

June 2015



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# the Virtual View

## Virtual Office Joins School Choice

As many of you already know, the Virtual Education Office in the Department of Education was recently moved back into the Office of K-12 School Choice and I could not be more excited. Virtual education is a critical piece of Florida’s educational choice landscape, as evidenced by the over 240,000 students taking advantage of the unique learning opportunities it offers. Virtual education can offer the powerful combination of quality and flexibility, allowing families to create customized educational experiences for their children. My team and I are deeply committed to ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education that meets his or her unique needs and we look forward to working with all of you to make sure that virtual education continues to serve the students, families and citizens of Florida well!

Adam Miller, Executive Director

## Virtual Graduates by District!

Bay—25	St. Lucie— 21
Clay—55	Pasco— 33
Dade—17	Charlotte— 21
FLVS— 467	Monroe— 2
Broward— 70	Escambia— 61
Marion— 33	Osceola— 20
Hillsborough— 52	Hernando— 8
Calhoun— 1	Brevard— 7
Lee— 30	Polk— 2
Lake— 12	Santa Rosa— 17
Palm Beach — 28	Seminole— 35
Manatee— 8	Walton— 4
St. Johns— 14	Orange— 27

### Inside this issue:

Bay and Palm Beach	2
FLVS, K12 and Duval	3
Orange, Lee and Pinellas	4
Duval and Hillsborough	5
K12, FLVS and Orange	6
DOE and St. Lucie	7
Florida School District Graduates	8

*“Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important”*

*Bill Gates*

## Bay Virtual School Students Excel in Many Avenues

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With graduation and courses wrapping up, Bay Virtual School wants to recognize its 25 seniors and one of their outstanding underclassmen.

Senior and BVS National Honor Society members Ben Hilsdon and Mary Katherine Webb were presented with college scholarships at graduation. These awards recognize their academic as well as volunteer efforts. Ben plans to pursue either a technical or philosophy oriented field and Mary Katherine is leaning toward education.

Junior Zacchary Vilardi excels in both the Arts and Math and Science. Zack was chosen out of 85 who auditioned to be one of 13 participants in our district's black tie Bay Education Foundation event, Arts Alive. He provided dinner music with his exquisite piano skills. When he's not tinkling the ivories and participating in local theater he says, "Physics is his passion!" Can you believe it! He was recognized as a Bay District Sunshine State Scholar. Great year, Zack!

Submitted by Carra Summers

## Proud Palm Beach Graduates

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On Monday, May 11th, the full-time seniors of Palm Beach Virtual School met for the first time...at their graduation. Nervous giggles and smiles abounded as students who had worked together online and in clubs matched faces to names for the first time. Not every senior in the Class of 2015 was present; absent from the group were some of the non-traditional students typical of virtual schooling: a student playing in the U.S. Open and a student traveling to Brazil.

Unlike large schools, which grapple with getting a large number of student across the stage as quickly as possible, PBVS had the luxury of truly celebrating its students. This celebration included a piano performance by student Kevin Sosa and a beautifully-sung rendition of John Mayer's "Stop This Train" by Salutatorian Abigail Skinner.

It was perhaps Valedictorian Gina Cipriano who best understood the uniqueness of a virtual graduation, taking the opportunity in her address to highlight some of her classmates and what brought them to PBVS. In doing so, these strangers and classmates felt the distance between them shrink. They had all come to PBVS for different reasons, but their choice united them as proud, independent graduates of virtual education.



Other great news in virtual... one of our students, Terrance Thomas, was selected to participate in a summer program at the Naval Academy. He is already there! WAY TO GO TERRANCE!!

Submitted by Debra Johnson

## FLVS Congratulates Grads

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Florida Virtual School students have had a stellar year for graduation! Over 430 students are graduating, with an additional 37 students having graduated mid-year. The following students have made special achievements this year:

Kristen Hall was appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Erin Ford has a full Track & Field scholarship to the University of Miami. Victoria Castagna will be attending John Cabot University in Rome on their Presidential Scholarship. Hannah Levi will be studying in Germany next year with the 2015 Congress-Bundestag Vocational Exchange Scholarship. Nicolas Mazzini will be attending The Chicago College of Performing Arts on full scholarship.

FLVS would also like to congratulate our first full-time student to graduate with an Associate of Arts, Sophia Wickham.

We are proud of all of our graduates' accomplishments and look forward to a fantastic 2015-16 school year!

Submitted by Robin Winder

## K12 Student Heads to West Point

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Thanks to his focus, determination, and online education, Jacob H. found himself with terrific college options this month.

But in the end, it was no contest for the Bay Virtual Instruction Program of Florida student, who had accepted an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

“I always wanted to be in the military and no other school can give me that type of training in terms of leadership or

knowledge about the military,” says Jacob, who turned down an Air Force ROTC scholarship as well as scholarships worth more than \$52,000 from both the University of South Carolina and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Although he's interested in flying, Jacob plans to study mechanical engineering. Whether the future brings a career in engineering, flying jets, employing his writing talents, or running his own business, Jacob's teachers are convinced his educational base, combined with his drive, will make him highly successful.

Submitted by Traci Hill

## Duval Graduate is National Merit Semi-Finalist

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Congratulations to Elaina Germanson who is DVIA's second National Merit Semi-Finalist! Elaina has attended DVIA for the past three years and will head to Florida State University this fall. With scholarship offers already over \$150,000.00, next year is sure to bring more opportunities for her. We are proud of you, Elaina!!

Submitted by Kristin Smith

## Orange County Senior Spotlight

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Orange County Virtual student, Alexandria (Lexi) Pelton, was chosen from hundreds of students across the district to be the Disney Dreamer and Doer. Lexie was nominated for this prestigious award by her Geometry teacher, Ms. Annette Schonborn. Ms. Schonborn said she nominated and supported Lexie to be the Disney Dreamer and Doer for OCVS because she is the epitome of a student that every teacher dreams about. She is trustworthy, loyal, and she exhibits the qualities you would ask for in a student achiever. Congratulations Lexi! Your teacher and school are so proud of you!

Submitted by Brandi Gurley

## Lee County Implements Learning Labs

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Due to a recent statute which mandates that students must successfully complete one online course as part of their graduation requirement, Lee Virtual School has established a relationship with several Lee County middle and high schools to provide Virtual Learning Labs (VLL's). These labs give students an opportunity to participate in online learning during their school day.

At the Alva School, students enrolled in Outdoor Education, were challenged by their teacher, Mr. Booth, to be among the first students to complete the course with an A. The four students who completed the challenge were presented with not only a certificate commemorating their achievement but also their favorite candy bar. Winners were: Ryan Stewart, Matthew Clark, Hayden Schreyer, Breanna Milan, and Ms. Jackie, their classroom monitor.



Submitted by Ann Taylor

## End of Course Review Brings Pinellas Students

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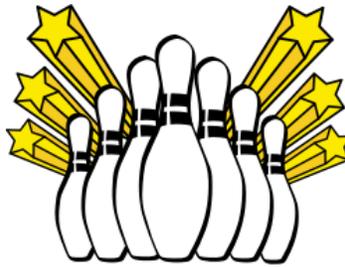
Pinellas Virtual School's Biology teacher, Mrs. Capra recently hosted a face-to-face End of Course Exam review session for her virtual biology students. During the evening review session, students worked in cooperative groups to answer sample EOC test questions as well as whole group discussions to deepen their understanding of the content. The students enjoyed the social interactions and found their learning experience to be extremely rewarding. The success of Ms. Capra's EOC review session has encouraged other Pinellas Virtual teachers to implement face-to-face test review sessions in their courses too.

Submitted by Holly McBride

## Duval Virtual Strikes Gold

Duval Virtual recognizes the need for their students, families, and faculty to get out and celebrate the year's successes. They had just such an occasion this spring with a bowling outing for their current and prospective families. Faculty had the chance to showcase the program options to interested families searching for "something different" and current families were able to have fun with bowling, pizza, and video games. Parents visited with teachers discussing student successes, challenges, special needs, and individual talents enabling all to put a face with the virtual courses. These opportunities are critical to both families and staff as Duval Virtual strives to meet the one-on-one and social interaction needs of their students.

Submitted by Kristin Smith



## Hillsborough Hits the Springs

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 45 Hillsborough Virtual School students, parents, and teachers participated in a field trip at Crystal Springs Preserve. Students collected and analyzed water samples, waded into the river with sampling nets to collect organisms, explored the roles of native and nonnative species, and completed a geocaching scavenger hunt. It was a great opportunity for students, teachers, and parents to meet one another and enjoy nature!

Submitted by Tanya Grinnell

**Conclusion:** Explain how what you have learned in your online science class relates to what you did on today's field trip.

I thought it was cool when I saw some animals walking on the water. I just learned about surface tension and how it works. Surface tension allows animals to be able to walk across the water like that.



# K12 Supports Families Before Student Enrollment

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K12's Enrollment Team, Teachers and Staff believe that by supporting families from their first interest in the program, they can help make students successful in the virtual world. K12 will host *Meet and Greet* events around the state for families to meet teachers, view materials, see the curriculum, and ask questions. Also, this year K12 has added more sessions to their summer orientations in order to accommodate all potential families. These sessions are designed to give families more information on their program and a look at the curriculum. Since these sessions are live, questions and feedback are given immediately.

There are five different topics to choose from and they will be available throughout the summer: Overview sessions, curriculum showcase, enrollment troubleshooting, question and answer, and summer in-depth platform sessions.



## FLVS Webinar on Early Science Education

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Megan Joyner-Hull, curriculum developer and Kindergarten math/science teacher, and Lena Gatzka, curriculum developer and first grade math/science teacher, recently presented a PreK-3 Digital Learning webinar, "Developing Young Scientists in the Early Elementary Classroom using Digital Resources." They shared the importance of science in the early elementary classroom as well as strategies to maximize science instructional time with literacy and mathematics integration. The live session was attended by more than 250 participants nationally. [CLICK HERE](#) to view the webinar recording.

Submitted by Suzan Kurdak

## Campus Beautification Day for Orange County Virtual

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A spring campus Beautification Project event was held on May 1st! Many OCVS staff members, parents, and students came to our physical building & volunteered their time and hard work to help beautify our grounds. A special thank you to Orange County Property Appraiser, Rick Singh, for his generous donation and time! The campus looks great!

Submitted by Brandi Gurley



# Happy Summer!

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This year has truly flown by. It seems like yesterday I wished you, your teachers and your students much success for the 2014-15 school year. And now as this year closes it is apparent that you have certainly experienced many successes. This newsletter highlights the ever growing number of virtual student graduates; the awards and scholarships they have earned as well as end-of-the-year celebrations and other endeavors in which virtual students participated. We are so proud of what you, your students and teachers have accomplished.

I wish you and your students, teachers and families a fun and relaxing summer.

Sally

## News From the Tower

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- ◆ Florida Online Course Catalog - All 67 districts and FLVS have entered courses in the catalog for a total of over 9,893 courses and 385 unique courses available for Florida students! Some courses have feedback ratings too! Please update courses (add, delete, edit) for the 2015-16 school year. The Online Catalog is being featured on the FDOE Facebook Page.

Like us at: <https://www.facebook.com/EducationFL?fref=ts>

- ◆ Florida Approved Courses and Tests - The first course provider approval process has been completed and we are proud to announce **Edmentum, Inc.** as an approved provider. A memo announcing their approval was sent to superintendents on June 5.
- ◆ Rules Pending Approval by State Board of Education - Changes made to Rule 6A-6.0981 Provider Approval for Virtual Instruction Program and Renewal Application and Rule 6A-6.0982 Florida Approved Online Course Providers should be presented and approved at the State Board Meeting June 17th. Look for updates after the meeting on the virtual education website: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/>
- ◆ 2015-16 Q & A - Thank you for your input; look for the new Q & A coming soon!



**The back to school issue of the Virtual View will be published in September. Please submit articles and pictures for the Welcome Back Edition to [virtualeducation@fldoe.org](mailto:virtualeducation@fldoe.org) by September 1.**

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2015  
Graduating  
Class of  
St. Lucie -  
Mosaic Digital  
Academy

# 2015 Graduates



FLVS



Pasco



Osceola



Lee



Bay



Clay



Broward



Orange