

September 2015

back to
School



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

the Virtual View

Welcome Back!

This is my last ‘back-to-school’ in my current role. I am just as excited as in previous years, but a little sad and a bit more reflective. I remember not so long ago, when opening and operating a full-time virtual school was new for Florida school districts and for FLVS. There were so many questions and concerns. Some were more eager than others to jump into the fray of providing this new opportunity for students, but all had some uncertainty about how to do it. I was in that boat right along with you. We figured it out together—no one fell or jumped out of the boat. However, it is YOU, my friends and colleagues who have actually provided this new and amazing way of learning for your students. We landed on the shore and YOU led the way. I am so proud of you and so happy that our students have such smart, creative, caring and collaborative adults who are so dedicated and enthusiastic about their education.

I’m still here to connect a few dots for you and look forward to my continued learning from you as you innovate and learn from each other. I wish you and your students much success and joy in learning during this new school year.

Sally

Welcome New Virtual Friends

Orange County Virtual School welcomed a new assistant principal, **Mr. Daniel Merchant**, who will no doubt be a valuable addition to the school as he brings a wealth of experience with him.

Volusia Online Learning welcomes two new teachers this year: **Sarah Gonzalez** to the Social Studies Department and **Yvette Henebury** to the Foreign Language Department.

Lake Virtual School is also welcoming two new staff members. **Nicole Carrasquillo** is joining the Lake Virtual full-time staff as a Spanish teacher and **Pauline Christianson** is the new guidance counselor.

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“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

- Malcolm X

#JUST DO IT Orange County Virtual School

Orange County Virtual School (OVCS) started off with a bang for the 2015-2016 academic year. Guided by Principal Gurley, faculty and staff had a great week of pre-planning activities to make sure student service is at the core of everything that is going on. Teachers are working to “Just Do It” this year to get the job done! #JUST DO IT

OVCS celebrated the first day of school on campus. Parents and students attended a morning of interaction with K-5 lead teacher, Mrs. Besuden, and enjoyed a visit from Principal Gurley. Assistant Principal, Mr.



Merchant, and Instructional Coach, Ms.

Banks, were also present for introductions and to help with computer access.



Returning parents welcomed new parents by offering their expertise and assistance, while students developed relationships and interacted with each other by building structures and putting puzzles together. OCVS proudly celebrated a successful first day of school!

Submitted by Lacey Anderson

Students “Meet the Teacher”

After planning throughout the summer, teachers began welcoming students back-to-school with online synchronous orientations beginning the week of August 10th. Sessions were offered twice each week for 4 weeks to accommodate different school start dates as well as students who enrolled late. At the conclusion of the last live session in early September, all students will receive recordings of the various sessions offered.

Now that school has begun for students, teachers took some time for a “Meet the Teacher” online synchronous session. All students in grades K-12 had the opportunity to meet with their teacher(s) to get know them on a personal level. Teachers shared a little about themselves with pictures and verbal interaction. They also had an opportunity to share course overviews and their contact information with all who attended. Submitted by Traci Hill

Pinellas Welcomes Back Students and Families

It was a busy first day of school for Pinellas Virtual School. Elementary teachers held two orientations for their students. Fifty students and their learning coaches attended this event. It was a smooth opening day as Pinellas Virtual School’s elementary students had the opportunity to meet their teacher face-to-face, familiarize themselves with the learning management system, ask their questions, and meet their classmates. We are looking forward to a successful and exciting school year!

Submitted by Mandy Perry



Duval Virtual Offers Interaction to Students

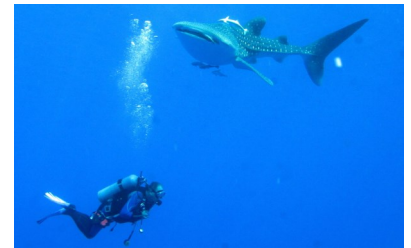
Duval Virtual Instruction Academy (DVIA) is exploring ways to increase their Teacher/Student interaction time. In August, students were invited to attend the “Get a Strong Start” Orientation and our “Rolling Open House” available for drop-ins throughout the first week. Teachers assisted families with best practices for virtual success, tours through the curriculum provider platform, time management lessons, course requirements and virtual education jitters. Instructors and administrators were thrilled to have the chance to work cooperatively on new strategies, individual student issues and beginning of the year set-up.



Students can still put a face to amazing teachers in a LIVE setting Monday-Thursday mornings or evening hours on Tuesday nights. Students can also meet their teachers during the same hours of availability in the Collaborate sessions at the Virtual Campus. Attendees can work individually with teachers in this arena or in classroom activities. At DVIA, they are tackling blended learning on multiple levels to make sure students have a strong start coming out of the gate. Submitted by Kristin Smith

A Special Marine Science Course

Students in Florida now have the opportunity to take a **Marine Science** course developed by the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind (FSDB) and offered through the MyDistrict Virtual School, run by the North East Florida Education Consortium (NEFEC). The course was specifically designed for students identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing who use American Sign Language (ASL). The course is being offered as a part of Project Fast Forward, an initiative of FSDB partner, DeafTEC. The project allows students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing across the country to earn college credit in STEM-related courses before graduating from high school. The goal of the project is to help these students enter college with credits and degrees in STEM fields. This course can also help Florida students meet the online course graduation requirement.



For more information please contact Colette Cook at 904-827-2338.

Submitted by Karen Hanson

A New Course and Opportunity at FLVS

FLVS is proud to offer **Intensive Reading** this semester. In this high school course, students engage in collaborative, interactive discussions with other students as well as their teacher. Students will work to develop reading and writing skills while improving vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing fluency, in addition to learning how to generate thoughtful questions and participate in research opportunities. Learn more at flvs.net/courses.

For the first time, students who successfully complete the [Driver Education/Traffic Safety](#) course with FLVS will have the opportunity to take the **Florida Learner’s License (permit) exam** for free. The exam is now available online with Driversed.com. Any student who successfully completes the FLVS Driver Education course will be sent the link to grant him/her one free Learner’s License exam; a savings of almost \$25.

Submitted by Suzan Kurdak

Broward Expands Its Course Catalog

Broward Virtual School (BVS) is excited to provide even more opportunities for their students this school year. BVS has expanded world language courses to include **Japanese I and II**. In addition, BVS launched a full catalog of **high school credit recovery** courses. Submitted by Chris McGuire

Edmentum Approved under Inaugural FACT Initiative!

Edmentum is excited to be the first online course provider approved by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) under the inaugural Florida Approved Courses and Tests (FACT) initiative. A total of 26 Edmentum courses have received approval for the 2015-16 school year. The approval signifies Edmentum's commitment to aligning with Florida state standards and program delivery requirements, as well as exceeding educator expectations and continually evolving to meet the needs of today's learners. In addition to these courses meeting DOE standards correlation expectations at 100% alignment, the approval also includes **four advanced placement** and two **world language courses (French and Spanish)**. [Click here](#) for the full list of Edmentum's FACT approved courses.



Submitted by Shane Dennison

Congratulations Dr. Amy Blowers and Volusia Online!

Volusia Online Learning received another international recognition over the summer. The International Literacy Association Award (ILA) for Technology and Reading honors educators in grades K–12 who are making an outstanding and innovative contribution to the use of technology in reading education. Dr. Amy Blowers was named the Southeast Regional Award winner for the English 4: Florida College Prep course she created for Volusia Online Learning. In addition to receiving this award during the 2015 ILA, there will also be an article in the Literacy Today magazine. This is the second international award Dr. Blowers has received. Last year, she received the Blackboard Exemplary Course Award. Dr. Blowers currently serves as the Instruction and Curriculum Specialist for Volusia Online Learning. Submitted by Amy Blowers

FLVS Boasts Two Leadership Academy Graduates!

Aura Plair, Director of Instructional Models, and Jeannine Schloss, Instructional Leader, were among the 147 who recently graduated from the Commissioner's Leadership Academy. The graduation ceremony marked the end of a year-long rigorous professional development program for Florida principals, principal supervisors, and education leaders. The project was a collaborative effort between the Florida Department of Education (DOE), the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership, and the Council for Educational Change.

Pictured l-r: Aura, DOE Commissioner Pam Stewart, and Jeannine at the graduation event held on June 16. Submitted by Suzan Kurdak

Broward Virtual School (BVS) Student Awards

Serving over 13,000 students in 2014-15, BVS has grown to be the largest district virtual school in the state. Three years ago, BVS served approximately 600 students and included a small faculty and staff. Today, BVS, led by Christopher McGuire, Principal and Antonette McGinty, Assistant Principal, houses a faculty of 85 teachers and non-instructional support members. As of June 2015, Broward Virtual helped 95% of seniors successfully complete their online graduation requirement with over 20,000 half-credit completions.



BVS Math Club

BVS has a growing full-time population that has been recognized nationally for their



Science Fair Winner

accomplishments, including being recognized by US News and World Report as a Bronze Medal Winner for the Nation's Best High Schools. Their Florida Standard Assessment (FSA) and EOC exam results exceeded state and district averages. BVS full time students have opportunities to participate in a myriad of extra-curricular activities such as Key Club, National Honor Society, Florida Future Educators of America, Math Club and Ambassadors of Hope; all led by enthusiastic staff members. Students are provided with face-to-face learning experiences such as hands-on writing seminars and science labs. Courses are taught by highly-trained Broward teachers who collaborate in professional learning communities to enhance their professional development. You

simply can't beat the virtual education model enhanced with local teaching and student support. Continue to watch Broward Virtual soar to new heights as they help students reach their maximum academic and social learning potential. BVS is expecting another banner year!

Submitted by Chris McGuire



Key Club at St. Patrick's Day Parade

Lake County Virtual School Blows Past EOC Averages

Lake County Virtual students performed extremely well on state proficiency exams. 85% of Lake Virtual School students passed the US History EOC, 85% passed the Civics EOC, 78% passed the Biology EOC and 83% passed the Algebra 1 EOC. Students also did very well on the new 10th grade FSA, ELA test with 81.8% of the students scoring 3 or above. Great job students and teachers! Submitted by Michael Elchenko

FLVS Students Beat the Standard

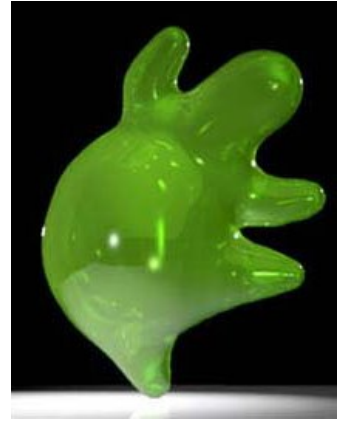
FLVS students outperformed the state average in End-of-Course (EOC) exams taken by Florida students in spring of 2015. FLVS Part Time students performed higher than the state average on the Biology 1 EOC assessment by 4%. They also outperformed the state average by 16% on the Civics EOC assessment and 10% on the U.S. History EOC assessment. "FLVS continues to prove that online education not only offers schools and students customized choices, but that learning virtually can be highly effective," said Jodi Marshall, executive vice president of FLVS Business and School Solutions. To read more, [click here](#). Submitted by Suzan Kurdak

K¹²'s Strong Start

With the School Year 2015-2016 underway, K¹²'s Strong Start team has been busy hosting **Back-to-School Pep Rallies** and **Virtual Field Trips** for students and their families. Students have been excited to get back to school and are joining these online sessions to celebrate the start of a great new year!

The **Back-to-School Pep Rallies** gives each student a chance to meet their peers online and get pumped up for the start of school. K¹² also made a tips and tricks video for the students to assist them as they prepare for the new school year and encourages the students to make their own back-to-school videos to share.

The **Virtual Field Trips** are a huge success! So far they have already launched three virtual field trips this school year. Students interacted with each other online while making bouncing bubbles, Flubber and Oobleck. With these fun creations students hypothesized how these worked and learned the science behind it. They were messy but fun Virtual Field Trips!



Enhanced High School Platform Receives Rave Reviews

As K¹² High School students return to school this fall, they and their families will encounter new and exciting features in their **Online High School Platform**. K¹² students, learning coaches and district staff will now have more visibility than ever into every aspect of each student's online education.

When students and their learning coaches log into the Online High School, they are greeted with an engaging home page giving them access to up-to-the-minute progress data, calendars, school news, and important links right at the fingertips of each student and his/her learning coach. Students and their families can also communicate with their teachers and other school staff directly through their Online High School. Additionally, students and their learning coaches now have the ability to personalize their views and create custom alerts that they are able to receive through email or text messaging. Families are excited and sharing that they love it! Submitted by Traci Hill

FLVS FT Connects with Learning Coaches



FLVS FT is committed to partnering with families to ensure that every student is successful. They are very excited to introduce FLVS FT families to their new Learning Coach Resource Sessions. As a Learning Coach, parents, family members (or designated caretakers), provide students with critical on-site supervision and support including entering attendance, helping with schoolwork, discussing progress with teachers and most importantly, guiding their students' learning. The sessions will provide Learning Coaches and caretakers with valuable tools and resources to be effective in their roles. Sessions are delivered multiple times each month and include several topics such as:

Curriculum that Makes a Difference, Defining the Gifted Student, and Born to Learn – Embracing Struggle through a Growth Mindset. In addition to the new Learning Coach sessions, additional resources can be found on the new “Learning Coach Central” page. The goal is to increase student achievement, by helping Learning Coaches to get started, get engaged and stay connected! Submitted by Sally Fernandez

News from the Tower



- If you have a 7001 school, it's time to submit your contracts with DOE-approved providers. Your contracts and a short survey for each is due by October 1st. Please visit the following website to submit your contracts: <https://app4.fldoe.org/contractstools/>
- Registration for VIP approval/renewal processes opened August 15. The applications are open September 1-30 for provider's that want to operate full virtual programs in Florida and for currently approved providers to renew.
- Registration for Course Provider approval opened August 15. The application is open September 1-30 for providers that want to offer and have their courses approved in Florida.
- Legislative session begins in January. We will keep you updated with any virtual changes that come our way!

Florida Online Course Catalog Offers More in 2015-16

The [Florida Online Course Catalog](#) includes updated course listings for the 2015-16 school year. Thank you to districts, providers and FLVS for your efforts to ensure that our students have the most current information on the courses you offer!

We are also very happy to announce that the catalog has a new online tutorial to assist parents and other catalog users to easily navigate through the catalog to find valuable information about specific online courses and course providers, but wait...there's more! A new Q & A is located on the department website dedicated to the online catalog! The link to the online catalog is also posted on the Florida Department of Education's [Facebook page](#), so feel free to sign in and 'like' the link! A big Thank You to Holmes and Flagler for posting the link to the online catalog on their websites! We encourage other districts to add the link to their websites, too. This is a great way to showcase your course offerings provided by your district. Submitted by Lisa Luna

Don't forget to submit your articles and pictures to virtualeducation@fldoe.org for our Holiday issue of the Virtual View!

