

A Time of Thanks and Hope

December 2016



Happy Holidays

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

the Virtual View

It is amazing how quickly another year passes; the school year is already half over as we head into a new year, 2017. This year saw changes within our virtual education office along with new virtual coordinators in the districts. We spent the past year reaching out to each district with Meet & Greet calls; introducing ourselves and being amazed at the opportunities and experiences each district is giving Florida students. We also travelled the state, hosting five virtual education workshops, inviting virtual coordinators, MIS folk and CFO's to collaborate on virtual options, database and funding requirements. We were busy but our work is not yet done.....

In 2017 we will continue to advocate for the repeal of Section 1002.455, Florida Statutes, so Florida can truly boast that all virtual options are available to all Florida students. We ask that you advocate at the district level too with your Senators and Representatives. Together we can make this happen!!

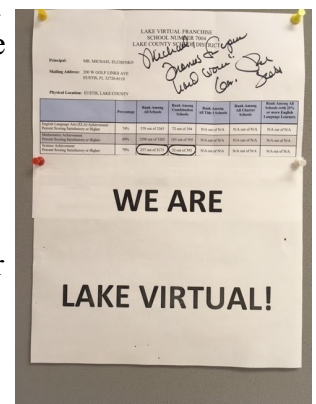
From our office to yours; we wish you a joyful and peaceful holiday season. We are thankful to work with such dedicated public servants and hope the new year brings abundant blessings.

Sandy, Nicolle, Lisa, Meagan and Pradeep

Science Scores that Soar!

Lake County Virtual School was the recipient of a signed report from Governor Scott recognizing the achievement of having FSA Science scores that ranked in the top 10% in the state. Ms. Carolyn Mendez (Lake Virtual full-time science teacher) did a great job preparing students to excel. All of the full-time staff meet weekly to discuss how to help raise student achievement via cross curricular activities.

Submitted by Mike Elchenko



Inside this issue:

Pinellas, Pasco	2
Pasco, Hillsborough	3
K12	4
K12, St. Johns, FLVS	5
FLVS, Lake	6
Orange	7
Orange, Duval	8
Palm Beach, DOE	9

“Education is not only a ladder of opportunity, but it is also an investment in our future”

Ed Markey

OneBlood Field Trip

This fall, Pinellas Virtual School (PVS) HOPE (Health Opportunities through Physical Education) students took a field trip to OneBlood Laboratories in St. Petersburg, for a behind-the-scenes look at the blood donation process. Thanks to Mr. Daniel Eberts (commonly known as “Dan the Blood Man”), students were able to see donors actively giving blood and then follow that blood into the lab to see how it is processed. Students and parents alike were enthralled and engaged by Mr. Eberts’ thorough explanation of how the blood components are used to save patient lives. He also went over the health benefits of donating blood (there are many!). The HOPE course emphasizes advocacy throughout each unit of the course. Blood donation is a way for students to practice advocacy and support their community. High school and college students are the populations most likely to donate, so it is important to educate and encourage them to do so! Pinellas is fortunate to have these young people out in the community armed with the knowledge and desire to save lives.



Submitted by Michelle Starrett

PVS Elementary visits the Pinellas Park Fire Department

Pinellas Virtual Elementary School was able to visit the Pinellas Park Fire Department and learn all about fire safety during Fire Safety Month in October. During this time the students learned the difference between an EMT and a paramedic.

Students were able to see the equipment and trucks. The students also learned how the firefighters dress quickly in their uniforms and how each piece keeps them safe.

The firefighters allowed each student time to work the firehouse. At the conclusion of the field trip students practiced how to get out of a house safely during a fire; “Get low and go!”



Submitted by Marcia Hall

Financial Aid 101 for Pasco Students

Pasco eSchool students were invited to attend a virtual presentation of “Financial Aid 101”. The presentation was hosted by Stephanie Rosh, a FLDOE representative from the Office of Student Financial Assistance. Students and parents were encouraged to ask questions and were reminded of the importance of applying to post-secondary schools. Students did not have to be enrolled in an online class to attend this informative session!

Pasco eSchool Hosts Virtual Great American Teach-In

The third annual Virtual Great American Teach-In was hosted by Pasco eSchool from Nov. 14 - 18. Students connected with guest speakers through Google Hangout to watch live sessions. Some featured guests included Mawi Learning CEO, Mawi Asgedom, singer/actress Alanis Sophia, and Michelle Lattke of "Girls Can Code!" Students who could not watch the live sessions have the opportunity to watch recordings on the Pasco eSchool YouTube channel.



The graphic features a central logo for the 3rd Annual Virtual Great American Teach-In. To the right, a list of speakers includes Alanis Sophia (Singer/Actress), Chris DeMott (Live Entertainment Project Manager), Mawi Asgedom (CEO, Mawi Learning), David Berger (Teacher & Author), Emma Ramsay-Saxon (Live Theater Stage Management), Steven Towe (Federal Law Enforcement), and Michelle Lattke ("Girls Can Code!"). A red banner at the bottom reads: "Please visit [eschool.pasco.k12.fl.us](https://www.eschool.pasco.k12.fl.us) for more information."

- November 14-18, 2016
- Interact with speakers from across the country!
- Stay tuned for updates and schedule details.

College Week in Pasco

Seniors in Pasco were encouraged to get a head start on college applications with a week of challenges for a chance to win a prize! Monday, students emailed in their post-graduation plans; Tuesday, they had to visit and screenshot a college, tech school, or military admissions page; Wednesday, they were to submit their admissions essays; Thursday, they simply had to wear their hopeful college/military branch colors and logos; and Friday, they had to screenshot their successfully submitted college applications! Winners from the drawing were awarded gift cards for participating.

Submitted by Pam Willoughby

Historical Hillsborough Field Trip

On November 2nd the English and Social Studies departments of Hillsborough Virtual School (HVS) participated in a collaborative, multi-cultural field trip around the northeastern area of Tampa. The walking tour was led by Mr. Fred Hearn of Fred Hearn Tours, LLC. Participants included 27 students, 16 parents, 6 siblings, and 5 teachers - Ms. Ashley, Ms. Sandy, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Norris, and Ms. Ferree. The field trip began at Booker T. Washington Elementary school and ended at the Robert W. Saunders Library with stops along the way at St. Peter Claver Catholic School and Perry Harvey, Sr. Park. After the tour, participants dined at New York New York pizza in historic Ybor City. Feedback on the trip was positive with comments such as; "I drive past that landmark every day and never knew its historical significance" and "I love all the



individual attention my child receives from teachers at HVS." The teachers enjoyed the opportunity to interact on a more personal level with students and parents. Instead of saying "cheese" for pictures, students were prompted to say "History Rocks" and "I love DBAs." An educationally good time was had by all, and several parents and students asked when the next field trip would take place.



Submitted by Tanya Grinnell

K¹² Students Love to Read!

Although the ability to read is a vital component to a student's educational success, many students do not have an internal love for reading. Teachers and Learning Coaches sometimes struggle to get their students to engage in the curriculum due to the reading components involved. Many students who dislike reading, also tend to become struggling readers and due to low state test scores, are required to take an Intensive Reading course. For some students, this can add to their discontent; however, the FL Intensive Reading teacher, Ashley Ertle, has worked to provide students with a course that not only helps students to develop necessary reading skills, but encourages the love of reading! Here is some great feedback we have received:



- “He FINISHED his novel!!!!!!!!!!”
- “We are doing the happy dance here! First big novel and he loved it so much he wants to read the others (hobbit). He kept reading today just because he was at the end and wanted to know the outcome.”
- “That reading log has been the best thing he's ever done his whole school curriculum. I tagged the advisor, so she can feel the excitement as well. Thanks for all you do, Learning Coach!”
- I got a really nice email today about Intensive Reading (IR). I spoke with this Learning Coach at length at the beginning of the year as she was concerned (and upset) with her student's placement in IR. I actually recommended to the district that he be removed from the course because her concerns were valid and supported by data. This is what she has to say about IR now: “Hi Mrs. Charlton, E. has been in IR for the past month and actually I think he is learning a lot of useful things. So maybe it's best that he stays in IR. Thank you so much for all your help. Learning Coach”

This is a huge testament to Ashley's hard work in making the course relevant and cohesive. Ms. Ertle, in conjunction with the FL Language Arts Content Coach, Jessica Charlton, have worked diligently over the past few years to adapt and create an Intensive Reading course that takes into account the individual needs of the student. Students utilize online and offline materials, including a weekly active reading log that helps guide students through their reading, to ensure that they are not only able to read the words, but also comprehend what they are reading. Students are encouraged to utilize the skills they learn in their Intensive Reading courses throughout their other K¹² courses.



K¹² Students Go On Field Trips



K¹² students and teachers have been having fun around Florida on field trips! From a Museum to a Mess Hall, a Candy Factory to a Zoo, students have been making new friends and memories! Each quarter, K¹² teachers host field trips that help foster a love for learning and encourage families to make life long K¹² friends. At the most recent field trip, students were able to join the Pensacola Mess Hall for hands on experiments and interactive exhibits! At Sweet Pete's Candy Factory, students were able to try their hand at taffy pulling and then enjoy the fruits of their labor along with other treats in the shop! Families were able to explore Mt. MichiMu, go on a Cruise Ship, create artwork and make their own music at the Miami Children's Museum. Last but not least, students enjoyed a beautiful day feeding stingrays, birds and giraffes at the Lowry Park Zoo. There is more fun coming in December for the second quarter field trips. Students, parents and school administration are encouraged to attend these fun events!

Submitted by Traci Hill

St. Johns Teachers Give Back and Connect

On Thursday, October 20th, teachers from St. Johns Virtual School (SJVS) traveled to Kissimmee for teambuilding and a service project at Give Kids The World (GKTW). GKTW is a "storybook" resort where children with life-threatening illnesses and their families are treated to a weeklong, cost



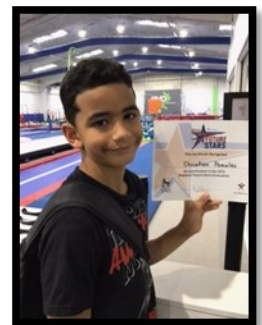
free vacation. SJVS teachers participated in the Winter Wonderland Celebration which allowed them to interact with families through arts and crafts, games, and activities. SJVS plans to build upon its relationship with GKTW with additional visits in 2017!

Submitted by Michael Eisen

FLVS Family Spotlight: Pomales Family

Elementary student Christian Pomales is only 11 years old, but he's already a competitive gymnast training 15 to 18 hours a week—and, he's not alone. Christian's older brother Julian, 12, and younger brother Andres Jr., 8, are also competitive athletes themselves, rounding out one very active Pomales family.

The family, who resides in Orlando, travels the state for gymnastics and Tae Kwon Do competitions. Christian is rated a Level 7 USA Gymnast, and Andres Jr. is already rated a Level 6 USA Gymnast after becoming the all-around Florida State Champion at Level 4 and 5. Meanwhile, Julian holds a purple belt in Tae Kwon Do, and was recently named the Intermediate Division Point Sparring Champion for the 12 to 13 age group at the U.S. Open ISKA World Martial Arts Championship.



FLVS Full Time is proud to recognize the Pomales Family.

Submitted by Sally Fernandez

FLVS Twins Receive President's Volunteer Service Award

Jonathan and Christopher Collins, of Ocala, were recently honored for their exemplary volunteer service with the President's Volunteer Service Award. The twins, currently enrolled in 10th grade at Florida Virtual School Full Time, have participated in more than 100 hours of service during the past 12 months.



The President's Volunteer Service Award is bestowed upon Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of their time in service to their community and their country. Jonathan and Christopher are honored to receive such a prestigious award, and credit their love of volunteering to knowing that they are able to make a difference by helping others in their own community.



FLVS Elementary Vocabulary Parade

FLVS FLEX Elementary students participated in their very own virtual Vocabulary Parade this year on October 28th. Students had the opportunity to read the fabulously creative picture book, "Miss Alaineus, A Vocabulary Disaster", by Debra Frasier. It's a story which celebrates words and definitions, and the characters in the book participate in a Vocabulary Parade and contest. The parades were done virtually by grade level (K-5) and were a wonderful way to celebrate the love of words and reading. They also provided a fun and academic focus for dressing up in creative homemade costumes. Here's a look at some of FLVS's creative students and teachers who participated in the fun as well!



Submitted by Diane Furey

1st Annual Lake County Virtual School Bar-B-Q

Lake County Virtual School (LCVS) held its First Annual Meet and Greet Bar-B-Q in November. The purpose of the Meet and Greet was to celebrate and recognize Lake County teachers. The Bar-B-Q was also a time for full time students and their parents to meet their teachers and other Lake County Virtual School students and parents. Over 150 students and parents joined in the Meet and Greet. What a collaboration session it was!



Submitted by Mike Elchenko

Titanic Field Trip for Orange County Students



Orange County Virtual School (OCVS) students along with Mrs. Silvers, Ms. Nieves, and Mr. Shelanskey boarded the Titanic for the first OCVS field trip of the school year! Attendees received a boarding ticket with their "Titanic" name, status, and reason for travel. They then went back in time to that fateful journey. Upon arrival, they were greeted by Mr. Isidor Strauss, co-owner of Macy's, who then introduced them to the shipyard to observe the construction of the massive ship. They boarded the ship in their prospective classes and saw many features of the ship, such as the communication room, dining rooms, a 1st class state room, and the infamous staircase. Mr. Strauss led the group to the boat deck on the night the Titanic struck an iceberg, and told his story on deciding not to get on the life boat. He didn't want to take the place of a younger man or boy, who still had many years of life, and his wife joined him in going down with the ship. Everyone either had goose bumps or tears in their eyes as he told his story. They were then led into a room that listed the passengers and crew members – those who survived as well as those who did not. Continuing on in the exhibit, the students and teachers got to see/feel a piece of an iceberg. They even got to touch a small part of the Titanic! They were able to walk back through the exhibit to finish working on their assignments and concluded the tour in the gift shop. What an amazing and educational account of history!

Hispanic Heritage Month

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, the OCVS International Club and OCVS families held an event on October 4th. The event included presentations about traditional Hispanic candies, music and dance styles. Special guests were Elan Lurie (professional performer and soloist) and Christian Sola (professional performer and owner of Bahhari), who performed live for the audience and held salsa and bachata lessons. Parents and students learned a lot. They danced and ended the celebration with a traditional Hispanic meal.



OCVS Science Club

The first Science Club lab experiments were held on October 18th, when students came on campus to participate in a Metrics Lab. There was a great turn out and wonderful enthusiasm with students in grades ranging from 3 - 12. During the lab, students worked together to apply measurement skills using a variety of tools. Experiments ranged from measuring volume to identifying density, making a rainbow using colored water, and checking displacement in a graduated cylinder.



Other labs included using a balance scale, measuring temperature, and understanding how to cancel units. Students were encouraged by their teachers Mr. and Mrs. Besuden, Mrs. Ferguson, and Mr. Fisher. Each student walked away from the activity looking forward to the next lab.



Orange County Virtual Wins Arts Ed Impact Grant



In order to create an art exhibit of students' work on our OCVS campus, Ms. J. Morrow and Dr. A. Mizzell diligently worked on an Arts Education Impact Grant application and won! Congratulations!!!

From L-R: School Board Vice Chairman Nancy Robinson, Ms. Juanita Morrow, Dr. Adolf Mizzell, Principal Brandi Gurley, Executive Area Director, Dr. Carl Cartwright.

Submitted by Anne Walsh

Virtual Expansion Under Way in Duval

Exploring new frontiers is a way of life for those of us engaged in virtual education. In Duval County, this semester has brought forth exciting additions in working with students with unique challenges. Duval's Hospital/Homebound program is now serving students with the option of a full-time virtual curriculum, allowing more flexible scheduling for students with doctors' appointments and illnesses that don't fit a traditional school calendar. At the River Oak Center, students are using Duval Virtual Instruction Academy (DVIA) to complete their coursework leaving vital time in the day for further drug and alcohol treatment after residential release. DVIA also works with the Department of Juvenile Justice to accommodate students unable to return to school after program release. Duval County is continuing to try to break the restrictions of the traditional classroom of six periods and four walls.



DVIA is truly excited about the additional supports that are being built at all academic tier levels for full-time students. From elementary through high school, increased performance expectations for parents, students, and teachers are bringing greater student engagement throughout the learning cycle. Incorporating systemic parent/student/teacher conferencing opportunities and triggered academic and attendance intervention is driving more students to regular collaboration with their teachers. Most importantly the school community is working as a team to make sure that no student falls through an online crack.

The part-time program continues to expand with new learning labs being added to Duval County's high schools and middle schools. Most high school students have the option to participate with DVIA as a second school within the regular school day, at their traditional school, increasing the amount of credits available to them in the year. Increasing the county's graduation rate is a top priority.

Of course there is always time for fun and an opportunity to spread the good works that DVIA is doing. Creative recruitment with current and prospective students, is always a good thing!!!

Submitted by Kristin Smith



Blended Learning Courses Growing in Palm Beach

What an exciting time to be in virtual education in Palm Beach County! The Edgenuity Blended Learning program has grown to over 3,000 students at the high school level and close to 1,000 students at the middle school level. Students are enrolled in courses such as US Government, Economics with Financial Literacy, Critical Thinking and Study Skills, Career Research and Decision Making, and M/J US History.



Content certified school-based personnel embed full class face-to-face lessons and small group/individualized remediation throughout the course along with the curriculum that is delivered via Edgenuity courseware. The blended learning model is a successful instructional method which combines a variety of approaches thereby freeing up the teacher to circulate and provide individual attention. Blended Learning students appreciate the ability to work at their own pace and have the teacher available in order to make sure that they fully understand concepts. Pictured with her students is Ms. Clemons who enjoys teaching blended and working with her students to ensure success!

Palm Beach Virtual School Profession Development Session

Statistics indicate that approximately 5% of teenagers are affected by depression, and only 1/3 receive treatment of some kind.

The staff fields many calls from parents of anxious or depressed children seeking an "alternative" to a large traditional school. Due to the increased number of students they serve and for additional training for mandatory reporters, the Professional Development team chose to bring this training to the staff. The Adolescent Depression Awareness Program (ADAP) through Johns Hopkins Hospital wants to reach as many teachers, students and parents with the "message that depression is a treatable medical illness."

The staff will complete an in-depth survey on their perceptions individually, then they will meet as a group to complete the four (4) hour training.

Submitted by Debra Johnson



Dr. Karen Swartz, ADAP's Director, speaking in a Baltimore City High School

Florida Online Course Catalog Update

The online course catalog now has over 19,000 courses for our students to choose from! Something new in the catalog are the completion and passage rates next to the courses that had more than 10 students enrolled. A great tool for parents and students to browse when deciding on which courses to take.

Feedback codes were sent to all the districts so that students can go in to the public side of the catalog and rate their course experience. We have received some great feedback this semester and a big thank you to Gadsden, Flagler, Lake, Hillsborough, Orange and Polk! The feedback results are wonderful to see! It's not too late to encourage your students to provide feedback on their courses!

It has been a pleasure to speak with our districts during our Meet and Greet calls throughout the year and we continue to be amazed at all the wonderful opportunities that you provide to the students in Florida through virtual education. Your dedication to our students every day is truly inspiring and we wish you all a blessed holiday season!

Submitted by Lisa Luna
