

The Delray Democrat

Florida Schools: The New Beaver Cleaver Laws¹

June Sandra Neal

Yes indeed, Florida's schools are now governed by a package of laws that Beaver Cleaver would find familiar, thanks to Governor DeSantis and the Republican legislative lemmings. All are reminiscent of the 1950s: A Straight, White, and Christian ethos. After years of agitprop, DeSantis managed to reverse many of the hard-won accomplishments of the last decades, a tragic revocation of our nation's hard-won advances toward greater equality, inclusion, and diversity. (Note the innocuous titles of the bills compared to their content.)

HB 1069 2023. "Child Protection in Public Schools." (Except for LGBTQ+ Kids)

- No discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity through grade 8. Whatever (unspecific) is taught from grades 9 through 12 must conform to state standards.
- A person is either "female or male based on the organization of the body...for a specific reproductive role, as indicated by the person's sex chromosomes, naturally occurring sex hormones, and internal and external genitalia present at birth."
- "...this is an immutable biological trait."
- Use of pronouns must conform to the person's sex at birth.

HB 1521 2023. "Facilities." (Use the Restroom We Tell you to)

- Students must use the restrooms that correspond to their sex at birth.

SB 266 2023. "Higher Education Institutions." (Higher Ed with Really Big Censorship!)

- No state higher education entity may use state or federal funds to "Advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, or promote or engage in political or social activism as defined by rules of the State Board of Education and regulations of the Board of Governors."
- Prohibits "...any curriculum ...based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, or privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, or economic inequities." (Another crazy DeSantis revision of history; guess there were *never* any obstacles to equality for Black, Brown, Jewish, etc. people.)
- The Governor's assistants (GAs) take over hiring of new faculty.
- Tenure can be reviewed at any time. (So, is it still tenure?)
- The educational model will be based on Western civilization.

¹ [*The Delray Democrat*](#), August 2023, page 6.

- Prohibits money spent for advocacy of “diversity, equity and inclusion.”
- *Note: the federal government *requires* colleges and universities using federal funds to work to prevent discrimination based on race and gender.

HB 7 2022. “Individual Freedom.” (The Tau of Ron)

Teaching of American history such as the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, etc., must conform to Ron’s standards: That means [White] students must not be made to feel “guilt” or “anguish” about elements of the nation’s history, such as slavery. Where did he get this? Any trained educator knows that fact-based historical knowledge helps students learn empathy, not guilt, and encourages working towards a better society.

DeSantis also opted out of the College Board’s AP African American Studies course, which is “currently in a two-year pilot program in 60 high schools nationwide, with plans to expand it to hundreds more schools in the [fall](#).” Unbelievably, the Board then removed many elements of the course he objected to and added “Black Conservatism.”

HB 1 2023. School Choice. (Or Robbing Peter to Pay Paul)

The expansion of the school voucher program is the greatest assault ever against public education in Florida. (See accompanying article “Privatizing Florida’s Public Education in this issue.)

HBill 5 2021. “Civics Education.” (Voting the DeSantis Way)

The K-12 civics curriculum will teach citizens’ rights and responsibilities in accord with our Founding [documents](#). Students will learn how to register to vote. Will they recognize how DeSantis has aggressively suppressed voter rights and gerrymandered voting districts to weaken minority voting power?

HB 225 2023. “Interscholastic Activities.” (Actually, it’s Religion *and* State)

This Bill ignores the Constitution’s “establishment clause,” separating church and state, and allows schools two minutes at athletic events to say whatever they wish, e.g., prayers, using the public address system. It also beats up on the Florida High School Athletic Association, removing much of its authority and giving it to the Gov’s people. Further, the Association [can no longer “make appointments that reflect the demographic and population trends of this state.”](#) Maybe it’s payback time for the 2015 Citrus Bowl football game when the Association refused to allow two Christian Universities to lead public prayers because they were on state property.