



FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S DESK

October

FLORIDA CIVICS AND DEBATE INITIATIVE

The Florida Civics and Debate Initiative (FCDI) continues to thrive thanks to the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis and educators like you. We now proudly have over 330 teams in all 67 of our school districts, with more than 125 new FCDI teams. During the school year, FCDI students participate in over 30 tournaments around the state practicing civil discourse, sharpening their reasoning, and growing in the civic virtues that sustain our constitutional republic.



BUILDING GREAT CITIZENS

The tragic assassination of Charlie Kirk underscored the importance of civic dialogue rooted in respect and understanding. Mr. Kirk's example in promoting open civic discourse reminds us that disagreement must remain peaceful and productive. To honor his legacy, the winner of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Debate at the FCDI Championship will be awarded a trophy named after Charlie Kirk and a \$50,000 scholarship. The runner-up will receive a \$25,000 scholarship, the two semifinalists will each receive a \$15,000 scholarship, and the four quarterfinalists will each receive a \$10,000 scholarship. Thanks to the Ronald Reagan Foundation, both the winner and the runner-up will receive invitations to attend the National Ronald Reagan Presidential Debate in California.

As educators, I encourage you to continue to promote respectful, principled and productive civic discussion in the classroom. To learn about FCDI and how your classroom can get involved, visit www.civicsanddebate.com.

[CELEBRATING FCDI TEAMS](#)



PROGRESS MONITORING RESULTS

I am pleased to share that the progress monitoring results for the beginning of the 2025-26 school year continue to show students succeeding. The percentage of students scoring a level 3 or higher in English Language Arts (PM1) increased 3 percentage points over PM1 results from last school year and were 7 percentage points higher than PM1 results in the 2022-23 school year, when progress monitoring began. In Mathematics, the percentage of students scoring a level 3 or higher increased 1 percentage point from PM1 results last school year and were 4 percentage points higher than the 2022-23 school year. Since progress monitoring was first implemented, more students are performing at or above grade level. These are impressive results, and I look forward to even greater numbers of students scoring a level 3 or above following the PM2 and PM3 results later this school year. Thanks to your hard work, students are excelling in record numbers. Keep up the great work!

[VIDEO MESSAGE REGARDING PROGRESS MONITORING RESULTS](#)



CHARTER SCHOOL CONFERENCE AND SCHOOL CHOICE SUMMIT

This year, we kicked off another successful Florida Charter School Conference and School Choice Summit. Over 800 charter and private school leaders across the state came together and had the opportunity to network, share practices and gather information on how to best serve students in their schools.

Florida remains number one for school choice. Nearly half of all students in Florida, about 1.4 million children, are learning in a school choice setting with more than half a million participating in scholarships.

Your dedication and commitment to providing all students a high-quality education, regardless of their zip code, is why Florida is revered as the Education State.



SUS SAFETY SUMMIT

Campus safety is a top priority of mine. Thank you, teachers, for your steadfast leadership and commitment to ensuring our K-12 schools remain safe and secure learning environments.

The Florida College System institutions and state universities came together to discuss their safety efforts at the 2025 Campus Safety Summit. At the Summit, I highlighted the profound success our state has had in implementing the most robust school safety measures nationwide.

We can have the highest academic standards, the strongest workforce programs and the most innovative pathways, but none of it matters if our students and faculty are not safe in their classrooms or on their campuses.

I'm proud of what we have accomplished, but I am determined to expand our work on school safety to higher education. As leaders, your dedication to proactive safety measures, emergency preparedness and the welfare of students is essential to the success of our schools, colleges and universities.

All students in Florida, no matter their age or where they attend school, should have a safe and secure learning environment.



RESILIENCY
FLORIDA

RESILIENCY FLORIDA

No one is immune to adversity or hardship. The 11 Resiliency Characteristics within Resiliency Florida help students overcome any challenge. Each characteristic has a definition and accompanying resources. Resiliency Florida provides a sample calendar and toolkit to highlight each characteristic.

[DOWNLOAD RESILIENCY RESOURCES FOR FREE](#)



SUGGESTED READING

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

ANIMAL FARM *by George Orwell*

Animal Farm is a powerful and thought-provoking story that uses talking farm animals to explore themes of power, freedom, and corruption. When the animals overthrow their human owner to create an equal society, their dream soon begins to unravel. The novel serves as an allegory for the Russian Revolution and the rise of communism. Through the downfall of the animals' utopia, George Orwell exposes how revolutionary ideals can be corrupted by tyranny and the pursuit of absolute control. As Victims of Communism Day nears, *Animal Farm* will offer students valuable insight into the dangers of communism and the abuse of power.

Recommended for grades 9-12.

