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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
Charter School Leaders

FROM: Anastasios Kamoutsas

DATE: March 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Constitutionally Protected Prayer and Religious Expression in Public Schools

Florida remains committed to longstanding constitutional protections for voluntary prayer and religious expression in our public schools. Superintendents and charter school leaders should take great care in understanding and safeguarding these rights for students and school staff.

On February 5, 2026, the United States Department of Education (USED) [released updated guidance](#) to state and local educational agencies (LEAs) regarding the current law governing prayer and religious expression in public schools. The purpose of this guidance is to update protections regarding prayer and religious expression and replace prior guidance from the Biden administration. This updated guidance affirms that students, teachers and other school employees retain constitutional rights to religious expression, including individual prayer.

Examples provided by the updated guidance include treating religious speech the same as secular speech. An essay with religious content should be graded with the same grading standards as a secular essay. Religious student organizations should be treated the same as secular student organizations.

To help ensure that students and school staff in Florida's public schools are able to exercise their rights to religious expression consistent with the law, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has launched a dedicated process for individuals to submit complaints if the updated guidance from USED is not properly followed. Each complaint will be promptly reviewed and investigated.

- Individuals may submit complaints to the FDOE Office of Academically Successful & Resilient Districts (ASRD): FLFaith@fldoe.org.
- FDOE staff will investigate each complaint and communicate with the complainant and the LEA.

Constitutionally Protected Prayer and Religious Expression in Public Schools

March 17, 2026

Page Two

- FDOE staff will report any complaints and public legal charges, such as lawsuits filed against an LEA, to USED.

Additionally, please ensure the attached letter is distributed to parents and ensure that all school employees are informed of and understand the rights of students to engage in prayer and religious expression in public schools, as well as their own rights and responsibilities.

Thank you for your continued leadership in ensuring that Florida's parents remain informed and engaged in the education of their children.

AK/pob