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The Gainesville Sun

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FSU remembers life of John Thrasher



A celebration of life honoring the late President Emeritus John Thrasher was held in Ruby Diamond Auditorium on Aug. 19. PHOTOS BY ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

School's 15th president called a true leader of people

Tarah Jean Tallahassee Democrat | USA TODAY NETWORK

Filling up the Ruby Diamond Concert Hall at Florida State University, hundreds of people from all walks of life gathered Aug. 19 to pay tribute to the late President Emeritus John Thrasher, who died in late May after battling cancer. • Amid the somber circumstance, loved ones remembered the 81-year-old Army veteran, former Florida House speaker and former state senator as a loving family man, a true leader of people and the 15th president of FSU – a role he often called the “best job ever.”

When FSU President Richard McCullough first met Thrasher after being interviewed for the president's position on campus, he said he was “immediately struck by his strong charisma and warm presence.”

“I knew at that moment that if I was lucky enough to be the president of Florida State University and follow President Thrasher, I would truly be standing on the

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A statue honoring the late President Emeritus John Thrasher stands under an oak tree near Westcott Fountain on Aug. 19.



Florida Education Commissioner Anastasios Kamoutsas speaks in front of the state board of education on Aug. 20. PROVIDED BY FLORIDA CHANNEL

State votes to sanction Alachua Board of Ed

Finds members violated 1st amendment rights of district's parents

Elliot Tritto

Gainesville Sun

USA TODAY NETWORK

The Florida State Board of Education on Aug. 20 voted to automatically put in sanctions to withhold funds equal to the salaries of Alachua County School Board members.

A few weeks after a brouhaha ensued over an overwhelming crowd to kick out an Alachua County parent during a school board meeting, the Florida School Board voted to automatically put in sanctions to withhold funds equal to the school board's salary if they violate parents first amendment rights again.

Florida Commissioner of Education Anastasios Kamoutsas found probable cause that the county board violated the first amendment and recommended for the state board to allow the district a ‘specified timeline’ to demonstrate compliance by making sure the districts policies are updated. Kamoutsas added training should be provided for each school board member and monitor the Alachua County School Board throughout the 2025-2026 to ensure there is not another violation in that district.

“If there is (a violation), the recommendation is the board is to issue automatic sanctions that includes a report to the legislature explaining how the district is violating the first amendment rights of parents within the district.

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DeSantis: State will be ‘vindicated’ in book ban lawsuit

Stephany Matat

USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Gov. Ron DeSantis says he anticipates his administration will be “vindicated” in an appeal to a federal judge's ruling last week calling part of the law used to take classic and modern books away from school libraries unconstitutional.

At a Aug. 19 press conference in St. Cloud, DeSantis said the state plans to appeal U.S. District Judge Carlos Mendoza's ruling.

Mendoza, of the Middle District of Florida, struck down a portion of HB 1069 the week prior, which prevents

books that “describe sexual conduct” from being in public schools. “We will be vindicated in this,” DeSantis said.

The judge wrote that it's “unclear what the statute actually prohibits.” Since DeSantis signed the measure into law in 2023, it's been used to sweep thousands of books off Florida's school library shelves.

But responding to a reporter's question about the state's next steps in this lawsuit, DeSantis said that his administration aims to empower parents to have a say in school materials that align with state standards.

“Are we really going to keep doing this? You know, we're here to do math

and reading and science, we're not here to inject gender theory,” DeSantis said. “That's just not appropriate in the schools. We obviously have a right to insist on those standards.”

In the federal judge's order, Mendoza drew concern with removal of contemporary classics like “The Handmaid's Tale,” which was among 23 books removed from Orange County and Volusia County schools.

For years, the DeSantis administration has defended book removals using the “government speech” doctrine, which says the government has the right

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For years, Gov. Ron DeSantis has defended book removals using the “government speech” doctrine.

DOUG ENGLE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

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