


BUYING ALL GOLD JEWELRY!
 12Kt • 14Kt • 18Kt & 24Kt • We Come to You!
 Sterling Silver • Bouillion • All Highwaymen Paintings
 Rolex & All Watches • Gold & Silver Coins • Antiques & Art



NO ONE PAYS MORE! INSTANT CASH!
BRUCE KODNER GALLERIES
 Mr. Kodner's Cell **Same Day Service!** 24HR on Call: 800-920-0067
 561-822-5043 FL Toll Free: 800-356-3637



MLB : Where FL top draft prospects could land

SPORTS, 1B

YOUR LOCAL NEWS SOURCE FOR LAKE AND SUMTER COUNTIES

DAILY COMMERCIAL

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026 | DAILYCOMMERCIAL.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Court: FL Stop WOKE act is unconstitutional



A federal appeals court ruled that Florida's Stop WOKE Act, signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis, cannot be enforced because it likely violates First Amendment protections. The court said the law improperly restricts viewpoints in higher education and threatens academic freedom. The majority called it a "breathtaking assertion of power to ban unpopular ideas from public discourse." TORI SCHNEIDER/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

'Because the government pays the professors' salaries, Florida says, their speech is the State's speech'

Stephany Matat
 USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Florida's law limiting race-based trainings or instruction still can't be enforced, after a sharply divided three-judge appeals court panel ruled that the law violates the First Amendment rights of students and professors.

The 2-1 majority of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals contended that the law suppresses political viewpoints contrary to Florida officials in academic settings, and that the law would "create a new rule that would quietly remove all free speech protections from the classroom," wrote Judge Britt Grant, who was appointed by President Donald Trump in 2018.

The ruling blasts the law as a "breath-

taking assertion of power to ban unpopular ideas from public discourse."

"Because the government pays the professors' salaries, Florida says, their speech is the State's speech," Grant wrote. "Emphatically no."

This decision comes after multiple years of legal battles, since the law (HB 7) was signed in 2022 by Gov. Ron DeSantis to combat "woke" ideologies in schools, colleges and universities. At this time, DeSantis' national profile was rapidly rising prior to him announcing a White House presidential bid, and he positioned himself on battling cultural issues and a chief critic to critical race theory.

DeSantis has kept the fight going over the years. In recent months, Florida officials moved to disallow introductory so-

ciology classes from counting toward general education requirements, citing a Florida law endorsed by the governor in his push to prohibit critical race theory in classroom curriculums and cut diversity, equity and inclusion programs at universities.

"Florida seeks to strip public university professors — and by extension their students — of the ability to fully engage with ideas that are, for better or for worse, very popular in some academic circles," Grant wrote in the majority's 52-page opinion.

This legal development is a loss for Florida officials and the governor's culture war battle, an emblem of his administration which is soon to end since

See WOKE ACT, Page 2A

Kornegay to retire

Superintendent receives back-to-back A's for Lake County Schools

Julie Garisto
 Leesburg Daily Commercial
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Just months after being named best-of-state in her field, Lake County Schools Superintendent Diane Kornegay is retiring at the end of the 2026-27 school year.

"After more than 35 years of serving students, educators and families, I have decided to retire at the end of this upcoming school year," Kornegay said in a media statement issued July 6.



"Deciding to retire has been one of the most difficult decisions of my career. While I know this is the right time for me personally, it is bittersweet to step away from a profession and a community that mean so much to me."

Kornegay is the longest-serving appointed superintendent in Florida, in her position since 2017. Under her watch, graduation rates jumped from 88% to over 90%. She spearheaded the flexible day-and-night school partnerships with Lake Tech, and the district earned back-to-back A grades from the Florida Department of Education for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years.

Before becoming Lake County Schools' 39th superintendent, Kornegay served in several leadership roles in Clay County Schools, including deputy superintendent, assistant superintendent for instruction and director of school improvement and teacher training. She also has been a school principal.

What will a new superintendent face?

According to Lake County's spokesperson, the school board is already beginning discussions on the transition. What are some challenges that may arise?

• **Artificial intelligence:** AI in schools has rapidly evolved past the initial panic over students using ChatGPT to cheat on essays to bullying with deepfakes. The next superintendent will have to draft the blueprint for

See SCHOOLS, Page 2A

Popular Florida influencer dies after gunshots hit Lamborghini

Michelle Spitzer
 USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

A popular Florida influencer with nearly 400,000 TikTok followers was killed with the Lamborghini she was riding in was hit with gunfire, according to authorities.

Brianna Johnson, 21, was riding in the lime green Lamborghini Urus Sunday, July 5 when a white sedan pulled up along side it at an intersection and opened fire, Miramar police said in a statement released to USA Today Network. Two other people also were in the luxury vehicle and

were transported to a hospital in critical condition.

Johnson died from her injuries. Identities of the other two victims have not been released.

Detectives are asking anyone with information to contact them as the investigation is ongoing.

Who was Florida influencer killed when Lamborghini shot at?

Johnson went by the name @_itgirlbri on TikTok where she had more than 382,000 followers. On Instagram she was

known as @dreamdoll_brii with more than 87,000 followers.

Her last post, about a week ago, amassed 3 million views on TikTok. It featured her posing with a high-end Mercedes Benz.

Followers were posting condolence messages on her social media page expressing shock and disbelief.

Where is Miramar where popular Florida influencer was killed?

Miramar is in the southern part of Broward County.

It's located about 30 minutes from Fort Lauderdale and just north of Miami Stadium.

According to Miramar police, officers responded to the area of Southwest 27th Court and Sunrise Boulevard to investigate.

Michelle Spitzer is a journalist for The USA TODAY NETWORK-FLORIDA. As the network's Rapid Response reporter, she covers Florida's breaking news. You can get all of Florida's best content directly in your inbox each weekday day by signing up for the free newsletter, Florida TODAY, at <https://floridatoday.com/newsletters>.

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to dailycommercial.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 150 | No. 161
 Home Delivery 352-787-0600
 ©2026 \$2.00

