

Back to School 2026: Lead with Knowledge

Dear Florida Educators,

A new school year always brings anticipation. New students. New opportunities. New beginnings. It also brings new questions.

Over the past several years, Florida's educators have navigated one of the most rapidly changing educational environments in the country. Through new laws, shifting guidance, public debate, and increasing scrutiny, you've continued to do what great educators have always done: you've shown up for students.

As organizations that work alongside Florida's educators every day, the Florida Education Association and Equality Florida's Safe & Healthy Schools Program share a common belief: every educator deserves clear information, practical resources, and the confidence to support every student, every family, and every colleague with professionalism, compassion, and integrity. Together, we remain committed to supporting educators- including LGBTQ educators, and helping schools create learning environments where every student has the opportunity to succeed.

As we begin this school year, let's ground ourselves in one simple truth:

Knowledge is our strongest tool.

It gives us confidence when questions arise. It helps us make informed, thoughtful decisions that serve students, support families, and strengthen our schools.

Across Florida, we've worked alongside educators, school counselors, administrators, district leaders, families, and students. One lesson has become impossible to ignore:

Much of the confusion we're seeing isn't created by laws themselves. It's created by misinformation, inconsistent implementation, and uncertainty about what the law actually says.

When uncertainty fills the gap, rumors often become practice. Don't let rumors become policy.

Every day, we hear from educators who have been told something is "illegal," only to discover the law says something very different. We hear from parents who are confused about their rights. We hear from administrators who want to do the right thing but haven't been given clear guidance.

Those conversations remind us why clarity matters.

When educators understand the law, they make better decisions. When districts implement policies consistently, families build trust. And when schools lead with knowledge, fewer students fall through the cracks.

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No matter your role—teacher, counselor, administrator, school social worker, school psychologist, support staff member, or district leader—you play an essential role in creating schools where students feel safe enough to learn and educators feel supported enough to teach.

As you welcome students back into your classrooms, remember this:

You are not alone.

There is a statewide community of educators, unions, school leaders, and organizations committed to supporting you. Whether you're looking for guidance on current law, best practices, or practical tools for supporting LGBTQ students and families, help is available.

This year, let's choose curiosity over assumptions.

Let's choose partnership over isolation.

Let's choose facts over fear.

Let's lead with knowledge.

Start the School Year with Trusted Resources

As you prepare for the year ahead, we encourage you to explore the resources available to support you throughout the school year:

• [FEA Know Your Rights Guide](#)

• [Equality Florida's Know Your Rights: Florida Educator Edition](#)

• [Equality Florida Safe & Healthy Schools Resources](#)

Thank you for the extraordinary work you do on behalf of Florida's students. We wish you a successful, inspiring, and rewarding school year.

With appreciation,



Geanny Ruiz

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Andrew Spar

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