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Florida gets an F in K-12 ranking



Florida educators, parents and others gather on the steps of the Florida Historic Capitol to voice their opinions for better support of public schools on May 5. ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Lands last for its lack of support of public schools

Alaijah Cross
Tallahassee Democrat
USA TODAY NETWORK

Among other national education research institutions, the Network for Public Education ranked Florida last for its lack of commitment and support for K-12 public schools.

The network, a nonprofit advocacy group that promotes and researches policies supporting traditional public schools, has evaluated and held states accountable for how public education is managed and upheld.

With scores up to 100, each state was evaluated based on privatization, school finance, and student and teacher supports.

“The grades in this report are not merely academic assessments influenced by demographics or changing test standards. They are a measure of how seriously each statehouse takes its obligation to the children who attend public schools within its borders,” says the report, released through a press release.

Florida earned an F, with 14 out of 100 possible points earned.

“The states most aggressively redirecting public funds toward private alternatives were also the states most neglectful of their public schools, their teachers, and their students. Privatiza-

tion and disinvestment, it turns out, go hand in hand,” the report adds.

Florida has steered billions in taxpayer funding to private school programs with limited oversight, a policy critics say disenfranchises public schools and the communities they serve.

Proponents contend that private school programs increase educational choice and competition, potentially improving outcomes for students and families seeking alternatives to traditional public schools.

A lawsuit filed by the Florida Education Association against the State Board of Education argues that traditional public schools must comply with a

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Rescuers search through the rubble of the Champlain Towers South condo collapse in Surfside on June 29, 2021. The National Institute of Standards and Technology announced June 22, 2026, that the structural failure started three weeks earlier at two garage columns. PHOTOS BY ANDREW WEST/FORT MYERS NEWS-PRESS

Slow-motion horror

Surfside building failing for weeks before collapse, report says

John Pacenti
USA TODAY NETWORK-FLORIDA

On the eve of the five-year anniversary of the Surfside condominium disaster, a new federal report reveals that the condominium collapse did not happen in an instant, but was rather the result of a slow-motion chain reaction that started weeks before the tragedy.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announced Monday that the structural failure started earlier in June 2021 at two critical garage columns beneath the pool deck of Champlain Towers South. Those initial failures quietly shifted deadly loads over three weeks across the 12-story building that was already severely compromised by original design flaws.

The five-year anniversary of the collapse is Wednesday, June 24.

“When building structures are

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Shown are Raymond and Mercedes Urgelles. Posters of some of the people missing from the Champlain Towers South condo collapse in Surfside were photographed on June 28, 2021, at the memorial fence near the scene.

Trump, Iran at odds over inspections

Jarrett Renshaw and Tala Ramadan
REUTERS

LOWER MACUNGIE TOWNSHIP, PA – President Donald Trump said on June 23 that Iran had agreed to nuclear inspections into “infinity,” while Tehran said it had made no such concession in negotiations, raising questions about the viability of their fragile peace deal.

The two countries, which held a first round of negotiations in Switzerland that ended on June 22, also offered conflicting accounts about financial incentives for Iran, control of the Strait of Hormuz, and Israel’s parallel war in Lebanon – all major aspects of the framework deal they signed that aims to end the war.

Nevertheless, Trump said negotiations were going smoothly with Iran. “We’re getting along quite well,” he said at a rally in Pennsylvania.

In a sign of easing tensions, the United States relaxed travel restrictions on Iran’s World Cup soccer team, allowing the squad to travel from Tijuana, Mexico, to Seattle two days before its next match instead of one.

But a Reuters/Ipsos poll found 35% of Americans think the United States is now in a weaker position with Iran than it was before the war, while 23% believe it is in a stronger position.

The Republican-controlled Senate, meanwhile, defied Trump and voted to halt the war, in a largely symbolic move that highlighted fissures in his party.

The Senate voted 50-48 in favor of the war powers resolution, which passed the House of Representatives earlier in June, reflecting growing concern even among some of Trump’s Republicans about the unpopular conflict.

It was the first time both chambers of Congress had passed a resolution directing a president to remove U.S. armed forces from hostilities, as spelled out in the War Powers Resolution of 1973, more commonly known as the War Powers Act.

While likely to remain largely symbolic, the votes were a clear setback for Trump, who until recently enjoyed nearly full support from Republican members of Congress. Trump’s Republicans hold slim majorities in both the Senate and House.

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