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## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** School District Superintendents

**FROM:** Anastasios Kamoutsas

**DATE:** February 3, 2026

**SUBJECT: Student Protests, Student Safety and Instructional Time**

The Florida Department of Education recently received correspondence from members of the Florida legislature regarding reports of organized student protest activity occurring during the school day. I want to thank them for bringing this matter to my attention and for their leadership in elevating concerns related to student safety, instructional time, and the appropriate role of public schools.

Florida's public schools exist first and foremost to provide high-quality instruction aligned to state academic standards in a safe and secure environment. School district leaders and school-based administrators carry a responsibility to safeguard instructional time, maintain campus safety, and ensure compliance with law, State Board of Education rules, and local school board policy.

Students retain constitutional rights to free expression, including the ability to engage in peaceful protest, when such expression complies with applicable law and school district policy. Any student whose actions are to the contrary should be appropriately disciplined. Districts have a responsibility to ensure that any protest activity does not interrupt instructional time, school operations and campus safety.

Administrators and instructional staff must not encourage, organize, promote, or facilitate student participation in protest activity during the school day. Any conduct by school or district personnel that diverts students from instruction, undermines classroom authority, or compromises student supervision violates professional responsibilities and warrants disciplinary action. Moreover, Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code, requires educators to take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated. Administrators must take proactive steps to ensure students remain under appropriate supervision during school hours and that instructional environments remain safe and focused on learning.

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Florida parents and families: instructional time matters. Classroom instruction provides students with the academic foundation they need to succeed, and schools must protect that time. While students may lawfully express their views in appropriate settings, Florida's public schools must remain focused on teaching, learning, and student safety. Therefore, we encourage you to have conversations with your students about the importance of not allowing civic engagement to detract from time in the classroom.

Superintendents: I expect you to share this communication with district leadership, school administrators, teachers and parents. I further expect that you address any violations of policy, by either students or staff, promptly and appropriately.

Thank you to all who share the responsibility of keeping Florida schools focused on education and student safety: teachers, administrators, parents, school resource officers, school guardians, and law enforcement partners.

CAK/pb