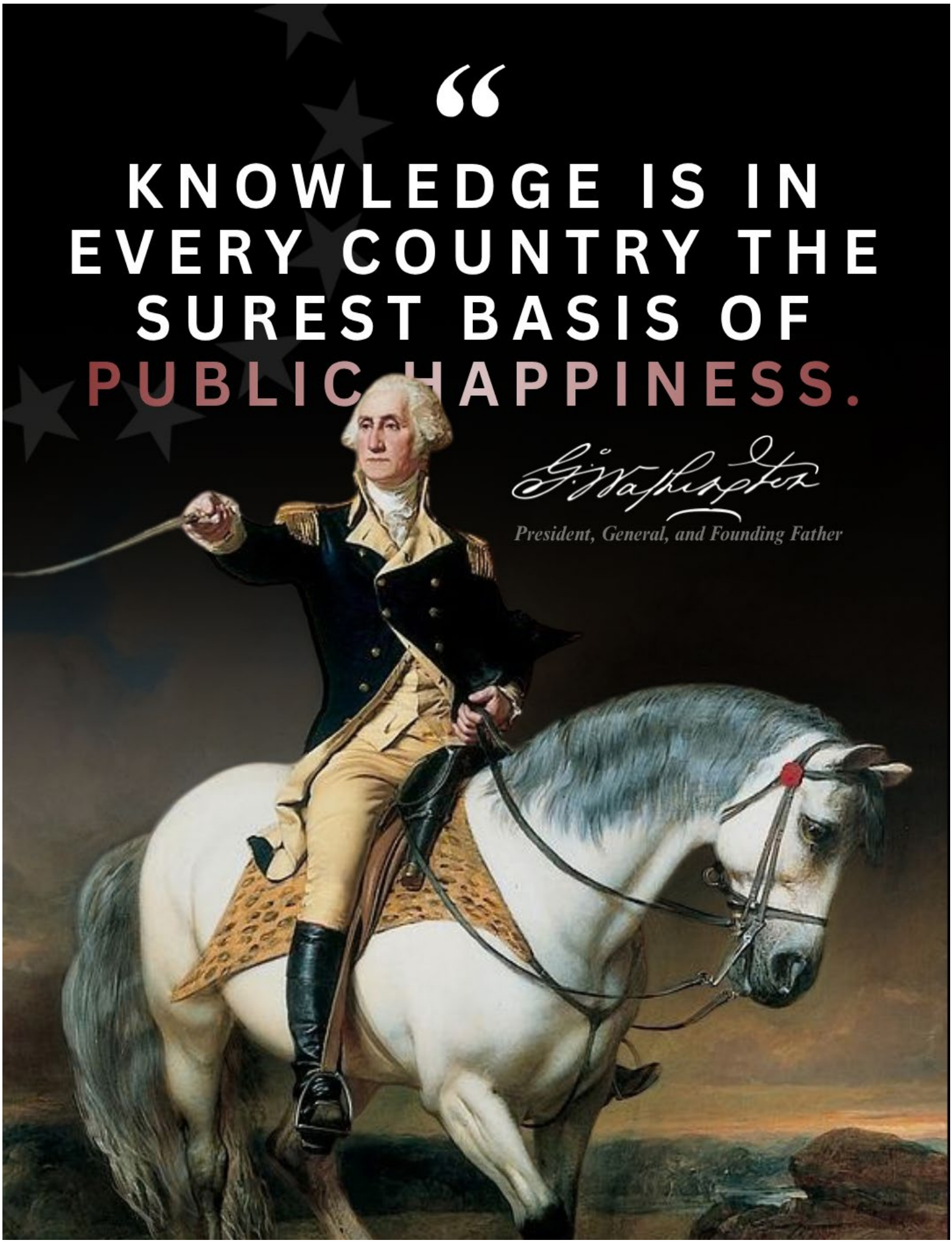
Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact 26

Heroes in the Classroom Bonus Program 26

Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) 27

Training in Supporting Military Families and Transfer of Education Records 27

Building Resiliency In Florida's Students 27
Purple Star Schools of Distinction and Collegiate Purple Star Campuses Programs 29
Postsecondary Education 30
#1 Ranked Higher Education System in the Nation 31
Tuition and Fee Waivers and Benefits 32
Postsecondary Financial Assistance and Scholarship Programs 33
Dual Enrollment 34
Giving Credit Where Credit is Due 34
Career and Technical Education 35
Apprenticeship Programs 37
Career, Technical and Adult Education Outreach Campaigns 39
A Wonderful Place to Raise a Family 40
A True Partner in State Government 42
A Trusted Steward of Taxpayer Resources 43
Employment, Training, and Streamlined Licensure for Veterans, Active-Duty Military, and Their Families 44
Housing, Health, and Economic Development 44
Championing American Values in the United States Military 45
The National Guard 45
United States Space Force 45
Conclusion 46


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KNOWLEDGE IS IN EVERY COUNTRY THE SUREST BASIS OF PUBLIC HAPPINESS.
G. Washington
President, General, and Founding Father

LETTER

FROM COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Florida is proud to be the nation's most military-friendly state. Across our communities, active-duty service members, veterans, military spouses, and military-connected students strengthen our schools, workforce, and neighborhoods through their leadership, sacrifice, and commitment to our nation. The Florida Department of Education is honored to support these families through an education system designed to provide opportunity, flexibility, and pathways to success at every stage of life.

Military families face unique challenges, including frequent relocations, school transitions, career changes, and deployments. We recognize that access to excellent educational opportunities is one of the most important factors families consider when determining where to live, work, and raise their children. Florida has intentionally built a system that helps military-connected families thrive by removing barriers, expanding opportunities, and ensuring students have access to the resources they need to succeed.

This report highlights the Department's continued commitment to serving Florida's military families through high-quality educational opportunities spanning early learning, K-12 education, workforce education, and postsecondary education. It reflects our belief that every student deserves access to an education that prepares them for success in school, in work, and in life.

Florida's commitment to educational excellence has produced results that are recognized across the nation. Florida students continue to achieve high levels of performance through rigorous academic standards, expanded educational choice, and innovative instructional practices. Today, Florida is home to a higher education system ranked #1 in the nation for the past decade, with record high school graduation rates, and it continues to lead the nation in educational freedom and opportunity. As the first state to implement a statewide progress monitoring system, Florida remains committed to pioneering solutions that help students reach their fullest potential.

Florida's success is a testament to the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, whose commitment to educational excellence and support for military families has helped make Florida a destination for opportunity. Under his leadership, Florida has expanded educational choice, strengthened workforce education, invested in student achievement, and advanced policies that support military service members, veterans, military spouses, and military-connected children. We are forever grateful and indebted to him for his vision and steadfast commitment to ensuring Florida remains both the Education State and a national leader in supporting those who serve our country.

Florida is also dedicated to creating opportunities for veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses. Through educator certification pathways, workforce training programs, apprenticeships, and postsecondary opportunities, Florida helps military families translate their experience, leadership, and talents into meaningful careers that continue their legacy of service within our communities. The strength of Florida's military community and the strength of Florida's education system are closely connected. We remain committed to expanding opportunities, removing barriers, and ensuring military families have access to the educational resources they need to achieve their goals. As Florida continues to grow and lead, we will remain steadfast in our support of the service members, veterans, and families who have given so much in service to our nation.

On behalf of the Florida Department of Education, I want to thank the brave men and women who serve our nation, and the families who serve alongside them. Your sacrifice, resilience, and dedication strengthen our communities and inspire future generations of Floridians. Florida is proud to stand with you, and we remain committed to ensuring that military-connected students, veterans, and families have access to the opportunities, resources, and support they need to thrive. As you continue your service to our country, know that Florida will continue to serve you in return by remaining a place where military families can succeed in school, in work, and in life.



Henry Mack
Commissioner of Education
Florida Department of Education


Florida's Military Installations, Missions, and Key Organizations
NAS PENSACOLA
Provides aviation flight and maintenance training for Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND
NAVAL AIR TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER
NAS WHITING FIELD
Multi-service primary fixed wing training and advanced helicopter pilot training.
CORRY STATION
Cyber warfare and intelligence training.
SAUFLEY FIELD
Naval education.
NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY PANAMA CITY
RDT&E for amphibious warfare, diving, maritime special operations, mine warfare, and other littoral missions in coastal areas.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
NAVAL SURFACE WARFARE CENTER PANAMA CITY DIVISION
NAVAL DIVING AND SALVAGE TRAINING CENTER
CENTER FOR EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL AND DIVING
NS MAYPORT
Fleet basing and support.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
US FOURTH FLEET
HELICOPTER STRIKE WING, ATLANTIC
NAS JACKSONVILLE
A master air and industrial base supporting anti-submarine warfare and aviation training.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
NAVY REGION SE HEADQUARTERS
FLEET READINESS CENTER SE
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND SE
PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE WING ELEVEN
Jacksonville Range Complex
150,000 square miles of air, surface, and subsurface operational area, strategically located in Florida's near coastal waters, supporting all services and integrating six instrumented ranges. Warm waters, temperate climate, lower sea states, and shore proximity make JRC the ideal training venue.
JACKSONVILLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Florida Air National Guard Base.
CAMP BLANDING JOINT TRAINING CENTER
Florida National Guard training base.
USMC SUPPORT FACILITY BLOUNT ISLAND
Maritime Prepositioning Force, Seaborne Logistics.
PINECASTLE BOMBING RANGE
Navy Primary Live-Fire Bombing Range.
HURLBURT FIELD
Supports global special operations missions.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
1ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING
EGLIN AFB
Conducts launch, range, and expeditionary operations supporting military, NASA, national security, and civilian missions.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
96TH TEST WING
919TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING
AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY MUNITIONS DIRECTORATE
RDT&E for air-launched munitions
F-35 JOINT INTERNATIONAL TRAINING
7TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP
NAVAL SCHOOL EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL
TYNDALL AFB
Advanced training for pilots, air traffic and weapon controllers.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
AIR FORCES NORTH / 1ST AIR FORCE
Command center for air operations in North America
601ST AIR OPERATIONS CENTER
53RD WEAPONS EVALUATION GROUP
supports air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons system evaluation programs
325TH FIGHTER WING / F-22 TRAINING AND OPERATIONS
MACDILL AFB
Supports airlift and aerial refueling missions, and hosts two Unified commands.
US CENTRAL COMMAND
United States command for Middle East.
US SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
Worldwide command for counter-terrorism special operations.
TALLAHASSEE
JACKSONVILLE
ORLANDO
TAMPA
ST. PETERSBURG
MIAMI
CAPE CANAVERAL SPACE FORCE STATION
Provides access to space and test range operations.
KEY ORGANIZATION:
SPACE LAUNCH DELTA 45
NAVY ORDNANCE TEST UNIT
PATRICK SPACE FORCE BASE
Supports launch, range, and expeditionary operations for the military, NASA, and civilians.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
SPACE LAUNCH DELTA 45
AIR FORCE TECHNICAL APPLICATIONS CENTER
920TH RESCUE WING
NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY ORLANDO - MULTI-SERVICE MODELING, SIMULATION AND TRAINING ACQUISITION
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER TRAINING SYSTEM DIVISION
PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR SIMULATION, TRAINING AND INSTRUMENTATION, ARMY
PROGRAM MANAGER FOR TRAINING SYSTEMS, MARINE CORPS
AIR FORCE AGENCY FOR MODELING AND SIMULATION
AVON PARK AIR FORCE RANGE
Air-to-ground and ground training range.
U.S. COAST GUARD 7TH DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS MIAMI
HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE
Provides combat air power, combat support forces, and humanitarian support.
US SOUTHERN COMMAND
United States command for Central and South America and the Caribbean.
NAS KEY WEST
The Navy's premier pilot training facility for transient tactical aviation squadrons.
KEY ORGANIZATIONS:
NAS BOCA CHICA
SPECIAL FORCES UNDERWATER OPERATIONS SCHOOL AND USCG KEY WEST
JOINT INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE SOUTH
FLORIDA COMMERCE
Joint Gulf Range Complex
A critical strategic advantage in Florida is the Joint Gulf Range Complex. This encompasses 180,000 square miles of DoD controlled airspace over the Gulf of Mexico. Florida's training area also contains multiple live-fire bombing ranges, including Pinecastle Range, Avon Park Air Force Range, and the Eglin Bombing Range. This integral part of DoD's Training Resources Strategy allows for joint maritime, air, and land training exercises.
MAP KEY
Private Sector Defense & Homeland Security Establishments
Unified Combatant Commands
State Capital
Florida's Largest Cities (by population)
Note: Bases have multiple missions and key organizations—not all are listed on this map.

INTRODUCTION

Florida has been at the forefront of bold, comprehensive education reform for decades – from accountability, to literacy, to teacher certification and recognition, to providing parents more freedom to select the learning environment that best fits their students' needs. These reforms laid the groundwork for the historic 2023 legislative session. Governor Ron DeSantis and elected officials across state government championed a truly transformative legislative agenda, making 2023 a watershed year in Florida education history.

For current members of the military, Florida's education freedom is welcome news. In 2018, the secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force pointed out that the "factors military families cite most frequently as drawbacks to military service include military dependents' difficulty assimilating into local school systems following a duty station transfer, the quality of schools available for their children, and the ability of spouses to obtain jobs and sustain careers." An *Education Week* article published a year later detailed the difficulties military families face when they are compelled to enroll their children in underperforming schools surrounding military bases in other states. For these reasons, no state has done more to increase the availability of high-quality public, private, and home-school options for our nation's military families than the state of Florida.



PUBLIC EDUCATION AND MILITARY RECRUITMENT

Decades after Florida's elected officials and education leaders began increasing academic rigor through systematic reform of its public education, the state remains a vital pipeline of talent for the United States military. A 2018 Institute for Defense Analyses report highlighted Florida's remarkable record of supplying recruits to the military. Relative to its youth population, Florida's military accessions outpace every state except Texas. More recent statistics from the United States Army Recruitment Command confirm that Florida is a military recruitment powerhouse. During Fiscal Year 2025, 9.1 percent of Army recruits were from Florida, trailing only Texas (13 percent) and California (10.9 percent) and far outpacing Georgia (5 percent).

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test provides insight into candidates' math, verbal, science/technical, and spatial recognition abilities. These scores are used in the evaluation process that determines whether a candidate qualifies to become a member of a branch of the military. Students who receive a substandard elementary and secondary education are less likely to achieve a satisfactory ASVAB score, limiting access to the remarkable opportunities the United States military offers our citizens and jeopardizing the safety and security of our nation.

While disaggregated ASVAB scores are not readily available for all branches of the armed forces, a 2010 Education Trust study of military recruitment reported state-by-state ASVAB ineligibility rates based on United States Army data. Florida's overall ineligibility rate of 20.9 percent was lower than the national average of 22.6 percent, despite having the third largest applicant cohort in the nation that year. The two states that had larger ASVAB cohorts, California, and Texas, had higher ineligibility rates than Florida. Even states with much smaller ASVAB cohorts, including Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New York, had a higher percentage of ineligible candidates than Florida. Most notably, Florida's ineligibility rates across racial and ethnic demographic groups were lower than the national averages.

In both the number of accessions and in the quality of recruits, the health and performance of the United States military is tied directly to Florida's schools. Standardized test scores suggest that the average recruit from Florida is far better prepared than those from other high-accession states.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, requires that state report cards disaggregate student achievement information on academic assessments (mathematics, reading/language arts, and science), including information about students with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. Florida's annual report cards include this disaggregation for accountability

measures such as achievement data at each level of achievement, proficiency, learning gains, and graduation rates.

In general, students from military families outperform their peers on state standardized tests, although such comparisons should be conducted with caution due to differences between the two groups. In 2025-2026, 73 percent of military-connected children performed on or above grade-level (Level 3) across all subjects and grades, compared to 62 percent of non-military students. Military-connected children exceed their non-military peers in grade-level performance by 11 percentage points in both Statewide English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Double-digit advantages for military-connected children hold true for science and social studies assessment results. In addition to assessment results, the Florida Department of Education offers a variety of statistical resources through its Know Your Schools Portal.

Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards

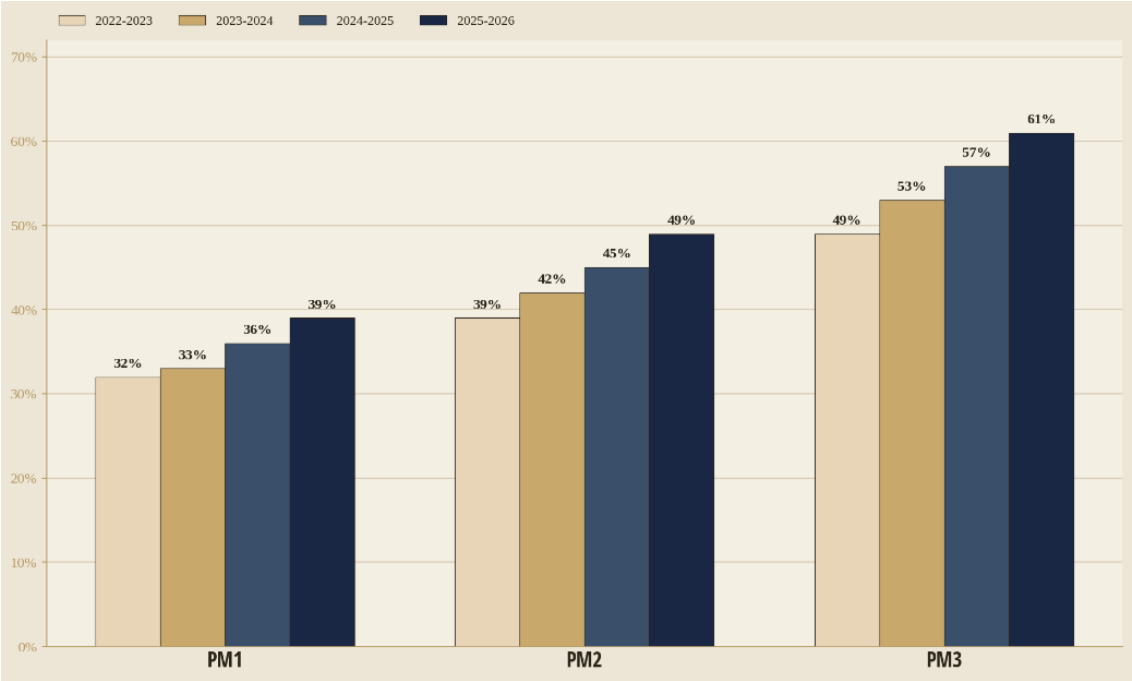
In 2019, Governor Ron DeSantis directed the Florida Department of Education to review and revise Florida's English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics standards, resulting in the development of the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards. The ELA standards emphasize foundational literacy skills, reading comprehension, vocabulary and effective communication, while the Mathematics standards emphasize conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. Following a phased implementation, Florida introduced the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) to measure student progress toward mastery of these standards. FAST provides three progress monitoring opportunities throughout the school year: Progress Monitoring 1 (PM1) establishes a beginning-of-year baseline, Progress Monitoring 2 (PM2) measures midyear progress and Progress Monitoring 3 (PM3) measures student mastery of grade-level standards at the end of the school year. Together, these assessments provide educators with actionable data to inform instruction, monitor student progress and measure academic achievement. In addition to the B.E.S.T. Standards for ELA and Mathematics, Florida maintains academic standards across all other content areas that establish high expectations for student knowledge and academic achievement.

Florida's First-in-the-Nation Progress Monitoring System

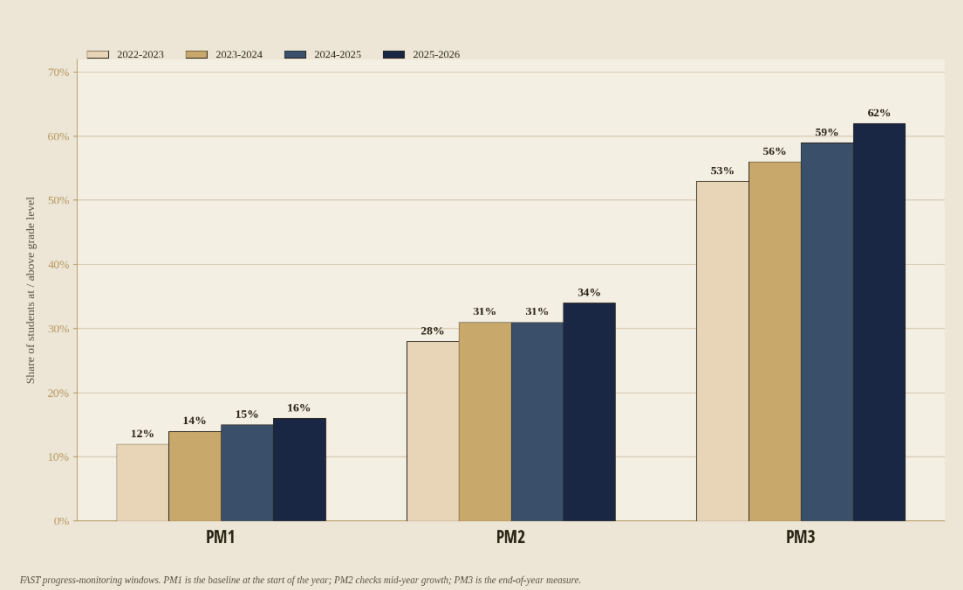
Florida became the first state in the nation to replace traditional end-of-year testing with a progress monitoring system. Under the previous high-stakes testing model, students could struggle the entire school year without educators receiving the information needed to proactively address those challenges. Florida's progress monitoring system changed that by providing teachers, students, and families with real-time insight into student performance, allowing educators and parents to identify areas where students may need additional support, adjust instruction, and help students stay on track to achieve academic success. Since implementing progress monitoring in 2022-2023, student performance has steadily increased across grade levels and student subgroups. In 2025-2026, for the first time ever, more than 60 percent of Florida students are performing at or above grade level

in both ELA and mathematics, marking another significant milestone for Florida's nation-leading education system.

Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) English Language Arts/Reading PM1 to PM3,
Grades 3-10 Achievement Level 3 or Above

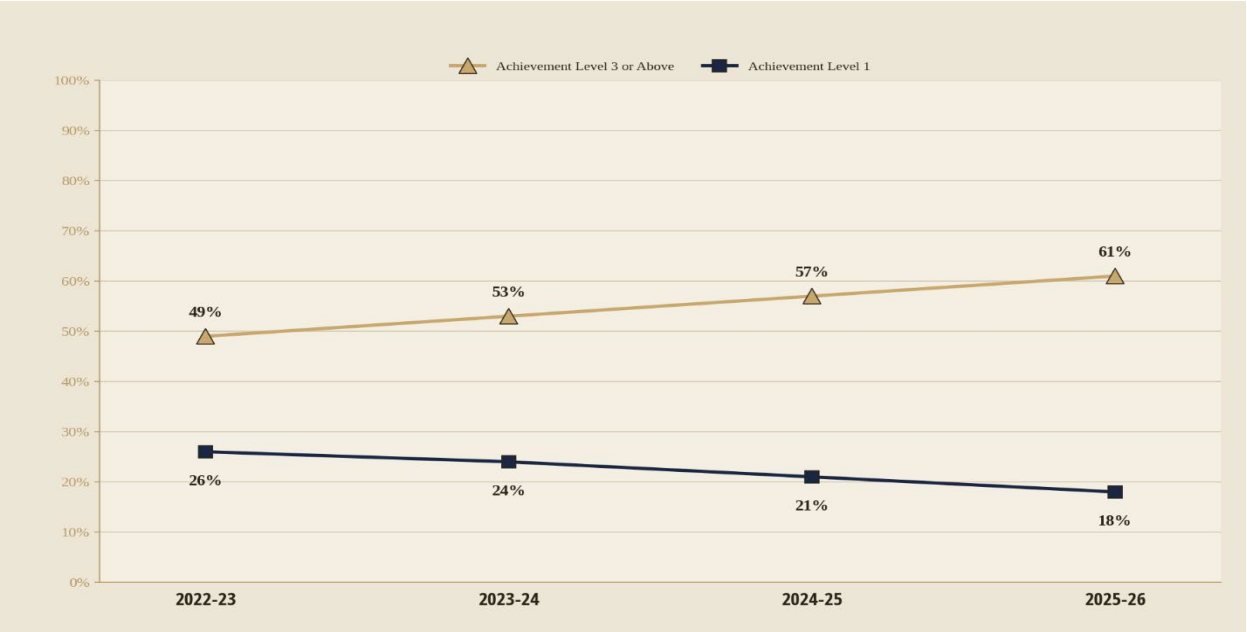


FAST Mathematics PM1 to PM3, Grades 3-8
Achievement Level 3 or Above



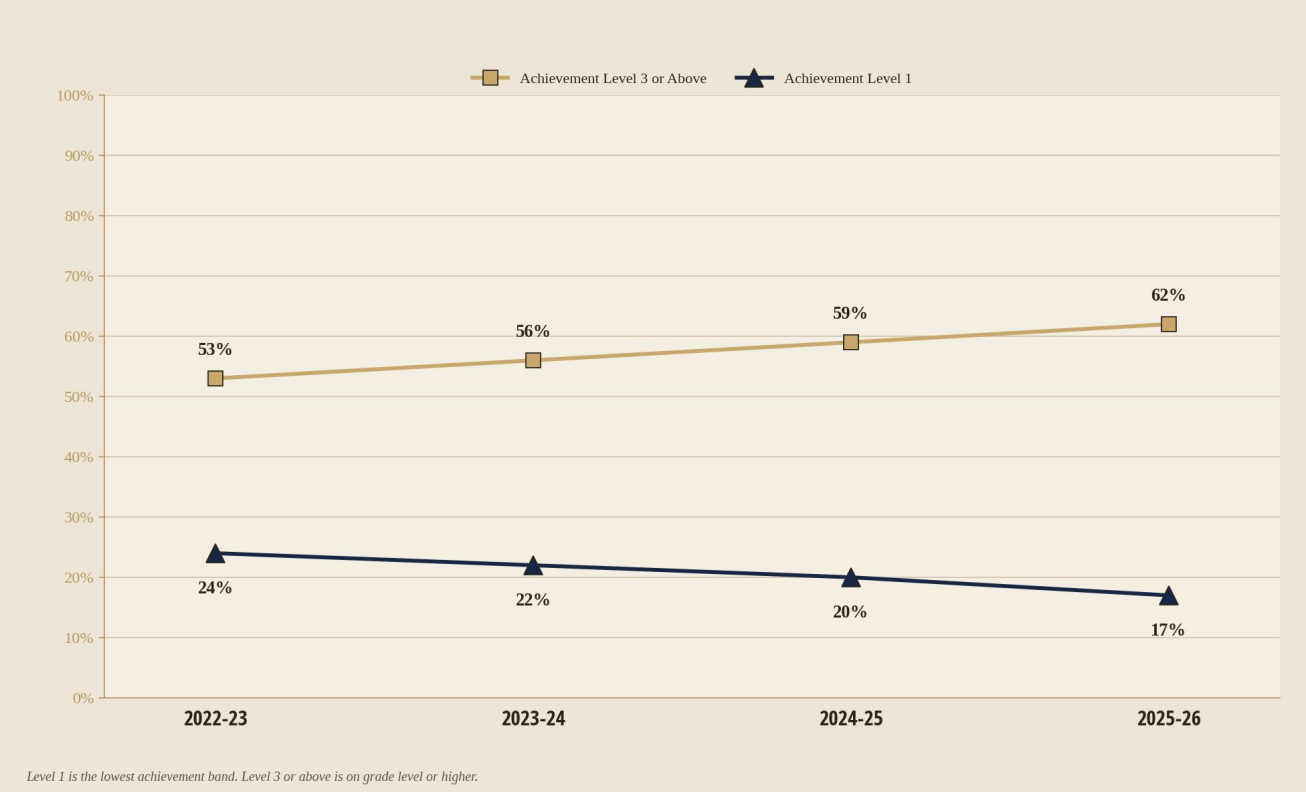
Sixty-one percent of students in grades 3–10 performed at or above grade-level on the end-of-year FAST ELA PM3 assessment in 2025-26, which is a 4 percentage-point increase compared to 2024-25, and 12 percentage points higher than the first year of implementation (2022-2023). Today, more than 150,000 additional students in grades 3 through 10 meet or exceed grade-level expectations, which is roughly equivalent to the population of Hollywood, Florida.

FAST English Language Arts PM3 by Achievement Level – Grades 3-10



Sixty-two percent of students in grades 3–8 performed at or above grade-level on the end-of-year FAST Mathematics PM3 assessment, a 3 percentage-point increase from 2024-2025 and 9 percentage points higher than the first year of implementation (2022-2023). Today, nearly 115,000 additional students across all mathematics assessments, including PM3 and high school level end-of-course assessments in Algebra 1 and Geometry, are now meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations. That is roughly equivalent to the population of Clearwater, Florida.

FAST Mathematics PM3 by Achievement Level – Grades 3-8



Subgroup Performance

All subgroups increased the percentage of students performing on grade level from 2025 to 2026 in both ELA and Mathematics on the end-of-year progress monitoring assessments.

FAST English Language Arts (ELA) PM3

- Students from military families increased performance in Grades 3-10 ELA by 4 percentage points compared to 2025 (68% to 72%).
- Both charter schools and non-charter schools increased performance in Grades 3-10 ELA by 4 percentage points compared to 2025 (62% to 66% and 56% to 60%, respectively).
- African American, Hispanic, and White students all increased performance at Level 3 or above in Grades 3-10 ELA compared to 2025:
    - African American students increased by 5 percentage points (45% to 50%).
    - Hispanic students increased by 5 percentage points (52% to 57%).
    - White students increased by 3 percentage points (67% to 70%).
- Students with disabilities increased performance by 3 percentage points (29% to 32%) in Grades 3-10 ELA compared to 2025.

- English language learners increased performance by 5 percentage points (17% to 22%) in Grades 3-10 ELA compared to 2025.
- Students from economically disadvantaged families increased performance by 5 percentage points (47% to 52%) in Grades 3-10 ELA compared to 2025.

Subgroup Performance on FAST ELA PM3, 2025 to 2026

Assessment	Subgroup	% Level 3 or Above	
		2025	2026
FAST ELA PM3 (Grades 3-10)	**All Students**	**57%**	**61%**
	Military Family	68%	72%
	Non-Military Family	56%	61%
	Charter School	62%	66%
	Non-Charter School	56%	60%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	54%	59%
	Asian	79%	81%
	Black or African American	45%	50%
	Hispanic/Latino	52%	57%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	57%	61%
	Two or More Races	63%	66%
	White	67%	70%
	Students with Disabilities	29%	32%
	Students without Disabilities	61%	66%
	English Language Learners	17%	22%
	Non-English Language Learners	62%	66%
	Economically Disadvantaged	47%	52%
	Non-Economically Disadvantaged	66%	69%

FAST Mathematics PM3

- Students from military families increased performance in Grades 3-8 Mathematics by 3 percentage points from 2025 to 2026 (69% to 72%).
- Charter schools increased performance by 2 percentage points (63% to 65%) and non-charter schools increased performance by 3 percentage points (58% to 61%) in Grades 3-8 Mathematics compared to 2025.
- African American, Hispanic, and White students all increased performance at Level 3 or above in Grades 3-8 Mathematics compared to 2025:
    - African American students increased by 3 percentage points (45% to 48%).
    - Hispanic students increased by 4 percentage points (56% to 60%).
    - White students increased by 2 percentage points (69% to 71%).

- Students with disabilities increased performance by 2 percentage points (35% to 37%) in Grades 3-8 Mathematics compared to 2025.
- English language learners increased performance by 6 percentage points (35% to 41%) in Grades 3-8 Mathematics compared to 2025.
- Students from economically disadvantaged families increased performance by 3 percentage points (50% to 53%) in Grades 3-8 Mathematics compared to 2025.

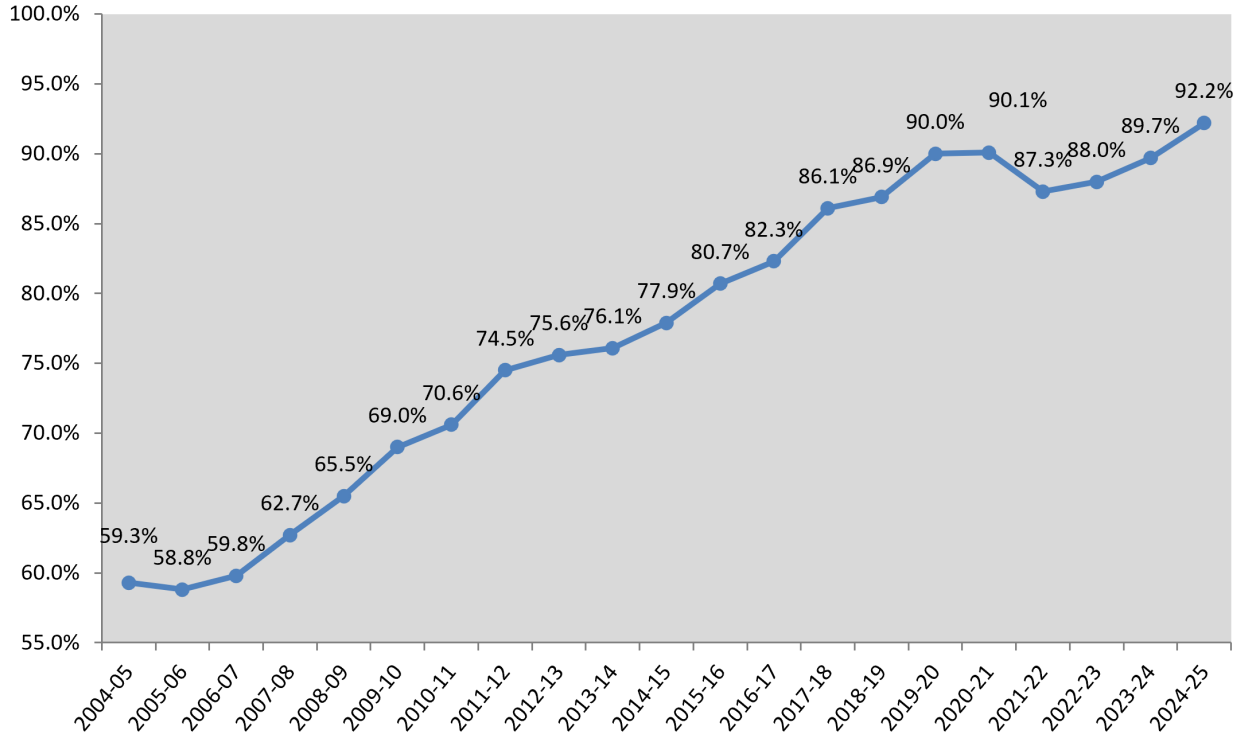
Subgroup Performance on FAST Mathematics PM3, 2025 to 2026

Assessment	Subgroup	% Level 3 or Above	
		2025	2026
FAST Mathematics PM3 (Grades 3-8)	**All Students**	**59%**	**62%**
	Military Family	69%	72%
	Non-Military Family	58%	61%
	Charter School	63%	65%
	Non-Charter School	58%	61%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	56%	60%
	Asian	85%	86%
	Black or African American	45%	48%
	Hispanic/Latino	56%	60%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	58%	62%
	Two or More Races	63%	65%
	White	69%	71%
	Students with Disabilities	35%	37%
	Students without Disabilities	63%	67%
	English Language Learners	35%	41%
	Non-English Language Learners	62%	65%
	Economically Disadvantaged	50%	53%
	Non-Economically Disadvantaged	69%	71%

High School Graduation Rate and College and Career Acceleration

Florida's high school graduation rate reached a record-breaking 92.2 percent for the 2024-2025 school year. This marks the highest graduation rate in Florida's history despite having increased rigor and student expectations. The rate increased 2.5 percentage points over the prior year and has increased significantly over the past twenty years. The rate rose from 59.3 percent in 2004-2005 to 92.2 percent in 2024-2025, which is a 32.9 percentage point increase.

Florida's Graduation Rates, 2004-05 through 2024-25



In 2024-2025, Florida's high school graduation rate for students from military families exceeded the state's record-breaking rate, with 96.6 percent of students from military families graduating from high school within four years.

Florida also tracks the percentage of graduates who exit high school having earned college credit and/or career credentials while attending high school. The accelerated options available to students include:

- Earning college credit through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), Florida's advanced courses and tests, and/or dual enrollment;
- Earning career training through career dual enrollment;
- Earning a national industry certification; and/or
- Earning an Armed Services Qualification Test score in Category II or higher on the ASVAB, along with a minimum of two credits in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) courses from the same branch of the United States Armed Forces.

For the most recent high school graduating class (2024-2025), 73 percent completed high school after earning acceleration credit while enrolled in high school. That represents a 5-percentage-point increase over the prior year and a 10-percentage-point increase over 2020-

2021. Among high school graduates from military families, the percentage is even higher, with 75 percent of 2024-2025 graduates having earned accelerated credit.

Florida has prioritized high standards, accountability, parental rights and expanded education options for families. Florida's continued progress reflects a statewide commitment to ensuring every student has a pathway to success and the preparation needed for postsecondary education, careers and life.

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

We know students thrive in a variety of environments, and parents should have opportunities to make educational decisions in their family's best interest. Military families are no exception. Thanks to Governor DeSantis, Florida is *the* national leader in school choice for all families – including military families – for students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. In fact, many states seek to replicate Florida's long-standing programs but usually at a fraction of the size.

During the 2025-2026 school year, more than 1.4 million K-12 Florida students accessed a state-created public or private choice option, which was larger than the total student enrollment of 35 states. Additionally, 200,000 Florida students attended private schools without any state scholarships during that year.

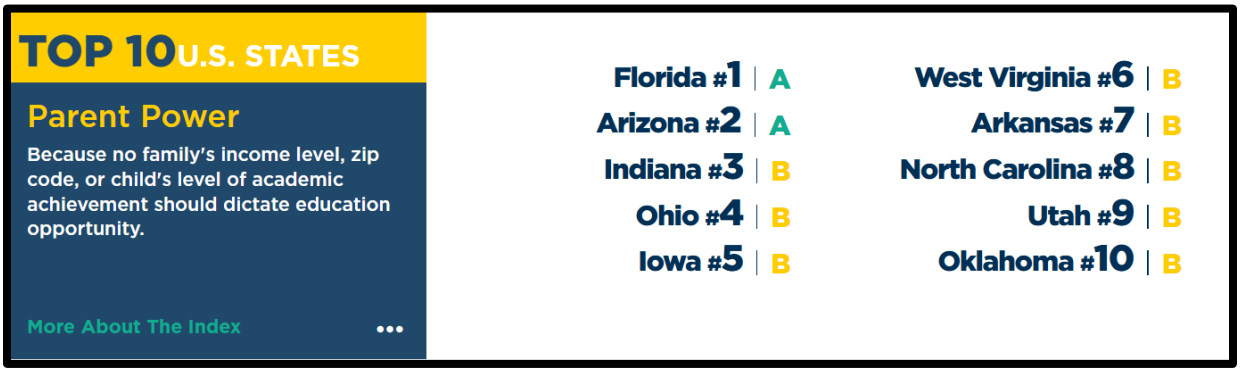
According to EdChoice, Florida ranks first in state spending on private choice and is the only state with a double-digit percentage of its combined private choice and public school expenditures spent on choice programs. And, according to the American Federation for Children, Florida ranks first in the nation for enrollments in education savings accounts, tax credit scholarship programs, and private school scholarships.

These resources and services let families choose their children's educational environment, whether that's a traditional public school, charter school, private school, home education program, virtual instruction program, or educational resources and services for students with disabilities.

Florida's robust school choice program encourages traditional public schools to better meet their primary goal of providing students with a world-class education. Florida parents who are not satisfied with their zoned traditional school know they have myriad educational options for their children. Hundreds of thousands of students and their families have used open enrollment opportunities to send their children to a school they are not assigned to attend. In Florida, your zip code is not your destiny.

National education and policy organizations recognize Florida as the national leader in school choice and educational freedom. Our state is fortunate to boast several innovative and

extraordinarily successful public and private school choice options for families. For example, the Center for Education Reform has consistently ranked Florida #1 in its latest "Parent Power! Index" based on the criteria of School Choice, Charter Schools, Teacher Quality, Transparency, and Personalized Learning.



Source: Center for Education Reform

The Parent Power! Index ranked Florida first in the nation for digital and personalized learning, first in the nation for choice programs, first in transformational learning, and second in the nation for charter schools.

According to the American Legislative Exchange Council's Index of State Education Freedom, Florida is ranked #1 for the third year in a row and was the only state to earn an A+ overall grade.

The Heritage Foundation has also ranked Florida #1 in its Education Freedom Report Card for five consecutive years. According to this report, "Florida's expansive education choice options are empowering parents across the state, and Florida's focus on civics in recent years has been a model for the nation."

Florida's recurring accolades in K-12 education are beginning to generate broader benefits, as Lightcast has again recognized Florida as the number one state for talent attraction and job growth. In addition, Florida has been ranked #1 in higher education state rankings by U.S. News & World Report since the rankings were created in 2017.

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program

To expand educational opportunities for children of families with limited financial resources and to enable children in this state to achieve a higher level of excellence in their education, the Florida Legislature created the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program in 2001. The law authorizes Florida taxpayers to divert state tax credits for contributions to nonprofit scholarship funding organizations (SFOs), which then award scholarships to eligible children.

In 2023, Governor DeSantis signed House Bill (HB) 1, which eliminated financial eligibility restrictions in the FTC Scholarship Program while still prioritizing awards to students with household incomes that do not exceed 185 percent of the federal poverty level and incorporating a second priority to award scholarships to students who live in households with incomes between 185 percent of the federal poverty level and 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

In addition, HB 1 created a new opportunity for Florida students who are not enrolled full-time in a public or private school. This program is the parent-directed Personalized Education Program (PEP), which provides the same opportunities and flexibilities as home education programs, and is funded through the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship.

In 2025-2026, 92,333 students participated in the FTC Scholarship Program. Of those students, 84,309 utilized the PEP scholarship, while 8,024 students utilized the traditional FTC scholarship toward enrollment at a private school option.

Family Empowerment Scholarship Program

Since its inception, the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) Program has been one of the state's greatest victories for Florida families. It provides an educational lifeline for parents seeking the best option for their children.

In addition to the changes HB 1 made to the FTC Scholarship Program, the bill also expanded school choice options for *all* students in Florida. This bill eliminated financial eligibility restrictions and extended the scholarship to all students eligible to attend a public school in Florida. It also extended eligibility to Florida students and to the dependent children of active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces who have received permanent change-of-station orders to this state.

The FES offers two pathways for parents, depending on their children's individual needs. The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO) provides additional educational options for all K-12 students, such as attending a participating private school. Families apply and renew annually through an approved SFO, which determines eligibility and distributes funding.

The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) is designed to offer families of students with disabilities, as young as three years of age, access to additional education options. Eligible families receive an education savings account (ESA) that they can use for private school tuition or a range of allowable educational uses, such as private tutoring, therapies, online learning programs, or other customized learning services and materials. Families apply and renew annually for participation in FES through one of the approved SFOs in Florida,

which determine eligibility, award and distribute funding to eligible student accounts, and approve eligible expenditures.

2026-27 Unique Abilities (FES-UA) Enrollment by Diagnosis

DIAGNOSIS TYPE	# OF STUDENTS	% OF STUDENTS
Other Health Impairment	37,084	21.97%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	29,688	17.58%
Multiple-Diagnosis	23,852	14.13%
Language Impairment	14,025	8.31%
Speech Impairment	13,558	8.03%
A Specific Learning Disability	11,494	6.81%
High-Risk Child	7,243	4.29%
Emotional or Behavioral Disability	6,858	4.06%
Rare Diseases	5,987	3.55%
Unknown	5,695	3.37%
Anaphylaxis	5,197	3.08%
Unknown (Formerly McKay)	2,064	1.22%
Hearing Impaired	1,331	0.79%
Intellectual Disability	1,318	0.78%
Visually Impaired	869	0.51%
Cerebral Palsy	713	0.42%
Down Syndrome	656	0.39%
Orthopedic Impairment	648	0.38%
Spina Bifida	148	0.09%
Traumatic Brain Injured	148	0.09%
Muscular Dystrophy	65	0.04%
Hospital or Homebound	60	0.04%
Dual Sensory Impaired	51	0.03%
Prader-Willi Syndrome	49	0.03%
Williams Syndrome	21	0.01%
Phelan-McDermid Syndrome	7	0.00%

Source: Step Up for Students

Since HB 1 took effect in 2023, the number of students participating in an FES program has more than doubled. In the 2025-2026 school year, 453,128 students participated in the FES Program. Of those students, 304,588 utilized the FES-EO scholarship, while 148,540 utilized the FES-UA scholarship.

Opportunity Scholarship Program

The Opportunity Scholarship Program is a school choice program the Florida Legislature created in 1999 as part of the A+ Education Plan. The program offers students who attended or were assigned to attend failing public schools the option to choose a higher-performing public school. Parents of public-school students may request and receive from the state an Opportunity Scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend a higher-performing public school if:

- By assigned school attendance area or by special assignment, the student spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school that has been designated as earning a grade "F" or three consecutive "D" grades as based on the statewide school grading system;
- The student has been in attendance elsewhere in the public school system and has been assigned to such school for the next school year; or
- The student has been assigned to the school for the next school year.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools that operate under a performance contract, or "charter", which frees them from many regulations traditional public schools adhere to while still holding the charter school accountable for academic and financial results. The charter contract between the charter school governing board and its sponsor—which, in Florida, is the local school district or college—details the school's mission, program, goals, students served, assessment methods, and ways to measure success.

All students seeking to enroll in a charter school have an equal chance of admission through a random selection process, or lottery. Due to capacity limitations, many Florida charter schools have wait lists; however, Florida law authorizes certain demographics of students, such as children of active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces, to bypass those lotteries.

In 2021, SB 1028 strengthened educational opportunities for military families by allowing state universities to expand high-quality developmental laboratory schools to serve communities around military installations, and paved innovative pathways for students to access industry certification and workforce education by allowing State University System institutions to sponsor charter schools to meet regional workforce demands.

In the 30 years since the first charter school was established in Florida in 1996, the number of public charter schools in Florida has grown to 738, educating 408,481 students in 2025-2026. Approximately half of Florida's charter school population comes from low-income households, and 70 percent of students enrolled come from racial or ethnic minority backgrounds. Florida has

one of the largest charter school enrollments in the nation and more than three decades of robust state policy to maximize opportunity for Florida's children.

Year	PK–12 Charter School Enrollment
2025-2026	**408,481**
2024-2025	**406,832**
2023-2024	**397,656**
2022-2023	**382,367**
2021-2022	**361,939**

Virtual Educational Options

Online learning is a major component of school choice options in Florida's education system and an important strategy for achieving state education goals. Florida students have more access to online learning courses than any other state. Florida Virtual School (FLVS) was created in 1997 and is the largest and most successful state virtual school in the United States. It offers over 190 online courses, including general education, advanced courses, and honors program options for middle and high school students. The school's funding is performance-based, and FLVS funds only students who successfully complete courses. It also offers a limited part-time elementary school program and two full-time schools for Florida's students in kindergarten through grade 12.

All school districts in Florida offer both full-time and part-time virtual instruction programs for students in kindergarten through grade 12. Many districts also operate franchises of FLVS, and some school districts offer individual online courses to students in and outside of traditional school settings. During the 2025-2026 school year, FLVS had 346,173 part-time enrollments and 9,592 students in the full-time state-level program. Another 14,780 students were enrolled in district virtual programs, and 96,404 students were enrolled in district part-time programs.

Florida launched its Florida Online Course Catalog in July 2014. The catalog includes information about available online courses offered by school districts, FLVS, and approved private providers. The catalog lets school districts, FLVS, and approved private providers showcase the online courses they offer, and it lets parents and students browse the catalog to see what online course choices are available.

Florida also provides much-needed flexibility for military-connected children enrolled in FLVS who live outside Florida because of their parent's assigned duty station. Because these children may have difficulty sitting for a Florida-based FLVS secure and proctored exam, the legislation

allows FLVS students to request that a licensed, certified instructor or education services officer test administrator administer the state-mandated assessments at the family's current military duty station.

Home Education

Homeschooling is a critical component of Florida's robust school choice system. For the 2025-2026 school year, school districts reported that 125,718 families and 163,941 students participated in home education programs. Whereas most states' home education populations rose and fell during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Florida's home education population continues to grow and is one of the largest in the nation. Students in home education are eligible for dual enrollment opportunities and extracurricular activities in their home districts.

PUBLIC SCHOOL BENEFITS & ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

In 2020, Governor DeSantis signed Senate Bill (SB) 662, which requires—beginning with the 2022-2023 calculation of school grades and in addition to the other acceleration mechanisms already identified in state law—schools must be able to earn credit for high school graduates who: (1) Earn an Armed Services Qualification Test score that falls within Category II or higher on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), which is a score of 65 or higher; and (2) Earn at least two credits in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) courses from the same branch of the United States Armed Forces.

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps

Florida is home to dozens of JROTC units housed in public schools throughout the state. During the 2025-2026 school year, Florida had nearly 55,000 enrollments in JROTC and military training courses. Retired Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard officers and enlisted personnel lead these units, which focus on academic excellence, character development, and public service.

In addition to courses offered to all public-school students, JROTC cadets in Florida were provided access to the following courses in the 2025-2026 school year:

Air Force JROTC

- JROTC Air Force Aerospace Science 1
- JROTC Air Force Aerospace Science 2

- JROTC Air Force Aerospace Science 3
- JROTC Air Force Aerospace Science 4 Leadership Development
- JROTC Advanced Aerospace Science
- JROTC Air Force Aerospace Science 4 Transportation
- JROTC Air Force Aerospace Science 4
- JROTC Air Force Leadership Education 1
- JROTC Air Force Leadership Education 2

Army JROTC

- JROTC Army Leadership Education and Training 1
- JROTC Army Leadership Education and Training 2
- JROTC Army Leadership Education and Training 3
- JROTC Army Leadership Education and Training 4

Navy JROTC

- JROTC Naval Science 1
- JROTC Naval Science 2
- JROTC Naval Science 3
- JROTC Naval Science 4

Marine Corps JROTC

- JROTC Marine Corps Leadership Education 1
- JROTC Marine Corps Leadership Education 2
- JROTC Marine Corps Leadership Education 3
- JROTC Marine Corps Leadership Education 4

Coast Guard JROTC

- JROTC United States Coast Guard Leadership and Operations 1
- JROTC United States Coast Guard Leadership and Operations 2
- JROTC United States Coast Guard Leadership and Operations 3
- JROTC United States Coast Guard Leadership and Operations 4

Military Training

- Military Training Transfer

High School Athletics

Sports are incredibly important for students to participate in because they teach valuable lessons that translate directly to the military, such as teamwork, dedication, responsibility, and a sense of duty. Many military families have children who actively participate in interscholastic sports programs. In some cases, a student cannot participate in a sport because they previously participated in the same sport in another state or location.

However, Florida law protects military families by supporting participation in athletics when a family relocates to another state. In fact, Florida law clearly provides a statutory exemption for dependent children of active-duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.

FLORIDA LAW PROTECTS MILITARY FAMILIES BY NOT RESTRICTING STUDENTS FROM PARTICIPATING IN ATHLETIC SPORTS WHEN A FAMILY IS RELOCATED

Eliminating "Transfer Penalties"

Prior to 2023, active-duty military families transferring to or within Florida during the school year faced multiple barriers to ensuring their school-aged children received opportunities and services on par with other students.

However, in 2023, Governor DeSantis signed HB 633 to address these issues. The bill waives controlled open enrollment deadlines for military-connected children whose parents transfer to or within Florida during the school year, allowing military families to select the district school that best meets their needs regardless of when they move. In addition, the legislation requires schools to enroll transferred military-connected children in special academic programs, including magnet schools, advanced studies programs, Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, Advanced International Certificate of Education, and International Baccalaureate.

In 2026, the Governor also signed Senate Bill 538, which modernized Florida's extracurricular participation statutes and preserved the right of military-family transfer students to participate.

Ongoing Commitments to Military-Connected Children

In 2022, Governor DeSantis signed SB 430, which reenacted the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The compact ensures a smooth transition for children of active-duty military families by enabling seamless school placement, enrollment, records transfers, and verification of graduation requirements.

EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Florida Department of Education is proud to support members of the United States Armed Forces, veterans and military spouses who want to continue their service in Florida's schools. Military members and their families bring valuable leadership, experience and a commitment to service that can make a lasting difference for Florida's students.

Florida provides multiple pathways for military members, veterans, and military spouses to enter the education profession and advance into school leadership. These opportunities include educator certification fee waivers for eligible military members, veterans, and spouses; alternative pathways into the teaching profession; and a pathway for qualifying former military officers to earn temporary certification in educational leadership and complete a state-approved school leader preparation program.

Through these initiatives, the state of Florida remains committed to recruiting military-connected individuals and helping them translate their experience and leadership into meaningful careers serving Florida's students, schools and communities.

Florida Veterans to Teachers Program (FV2T)

The Florida Veterans to Teachers Program (FV2T), formerly known as Troops to Teachers, provides career transition assistance to current and former military members and military spouses interested in becoming teachers in Florida.

Through a partnership with Tallahassee State College (TSC), FV2T provides individualized guidance to help participants navigate the transition from military service to the teaching profession. FV2T helps participants understand Florida educator certification requirements and identify the appropriate pathway to certification.



The program provides guidance on:

- Degree and educator certification pathways;
- Certification examination preparation;
- Educator certification application requirements and processes;
- Employment opportunities and areas of teacher demand; and
- Strategies to strengthen participants' preparation for employment in Florida schools.

FV2T also works with schools and school districts to support recruitment and employment opportunities for participating service members, veterans, and military spouses. Through individualized support and partnerships with education employers, FV2T helps participants move from military service into Florida classrooms and expands the pool of qualified teacher candidates.

Purple Star Teacher Leadership Program

The Florida Department of Education's Purple Star Teacher Leadership Program develops school-based leaders who support military-connected students and families and mentor military veterans transitioning into teaching. The Department launched the program in 2022 as part of Florida's broader efforts to support military families and expand pathways for veterans to become educators.

Through targeted professional learning, participating educators strengthen their skills in observing high-quality instruction, providing evidence-based, actionable feedback, and coaching teachers new to the profession, including veterans using Florida's Military Veterans Certification Pathway. Participants also develop strategies to address the unique needs of military-connected students and families. Participants include teacher leaders, instructional coaches, school administrators, and military liaisons who build local capacity to support military-connected students and veterans entering Florida classrooms.

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION *COMMITS* TO THE RECRUITMENT OF MILITARY PERSONNEL, VETERANS & THEIR SPOUSES TO CONTINUE THEIR SERVICE BY *TEACHING AND LEADING* IN FLORIDA'S SCHOOLS

Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans

In 2022, Governor DeSantis signed SB 896, which established the Military Veterans Certification Pathway to expand opportunities for veterans to enter the teaching profession. The pathway recognizes military service and allows qualified veterans who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree to obtain a five-year Temporary Certificate while completing the requirements for a Florida Professional Certificate.

To qualify for the pathway, an applicant must meet applicable Florida educator certification requirements and:

- Document at least 48 months of active-duty military service with an honorable discharge or medical separation;
- Complete at least 60 college credits with a minimum cumulative 2.5 grade point average;
- Demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge, including a passing score on the applicable Florida subject area examination when required;
- Obtain employment in a Florida school and receive an assigned mentor or clinical educator; and

- Complete the required background screening.

Additionally, state law requires an employing school district, charter school, or charter management organization to assign each participating veteran seeking to enter the classroom through this pathway with a qualified teacher mentor or clinical educator for at least two school years after the veteran begins employment.

The five-year Temporary Certificate gives participating veterans time to complete a bachelor's degree and the remaining requirements for a Florida Professional Certificate while gaining classroom experience. The certificate is limited to one issuance and is nonrenewable. The pathway applies only to certification subject areas for which the State Board of Education otherwise requires a bachelor's degree and does not apply to subject areas that require a higher-level degree.

Military Certification Fee Waiver

Section (s.) 1012.59, Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires the State Board of Education to waive specified educator certification and examination fees for eligible military members, veterans, and their spouses or surviving spouses.

For eligible applicants, the waiver covers initial General Knowledge, Professional Education, and Subject Area Examination fees, as applicable, as well as specified educator certification fees. Current Department guidance provides waivers for the initial certification application, an initial athletic coaching certification application, an application to upgrade from a Temporary Certificate to a Professional Certificate, and applications to add subjects or endorsements to a valid Florida educator certificate. The waiver also covers registration fees for an eligible applicant's initial attempt on Florida certification examinations.

The Military Certification Fee Waiver supports Florida's efforts to recruit military members, veterans, and military spouses into the education profession by reducing the costs associated with obtaining and advancing a Florida educator certificate.

Florida's Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) also waives professional licensing fees for military members and their spouses, impacting more than 20,000 individuals and saving them about $1.5M in fee payments over the last decade. Since 2017, over 3,300 individuals have received streamlined military endorsement by accepting other states' credentials and avoiding Florida-specific exams. To ease the burden on military families who do need to take licensure exams, DBPR offers testing at military bases in the state, as well as Cuba, administering 3,112 tests in the last decade.

Military Educational Leadership Pathway

Florida also established the Military Educational Leadership Pathway to recognize military leadership experience and provide an additional pathway into school leadership. S. 1012.55, F.S., requires the Florida Department of Education to issue a three-year Temporary Certificate in Educational Leadership to an individual who:

- Earned a passing score on the Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE);
- Served for at least three years as a commissioned or noncommissioned military officer in the United States Armed Forces;
- Was honorably discharged or retired from the United States Armed Forces; and
- Is currently employed full time in a position requiring an educator certificate in a Florida public school, state-supported school or nonpublic school that has a state-approved Level II school leader preparation program.

A state-approved Level II school leader preparation program must accept an individual who holds the three-year Temporary Certificate in Educational Leadership. After the individual successfully completes the Level II program, the Department issues the individual permanent certification as a school principal.

The pathway recognizes the leadership experience veterans gain through military service while requiring participants to demonstrate educational leadership knowledge, gain relevant school-based experience, and successfully complete Florida's preparation requirements for school principals.

Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

In 2023, Governor DeSantis signed HB 1125, which joined Florida to the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact by creating s. 1012.993, Florida Statutes. The Compact establishes a streamlined process for eligible teachers licensed in one member state to obtain an equivalent license in another member state.

The Compact specifically addresses the mobility needs of military families. Eligible military spouses may use certain temporary or provisional licenses to qualify under the Compact, recognizing that frequent military relocations can make it difficult for spouses to maintain professional educator licensure across state lines. The Compact reduces barriers to employment for military spouses while maintaining each member state's specific educator certification requirements.

Heroes in the Classroom Bonus Program

In 2023, the Legislature established the Heroes in the Classroom Bonus Program in section 1012.715, Florida Statutes. Subject to legislative appropriation, the program provides a one-time sign-on bonus of $4,000 to eligible honorably discharged or retired military veterans and retired first responders who become full-time classroom teachers. Eligible participants may receive an additional bonus of $1,000 for teaching in a high-demand teacher need area identified by the Department.

Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)

Florida was one of the original 11 states to adopt the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, enacting it into law in 2008 through s. 1000.36, F.S. The Compact supports the educational success of military-connected students by addressing challenges associated with frequent moves and parental deployments, including enrollment, transfer of records, educational placement, extracurricular participation, and on-time graduation.

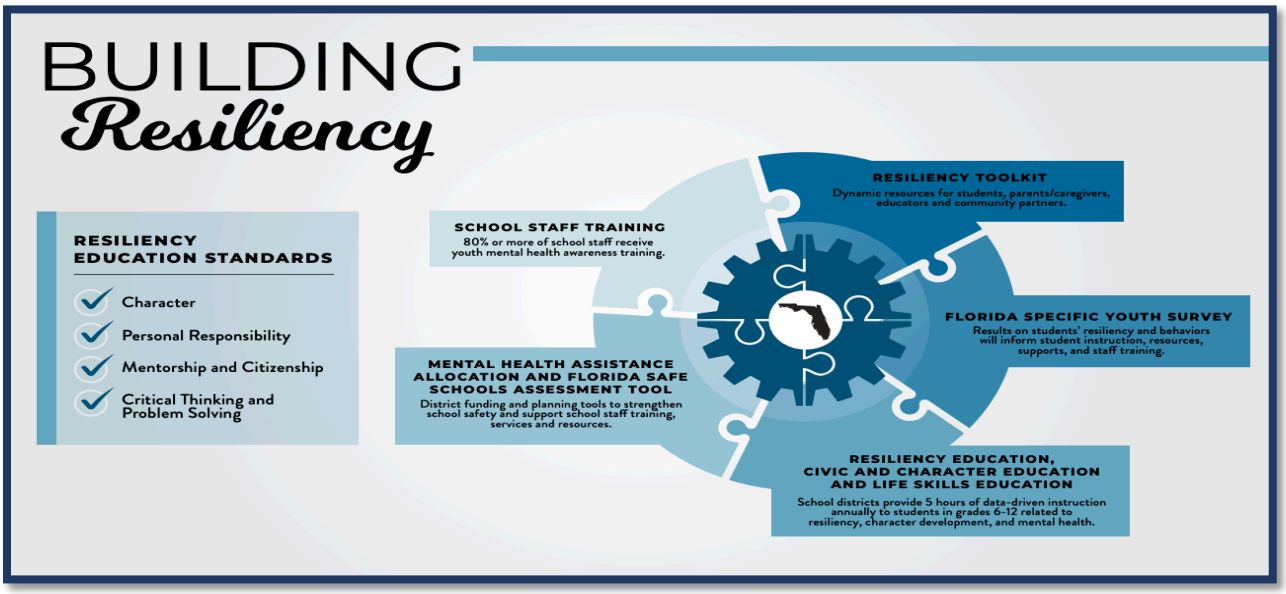
Florida's State Council on Interstate Educational Opportunity for Military Children, established under s. 1000.39, F.S., provides advice and recommendations regarding the state's participation in and compliance with the Compact. The Council includes state education leadership, school district and military representatives, legislative and executive branch representatives, and the Compact Commissioner and Military Family Education Liaison, who serve as nonvoting, ex officio members. Military school liaisons and other military and community partners also participate in supporting the Council's work.

Training in Supporting Military Families and Transfer of Education Records

To strengthen support for district and school personnel, the Florida Department of Education has developed a required training module pursuant to s. 1003.05, F.S., focused on facilitating and expediting the transfer of K–12 education records for students entering from out-of-state schools, particularly military-connected students. The training covers Florida's initiatives supporting military families, the development and implementation of memoranda of agreement between school districts and military installations, and key components of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, including procedures for transferring a K–12 student's education records from an out-of-state school. District school boards must make the training available to public and charter school employees who work directly with military-connected students and families.

BUILDING RESILIENCY IN FLORIDA'S STUDENTS

Florida is leading a first-in-the-nation approach to build resiliency in Florida's students. In November 2022, the State Board of Education adopted Rule 6A-1.094124, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). The rule revisions align mental health education and character education in support of the development of Resiliency Education. The resiliency characteristics defined in the rule include empathy, perseverance, grit, gratitude, responsibility, critical thinking and problem solving, responsible decision-making, self-awareness and self-management, mentorship, citizenship, and honesty. Florida also pioneered a training specifically for moms, dads, grandparents, volunteers and mentors to become Resiliency Coaches. As of 2026, over 800 dedicated volunteers are better prepared to support students in building resiliency. Florida educators also have dedicated professional learning focused on Resiliency Education. The Resiliency Educator Endorsement, launched in August 2026, equips educators with strategies and approaches to help students build resiliency when facing every day and more significant challenges.



Florida is committed to supporting mental health as part of a comprehensive approach to school safety and student well-being. Each school district is required to submit a mental health plan to the Florida Department of Education outlining how it will address mental health needs within its schools, pursuant to the Mental Health Assistance Allocation under s. 1006.041, F.S. In 2026, the Governor committed $180 million to the Mental Health Assistance Allocation to help school districts provide school-based mental health resources, including training school staff to detect and respond to mental health issues and connect students experiencing behavioral health issues with appropriate supports. All efforts focus on delivering evidence-based mental health care treatment to children.

Additionally, s. 1012.584, F.S., requires continuing education and in-service training for youth mental health awareness and assistance. This evidence-based youth mental health awareness and

assistance training program helps school personnel identify and understand the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness, and substance use disorders, and provides such personnel with the skills to engage with at-risk students and encourage those students to use appropriate professional help and other support strategies.

Since 2018, Florida school districts have been required to establish threat assessment teams at each school to assess and intervene with individuals whose behavior may threaten the safety of school staff or students. In 2023, the legislature amended Section s. 1001.212(12), F.S., to task the Department of Education's Office of Safe Schools with developing a statewide behavioral threat management operational process, a Florida-specific behavioral threat assessment instrument, and a threat management portal. The threat management process is designed to identify, assess, manage, and monitor threats to schools, school staff, and students. The goal of all school safety efforts is to prevent violence or harm to members of the school community. Threat management uses a methodology that identifies students exhibiting threatening or other concerning behavior, gathers information to assess the risk of harm to themselves or others, and identifies appropriate interventions to prevent violence and promote successful outcomes. The process applies a non-punitive assessment to distinguish between innocuous and serious situations. The aim of the threat management process is to intervene at the earliest stage to aid students and to alter or disrupt any concerning behavior for the benefit of the student and school.

PURPLE STAR SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION AND COLLEGIATE PURPLE STAR CAMPUSES PROGRAMS

Students in military families may face academic challenges when they relocate to new schools because parents serving in the military are transferred to a military installation within Florida. Governor DeSantis established the "Purple Star Schools of Distinction" to identify schools that support military-connected children and families (Rule 6A-1.0999, F.A.C.). An eligible school will be recognized if they meet the following requirements:

- Designate a staff member as a military liaison;
- Maintain a webpage on the school's website that includes resources for military students and families;
- Maintain a student-led transition program to assist military students in their transition into a school;
- Offer professional development training opportunities for staff members on issues relating to military students; and
- Reserve at least five percent of open enrollment seats for military-connected students.

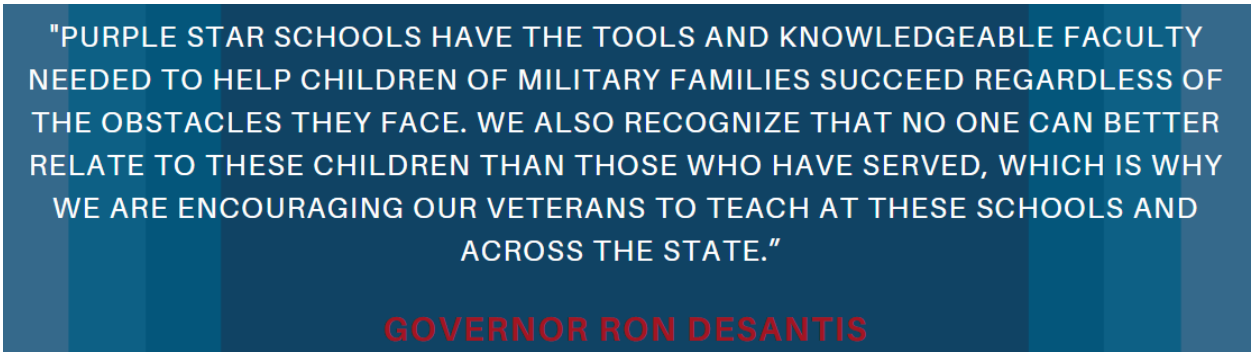
Ensuring that military families have many opportunities to take advantage of various forms of school choice is a particularly important issue that has repeatedly come up in Florida Department

of Education conversations with military liaisons and at military compact meetings. No other state can compete with Florida in terms of the availability of school resources or school choice options for military families.

On November 15, 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis designated 114 schools in 10 counties across the state as Florida's first class of Purple Star campuses in recognition of their support for the children of military families, and in 2026, there are now 451 Purple Star Schools of Distinction. Additionally, the Purple Star School District Designation, established by the Governor in 2024, recognizes districts that coordinate critical services for military families and students across the district and support their unique needs. Today, six school districts hold this designation. Schools and districts hold this distinction for three years, with the application period open annually.

In 2023, the Governor signed SB 732, which extended the Purple Star Program to institutions of higher education. The legislation directs the State Board of Education and the Florida Board of Governors to approve rules and regulations governing the new Collegiate Purple Star Campuses program.

Within the State University System of Florida, 11 institutions are designated as Collegiate Purple Star Campuses, and four institutions have earned a 2026-2027 Military Friendly® distinction. The State University System of Florida is proud to serve military families, offering specialized student support services on all 12 campuses including student veteran centers for resources and assistance with benefits; veteran liaisons to offer guidance and support; priority course registration for veterans using GI Bill benefits, their spouses, and dependents; career and counseling services; and entrepreneurship programs supporting veteran-owned businesses.



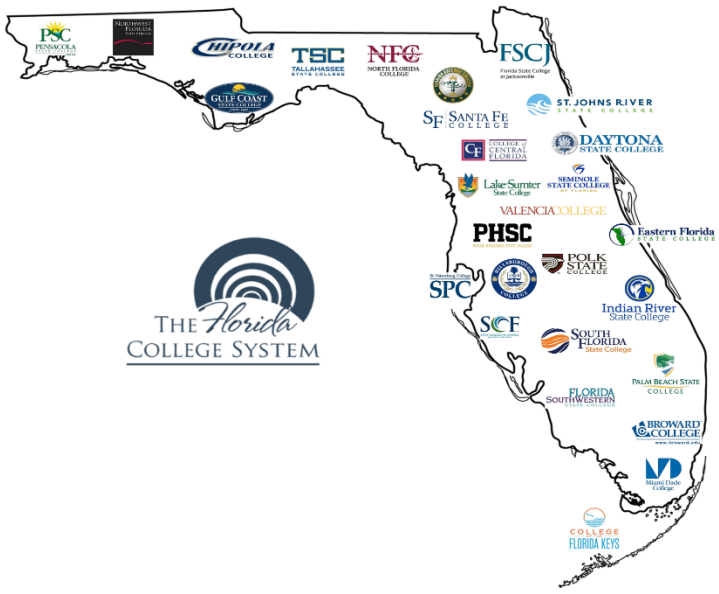
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

The Florida College System (FCS) honors the service and sacrifice of our military service members and is pleased to offer a variety of options for current and former service members and their families to pursue or continue their education. Each of the 28 FCS institutions has dedicated staff and veteran service centers to help military students and families access the benefits and resources available to them.

The Florida College System also offers a variety of articulation options that support student learning and prepare students for postsecondary success, including dual enrollment. Through high-quality postsecondary programs, Florida helps military students continue their education, build on their experience, and begin or advance their civilian careers.

FLORIDA *PROVIDES A LITANY* OF HIGH-QUALITY POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF *TO BEGIN* AND *ADVANCE* THEIR CAREERS

Florida has 12 state universities and 28 state colleges, which are generally the first point of access to higher education for students statewide. Approximately 60 percent of Florida high school graduates who pursue postsecondary education in Florida begin their postsecondary education at an FCS institution.



Over the past several decades, the number of degrees and certificates awarded has increased significantly. In 1998-1999, FCS institutions awarded over 45,000 degrees or certificates. By 2025-2026, that number had more than tripled, increasing by approximately 336 percent to 151,579 degrees or certificates.

This impact extends beyond graduation: 91 percent of recent FCS graduates are either employed or continuing their education, contributing to the state's economic growth.

#1 Ranked Higher Education System in the Nation

Since the inception of the Best States rankings in 2017, U.S. News & World Report has ranked Florida's higher education system #1 in the nation. Compared to other states, Florida offers the lowest in-state tuition and fees, strong on-time graduation rates and pathways that help students complete their programs without the traditional burden of debt. Florida leads the nation in two-year college graduation rate, and remains committed to delivering affordable, high-quality programs that open doors for students and strengthen communities throughout the state.

Tuition and Fee Waivers and Benefits

Florida continues to set the national standard for college affordability, ranking #1 in the nation for the lowest in-state tuition and fees, according to U.S. News & World Report. Across the FCS, student costs remain stable and affordable, with an average in-state cost for tuition and fees of $3,204 for 30 semester hours of credit. In the State University System, annual in-state tuition averages $6,300, almost half the national average of $11,950.

FLORIDA PROVIDES *IN-STATE TUITION RATES* AT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Florida provides in-state tuition rates at postsecondary institutions to the following active-duty members of the Armed Forces and their families:

- Active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces residing or stationed in Florida and their spouses and dependent children, and active drilling members of the Florida National Guard (s. 1009.21(10)(a), F.S.); or
- Active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces and their spouses and dependents attending a public college or state university within 50 miles of the military establishment where they are stationed, if the military establishment is within a county contiguous to Florida. (s. 1009.21(10)(b), F.S.)

FCS institutions, school district career centers, and charter technical centers currently offer tuition waivers to spouses and dependents of deceased law enforcement, correctional and correctional probation officers identified in s. 112.19(3), F.S., and firefighters identified in s. 112.191(3), F.S. In 2019, Senate Bill 7098 amended those statutes and expanded those benefits to include spouses or dependents of deceased first responders and members of the Florida National Guard and the United States Armed Forces (see s. 250.34, F.S., and s. 295.01, F.S.).

In 2022, Governor DeSantis signed HB 45, which provides educational opportunities for disabled veterans by providing additional assistance to achieve a 100 percent award for tuition and fees.

Another important benefit is the Purple Heart Waiver, established in s. 1009.26 (8), F.S., which provides tuition waivers for Florida military veterans who have received a Purple Heart or combat decoration that is "superior in precedence." The waiver covers the tuition toward a degree or certificate program up to 110% of the required hours for the program of study.

In addition, the Congressman C.W. "Bill" Young Veteran Tuition Waiver Program authorizes an out-of-state waiver for honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed and Reserve Forces (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy) and the National Guard (Army and Air) or any other student who is entitled to and uses educational assistance provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs who physically resides in Florida while enrolled as a degree- or certificate-seeking student. Veterans under this program are also given enrollment priority pursuant to s. 1009.26(12)(d), F.S.

In 2021, the Free Seat Program was created, encouraging veterans, active-duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces, active drilling members of the Florida National Guard, and nontraditional students to enroll in an online baccalaureate degree program at a Florida public university. The Free Seat Program covers tuition and fees for one online bachelor's course, waived in the first term in which the student participates in the program.

Postsecondary Financial Assistance and Scholarship Programs

Building on its position as the nation's leader in college affordability, Florida offers a variety of financial aid grant programs and scholarships that support military students and families.

Florida offers unique programs that support military service members and their families. In 2025, FCS institutions welcomed and enrolled 44,090 active-duty military personnel, veterans, reservists, spouses, and dependents as certificate- or degree-seeking students. For the same academic year, the State University System enrolled 19,213 military-affiliated students.

The 2014 Florida Legislature created funding for the Honorably Discharged Graduate Assistance Program (HDGAP) as a supplemental need-based veteran educational benefit. Funds are to be used to assist in the payment of living expenses during holiday and semester breaks while pursuing a graduate degree for active-duty and honorably discharged members of the United States Armed Forces who served on or after September 11, 2001.

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program for children of active-duty military personnel provides awards that cover up to 100 percent of full tuition and textbooks, based on high school GPA, qualifying scores on college entrance examinations, and completion of the required number of volunteer service hours or 100 paid work hours. Florida also offers a tax- and risk-free investment plan for families to save for college via the Florida Prepaid Plan.

Florida provides the Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans (CSDDV), which awards benefits to dependent children or non-remarried spouses of qualified Florida veterans (s. 295.01, F.S., and s. 295.015, F.S.). In 2023, Governor DeSantis signed HB 339, which clarifies and expands eligibility requirements for the CSDDV state scholarship program.

Dual Enrollment

In addition to being number one in the nation for in-state tuition, financial aid, and scholarship programs that help make postsecondary education more affordable, Florida has invested in dual enrollment programs that allow high school students to enroll in postsecondary courses and earn both high school and college credit. As a result, many Florida students now graduate from high school with all or part of an associate degree or other high-quality credential of value, preparing them to continue their education or enter the workforce in a high-demand field.

With over 110,000 students participating in dual enrollment in the Florida College System, more middle and high school students are taking college-level courses than ever before, and they are thriving. In the FCS, dual enrollment students achieved a 94.7 percent course pass rate, resulting in over $128 million in savings in tuition and fees for Florida families. These outcomes reflect Florida's commitment to expanding access to high-quality pathways that help students progress from high school to postsecondary education and the workforce.

Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

In 2020, Governor DeSantis signed HB 171, which required the Articulation Coordinating Committee to create a process for uniformly awarding postsecondary credit or career education clock hours to service members and veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Florida postsecondary institutions must award credit/clock hours in accordance with established equivalencies, if the credit or clock hours are applicable toward the student's degree or certificate.

In 2022, the Governor signed SB 514, which authorizes state agencies to substitute work experience, including military experience, for postsecondary education, allowing veterans to use on-the-job experience to apply for civilian jobs.

In August 2022, the State Board of Education amended Rule 6A-10.024, F.A.C., to expand opportunities for veterans and military service members to be awarded postsecondary credit for equivalent training and education acquired in the military. The Board implemented a specific list of college credits and clock hours that are now guaranteed to former and current military members at any Florida state college, university, or district technical center. Specific courses and credit

hours to be awarded are listed on the Credit or Clock Hour for Military Experience Equivalency List, updated and expanded annually by the State Board of Education.

In 2023, Governor DeSantis signed SB 274, which addressed differences in how postsecondary institutions granted credits to military medics and health care specialists. In 2024, the State Board of Education created Rule 6A-10.0244, F.A.C., which includes the course equivalencies and minimum credit or clock hours that must be awarded in an accredited nursing education program for military training and education required for service as an Army Combat Medic Specialist, a Navy or Fleet Marine Force Hospital Corpsman, an Air Force or Space Force Aerospace Medical Service Technician, or a Coast Guard Health Services Technician. The Florida Board of Governors of the State University System and the State Board of Education must approve these changes.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

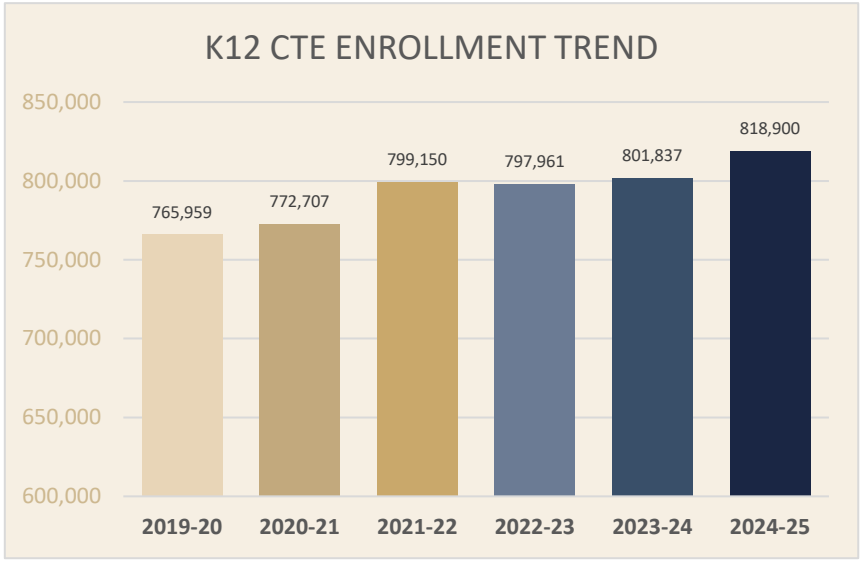
Attending a traditional college or university may not be for every student. For many students, careers in technical trades can be a very prosperous and fulfilling career decision. Focusing on career and technical education (CTE) helps students avoid massive student debt while gaining hands-on training in in-demand industries. Students who complete programs can earn industry-recognized certificates or credentials and enter the workforce upon graduation or program completion. Florida's commitment to CTE has earned it the #1 ranking in the nation for Workforce Education.

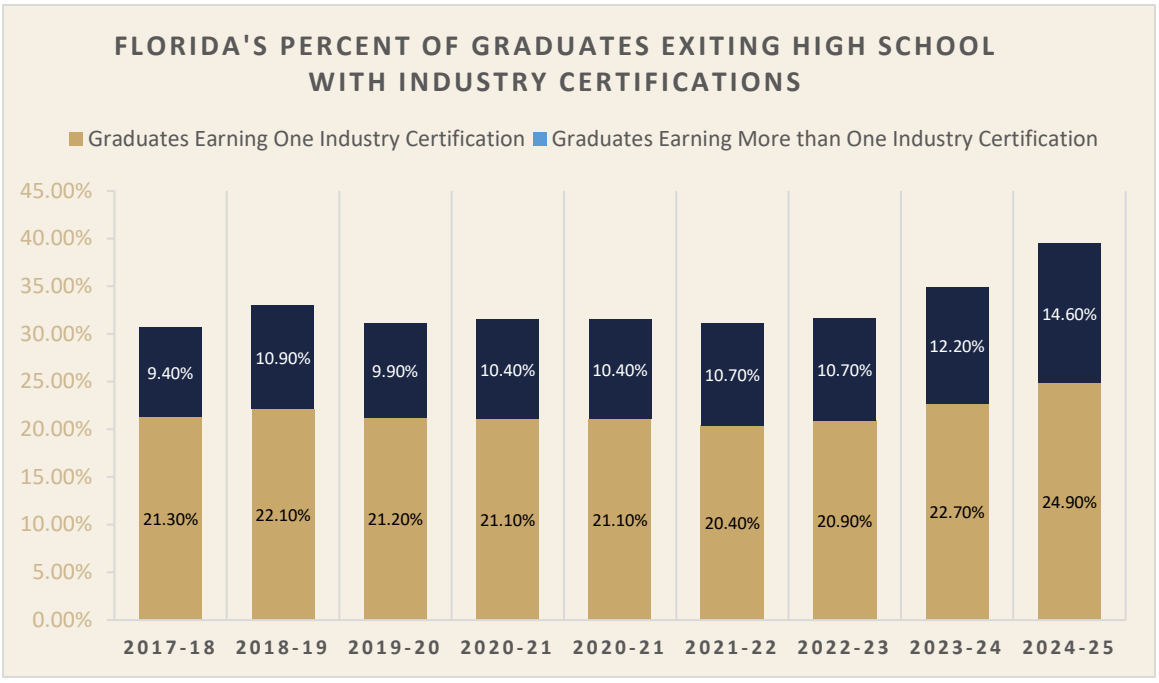
Florida has created streamlined pathways that help students complete high school and enter the workforce prepared for their chosen career path. CTE programs are available in many in-demand industries, including healthcare, cybersecurity, engineering, and manufacturing. Students can complete dual-enrollment programs with local technical colleges or enroll in a CTE program at their high school and graduate with an industry credential and the skills they need to enter a career. Entering the workforce at an earlier age allows our students to first gain real-world experience within their chosen career. Stackable credentials also allow these students to earn more training to further advance their careers. As a result, student participation in CTE programs has increased dramatically since 2014-2015. K12 student enrollment is currently at its highest level yet, with a record 818,900 enrollments.

K12 CTE Enrollment Trends

2013-14	642,326
2014-15	652,917
2015-16	706,845
2016-17	709,579
2017-18	729,439
2018-19	750,713

2019-20	765,959
2020-21	772,707
2021-22	799,150
2022-23	797,961
2023-24	801,837
2024-25	818,900





Florida's Percent of Graduates Exiting High School with Industry Certifications

Graduation Year	Graduates Earning One Industry Certification	Graduates Earning More than One Industry Certification
2013-14	17.3%	5.7%
2014-15	17.3%	6.4%
2015-16	18.0%	7.3%
2016-17	20.2%	8.4%
2017-18	21.3%	9.4%
2018-19	22.1%	10.9%
2019-20	21.2%	9.9%
2020-21	21.1%	10.4%
2021-22	20.4%	10.7%
2022-23	20.9%	10.7%
2023-24	22.7%	12.2%
2024-25	24.9%	14.6%

Students earning an industry certification through a CTE pathway typically outperform their peers in several ways. They tend to earn a higher GPA, have fewer absences, are less likely to drop out of school, are more likely than other students to take Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses, are much more likely to earn a standard diploma, and are nearly twice as likely to earn a Bright Futures scholarship.

Apprenticeship Programs

Students working in a registered apprenticeship program are paid employees participating in an "earn while you learn" model. Students who complete either a career certificate or apprenticeship program learn the skills they need to immediately enter the workplace and find a high-paying job. Florida is emphasizing apprenticeship programs that give students hands-on training while earning certification or licensure credentials in their fields, so they can grow their careers and meet high-demand areas of workforce needs. Upon completion, many apprentices are offered full-time employment by their apprenticeship program's sponsoring employer. Florida's Office of Apprenticeship works closely with the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) State Approving Agency to ensure registered apprenticeship programs are recognized and approved, which allows the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) to pay educational assistance to veterans and other eligible individuals while they pursue approved apprenticeship programs. The State Approving Agency ensures that institutions and establishments meet and maintain acceptable approval standards for educational assistance from the VA.

As Florida's economy has strengthened over the past several years, the number of apprentices and programs has dramatically increased. The FDOE streamlined the approval process, reducing

barriers and eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic steps to make it easier and more accessible to register a program. 2024-2025 was a record year for new programs, with 43 new apprenticeship programs and 7 new preapprenticeship programs registered from July 1, 2024, through June 2025.

From July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, the FDOE had 344 registered apprenticeship programs training 20,395 active apprentices and 70 preapprenticeship programs training 4,524 preapprentices for a total of 414 registered apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs training 24,919 apprentices and preapprentices. In the same timeframe, 2,262 apprentices have graduated from their respective programs. Currently, over 2,100 employers are participating across 144 apprenticeable occupations, where apprentices earn an average wage of $58,000 upon program completion.

Every apprenticeship program that the FDOE establishes is registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. This gives Florida apprentices the credibility and marketability of graduating from a nationally recognized program and earning nationally recognized, industry-issued credentials, and it also gives our apprentices mobility. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Florida is ranked 9th out of 50 states for the number of new apprentices.

Many apprenticeship programs partner with school districts, FCS institutions, or State University System (SUS) institutions to provide the related technical instruction (RTI) for their programs, or the "learn" component of the "earn while you learn" model. Roughly 47 percent of our registered programs outsource the RTI component to a local educational agency (LEA). Of those, Florida's district technical colleges provide approximately 73 percent of RTI, FCS institutions provide roughly 19 percent and SUS institutions provide about 2 percent. Partnerships between school district technical colleges and FCS institutions represent 4 percent of instruction, and partnerships between school district technical colleges and SUS institutions represent 0.5 percent.

Total Number of Apprenticeship Students in District and College Programs

Year	District Enrollment	College Enrollment	Total
2012-13	6,201	2,278	8,479
2013-14	6,884	2,262	9,146
2014-15	7,424	2,471	9,895
2015-16	9,232	2,681	11,913
2016-17	9,715	2,630	12,345
2017-18	9,877	2,785	12,662
2018-19	10,681	2,753	13,434
2019-20	10,769	2,970	13,739
2020-21	10,905	2,726	13,631
2021-22	11,106	2,521	13,627
2022-23	11,759	2,491	14,250

2023-24	12,356	2,041	14,505
2024-25	13,305	1,754	15,059

Students participating in apprenticeship programs can earn a salary while in the program and attain a career that pays even better upon completion.

In 2013, the Florida Legislature enacted section 1003.4286, Florida Statutes, authorizing the Commissioner of Education to award a standard high school diploma to an honorably discharged veteran who has not completed high school graduation requirements. The State Board of Education subsequently adopted Rule 6A-6.0202, F.A.C., Awarding High School Diplomas to Honorably Discharged Veterans, which establishes eligibility criteria and application requirements for veterans seeking a standard high school diploma.

Rule 6A-6.0202, F.A.C., provides for the award of a standard high school diploma to eligible veterans who meet the following criteria:

- Left a public or non-public school located in any state prior to graduation and entered the armed forces of the United States.
- Is a current Florida resident or was previously enrolled in any high school in this state or was a resident of the state of Florida at the time of death.
- Is honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States as verified by the FDVA.

The Department may send a standard Florida high school diploma upon receiving a completed application along with a DD Form 214 or other honorable discharge documentation. Family members who would like to apply for a diploma posthumously may do so. The FDOE and FDVA work together to help veterans with the diploma application process.

Career, Technical and Adult Education Outreach Campaigns

The Division of Career and Adult Education has multiple outreach campaigns to communicate with teachers, students, parents and businesses about CTE and adult education in the state of Florida. Each campaign has a unique audience and mission.

- Established in 2019, Apprentice Florida has expanded registered apprenticeship programs, actively engaging businesses across the state to highlight the advantages of launching and participating in apprenticeships.

- Launched in 2020 under Governor DeSantis's leadership, Get There aims to redefine workforce education by promoting Career and Technical Education (CTE) as an accelerated, cost-effective pathway to high-demand careers. This campaign targets students who need postsecondary CTE programs now, whether it is to start a new career or advance their current career.

- Future of Work Florida, launched in partnership with The Florida Chamber Foundation in 2022, strengthens the connection between education and industry by giving students critical insights into high-wage, high-demand careers and ensuring they are prepared for the evolving job market. This campaign aims to communicate with K-12 students and parents about future opportunities available to them through CTE programs.

- Since its launch in 2022, Your Way has reshaped adult education in Florida, ensuring every adult knows the resources available to help them advance their careers and improve their economic opportunities. Your Way aims to communicate the importance of GED® and English as a Second Language (ESOL) programs to adult learners.

- Launched in 2025, XploreFLEd gives students nationwide access to Florida's top-ranked higher education system. Out-of-state students can enroll in select online workforce courses at institutions like Polk State, Miami Dade, and Tallahassee State College. This initiative emphasizes practical skills and career readiness. This campaign is especially relevant to military members and their families, as Florida's top-ranked education system is accessible to students nationwide. Frequent relocations no longer hinder military families from accessing education in Florida.

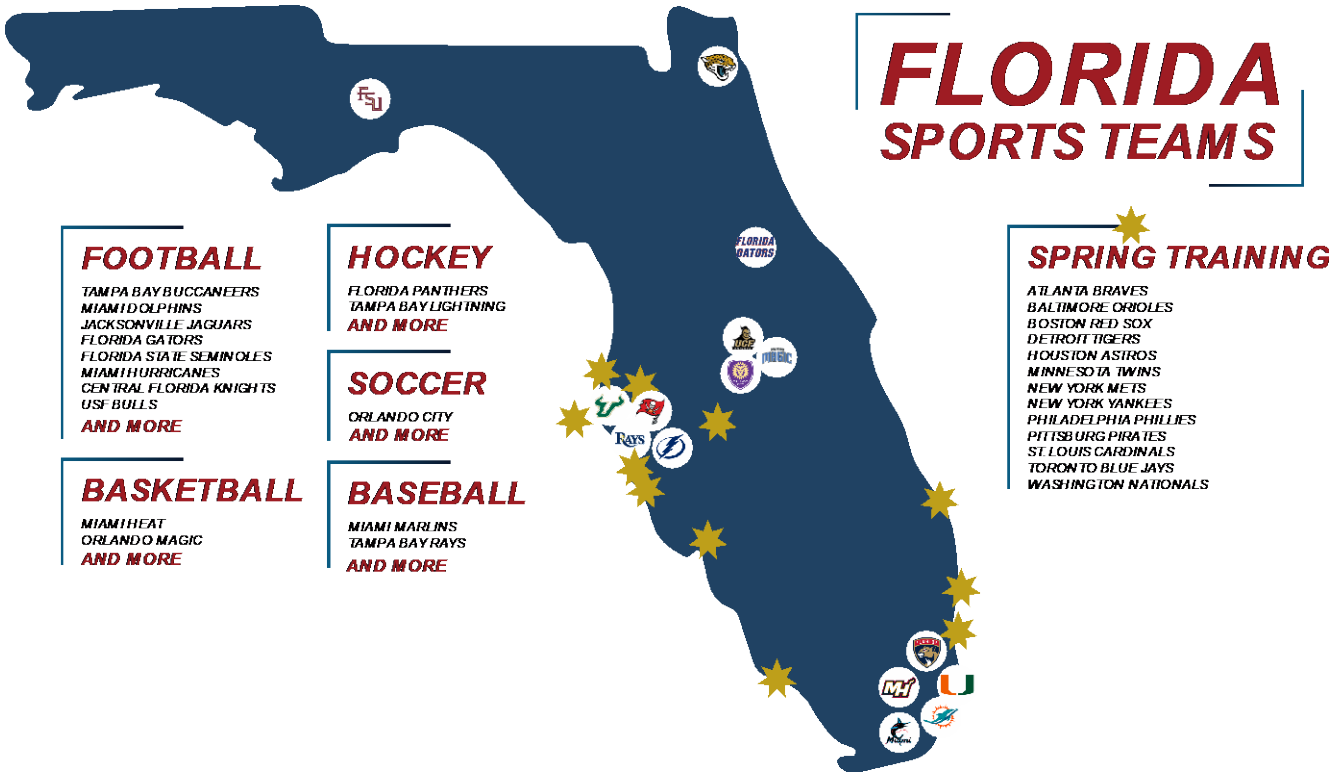
A WONDERFUL PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY

As the nation's most family-friendly state, Florida has been a destination for tourists from around the globe. In 2025, the state set a record by welcoming 143.3 million tourists, a 0.2 percent increase from the year before.



Visitors flock to Florida's resorts, theme parks, nearly 200 state and national parks, educational destinations such as Kennedy Space Center, and, of course, its world-renowned beaches. In fact, Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman, aka "Dr. Beach," annually ranks numerous Florida beaches in the top ten, including the top beach in 2020 (Grayton Beach) and 2023 (St. George Island). The 2026 Top Beaches List includes three Florida beaches: St. Andrews State Park, Caladesi Island State Park, and Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park.

Additionally, Florida is home to championship sports teams from the four most popular leagues: NBA (Orlando Magic), MLB (Miami Marlins and Tampa Bay Rays), NFL (Miami Dolphins, Jacksonville Jaguars, and Tampa Bay Buccaneers), and NHL (Florida Panthers and Tampa Bay Lightning). The state is also home to the iconic and famous Daytona 500. Florida's colleges and universities also field some of the nation's most competitive men's and women's athletic teams.



A TRUE PARTNER IN STATE GOVERNMENT

Most importantly, Florida has developed a state government that is unrivaled in terms of military support. In fact, our own Governor DeSantis, along with many members of the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate, have honorably served in the United States military. State and legislative leaders actively seek solutions to the problems military families face. Florida's elected officials welcome input from active-duty military, veterans, civilian contractors, and residents who share their goal of sustaining Florida's place as the nation's most military-friendly state.

The laws and numerous grant programs offered in this state show that Governor DeSantis and Florida lawmakers listen to military families and proactively work to make the transition to, and life in, Florida a much better experience than in other states. The Florida Legislature continues to pass additional military-friendly legislation that benefits military families.



A Trusted Steward of Taxpayer Resources

Unlike the federal government, Florida refuses to take more from its taxpayers than is necessary to fulfill its constitutional mandates. The structure and burden of a state's tax system significantly affect the day-to-day decisions that businesses and families make, and military families are no exception. Simply put, taxes matter to businesses and families. That is why people and companies are relocating to Florida.

Thanks to Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida continues to pass balanced, fiscally responsible budgets that support essential services and productive enterprises. This fiscal stewardship allows Florida to continue to receive an AAA credit rating (rated by Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's), ensuring Florida taxpayers are protected by securing favorable interest rates when borrowing. This helps Florida remain a low-tax state. In fact, thanks to the Governor, Florida's spending has been reduced for four consecutive years, and the state has retired approximately 50 percent of its entire debt. No other state can boast such fiscal responsibility.

Florida is routinely ranked as one of the most tax- and business-friendly states in the entire nation. The CATO Institute's Freedom in the 50 States ranks Florida the #2 state overall and the #1 state in terms of taxes, government employment, spending, debt and fiscal decentralization. Florida is also the top state for economic freedom, a category that includes fiscal and regulatory policy.

FLORIDA IS ROUTINELY RANKED AS ***ONE OF THE MOST TAX- AND BUSINESS-FRIENDLY STATES*** IN THE ***ENTIRE NATION***

Similarly, the Tax Foundation's 2026 State Business Tax Climate Index ranked Florida #5 in the nation for its overall tax structure, #1 in individual taxes, and #8 for unemployment insurance taxes. The only states ranked higher than Florida were Wyoming, South Dakota, New Hampshire and Alaska, states that have a fraction of the population and economic output as Florida.

Unsurprisingly, the Tax Foundation identified Connecticut, California, New York, and New Jersey as the states with the nation's worst state tax system structures.

Employment, Training, and Streamlined Licensure for Veterans, Active-Duty Military, and Their Families

The Department of Defense SkillBridge program provides eligible servicemembers who are beginning their transition back to civilian employment the ability to train and learn with the industry partner(s) that best align with their military training and work experience within the servicemember's final 180 days in the military. The goal of this program is to enhance military members' career prospects by making them more marketable as civilians.

In 2021, Governor DeSantis signed HB 435, which aligned Florida's Veterans Employment and Training Services Program with the SkillBridge program to improve employment and career outcomes for service members transitioning to civilian employment.

In 2022, the Governor signed SB 562, which requires the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation to expedite license applications of active-duty military spouses. Because active-duty military members relocate regularly, this measure allows military spouses to transition into Florida's workforce with minimal disruption and delay.

Additionally, in 2022, the Governor announced that CareerSource Florida and state workforce agencies dedicated $20 million in targeted workforce training support for Florida's veterans. This funding focuses on high-demand industries including aviation, aerospace, and defense.

In 2023, the Governor signed HB 139, which, in addition to establishing the Office of Veteran Licensure Services within the Florida Department of Health, extends multiple services to veterans' spouses, including the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program administered by Veterans Florida. Thanks to this legislation, veterans' spouses will now receive support to pursue careers in health care professions in Florida.

Housing, Health, and Economic Development

In 2022, Governor DeSantis announced more than $3 million in awards to military communities through the Defense Infrastructure Grant Program, the Defense Reinvestment Grant Program, and the Florida Defense Support Task Force Grant Program. Through collaborative efforts with multiple state-supported entities, these programs provide grant funding to defense-dependent communities to support economic diversification efforts, local infrastructure projects, and military community relations.

When the Governor signed the General Appropriations Act in 2022, the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) created the Hometown Heroes Program. The program, available to eligible borrowers, including active-duty military and veterans, offers zero-interest-rate loans to reduce the amount of down payment and closing costs from $10,000 to a maximum of five percent or $25,000, whichever is less.

In 2023, the Governor signed SB 102, which directed the FHFC to provide housing near military installations with "preference given to projects that incorporate critical services for servicemembers, their families, and veterans, such as mental health treatment services, employment services, and assistance with transition from active-duty service to civilian life."

Additionally, the Governor signed HB 485, which creates the Division of Long-term Care within the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs to oversee the operations of veterans' adult day health care programs.

Championing American Values in the United States Military

In 2023, the Florida Senate approved Senate Memorial 1382, which asked Congress to prohibit the use of "woke" social engineering and experimentation practices, which "are eroding military effectiveness, and to mandate a return to a merit-based system for military force development and composition."

The National Guard

Senate Memorial 1036 from the 2023 legislative session urged Congress to "to impel the United States National Guard Bureau to examine the resource allocations of the Florida National Guard and allow an increase in its force structure." In terms of the ratio of Guardsmen per resident, the Florida National Guard ranks 53rd among the 54 states and territories due to insufficient resources from the United States National Guard Bureau.

United States Space Force

In 2022, Governor DeSantis signed SB 438, which updated Florida's definition of "Uniformed Service" to include the United States Space Force and updated military base names.

A year later, Florida's Patrick Space Force Base was selected as the home for the United States Space Force Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM) headquarters. This selection further solidifies Florida's dominance as the most military-friendly state and its position as America's hub for military and private space operations.

STARCOM will prepare combat-ready United States Space Force Guardians to fight and win in a contested, degraded, and operationally limited environment through the deliberate development, education, and training of space professionals; development of space warfighting doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures; and the test and evaluation of United States Space Force capabilities.

CONCLUSION

Thanks to the work of Governor DeSantis and the Florida Department of Education, Florida has proven itself to be both the "Education State" and the "Military-Friendly State." Our status is cemented and unparalleled in terms of the access our residents – including military families – have to a variety of world-class, affordable, and high-quality education opportunities. We are a national leader that is recognized for excellence in our tireless search for innovative ways of providing our students with an outstanding education. By rethinking how we deliver education to our students holistically, we have focused our attention at the granular level – on the individual educational needs of our students. Although we have comprehensively improved our educational delivery system over the past two decades, we can always do more.

Florida knows all too well that we must never become complacent; we must never stop looking for ways and areas to improve, and we must never give up on our mission to produce the greatest education system in the world – and our military families are an essential part of that mission.

Our students and their families deserve nothing less.