

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OKALOOSA COUNTY

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
MARCUS D. CHAMBERS

ATTORNEY TO THE BOARD
C. JEFFREY McINNIS, Esq.



BOARD MEMBERS
TIM BRYANT
D. PARKER DESTIN
LINDA EVANCHYK
BRETT HINELY
LAMAR WHITE

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
June 3, 2025

Contact: Catherine Card
Public Information Officer
catherine.card@okaloosaschools.com

Destin Middle School's Noah Finkler Wins Florida State Civics Championship, Advances to National Finals

Okaloosa County is proud to celebrate an outstanding accomplishment by Destin Middle School 8th grader Noah Finkler, who has been named the Florida State Champion of the 2025 National Civics Bee. Noah earned first place at the Florida State Finals, held May 31 at Florida State University in Tallahassee, and received a \$1,000 prize. His victory secured him a spot in the National Civics Bee Championship this fall in Washington, D.C., where he will represent Florida against top students from across the country.

Noah's journey began at the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce's inaugural National Civics Bee, held on March 11. He won first place at the local competition—earning a \$500 prize and a trophy—alongside two other finalists from Northwest Florida Ballet Académie. The event, hosted in partnership with the Okaloosa County School District, was made possible through the generous support of Eglin Federal Credit Union, Cox Communications, Chesser & Barr, and Sportsclips. Held at Gregg Chapel Life Center, the Fort Walton Beach competition marked Florida's first local National Civics Bee, showcasing the knowledge and civic passion of middle school students throughout Okaloosa County. "The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has given students a tremendous opportunity to engage in civic education," said Ted Corcoran, President and CEO of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce. "We were honored to be the first Chamber in Florida to participate, and it has been inspiring to see students like Noah thrive in this competition."

The National Civics Bee, an initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, aims to promote civic learning and engagement among middle schoolers. At the state level, Noah was one of nine student finalists who showcased their knowledge, leadership, and commitment to civic life. "This is an incredible achievement for Noah, and we couldn't be prouder," said Superintendent Marcus Chambers. "His dedication to civic education and ability to excel on such a competitive stage speaks volumes. We look forward to cheering him on as he represents Florida at the national level." As Noah prepares to compete in Washington, D.C., he has the opportunity to win grand prizes, including a \$100,000 education savings plan for the National Civics Bee champion. Okaloosa County Schools wish Noah the best of luck as he represents Florida on the national stage this November!



###

CENTRAL COMPLEX-202 A HIGHWAY 85 NORTH-NICEVILLE, FL 32578
TELEPHONE (850) 833-3100 FAX (850) 833-4237

CARVER HILL ADMINISTRATION COMPLEX-461 W. SCHOOL AVENUE-CRESTVIEW, FLORIDA 32536
TELEPHONE (850) 689-7117 FAX (850) 689-7121