

Florida Virtual School: A brief overview

"I believe Florida has definitely taken the first step by using technology to reinvent the classroom rather than simply applying technology on top of traditional teaching practices. FLVS will continue to strive to reinvent rather than replicate traditional teaching practices."

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige

The ability for schools to provide students the knowledge and skills that they will need to succeed in the information age of the 21st century will be one of the most important measures of effective educational reform. How well our young people acquire the ability to think and reason is the true test of our efforts as parents and educators. The desire to help our student become successful 21st century citizens is the reason that Florida Virtual School first came into being. "No Child Left Behind" is more than a mandate. It forces us as educators and as a nation to put words into action if we truly believe that every student, regardless of circumstance, can be successful. Through programs such as Florida Virtual School, no longer is time, distance, or availability to rigorous courses an obstacle to students and schools.

Since Florida Virtual School began in 1997, success has been our expectation. It is an expectation equally shared by our students, parents, partners, and political supporters. The belief that student-centered education really works has made the past eight years an exciting and productive adventure. Florida Virtual School is a place where students are at the center of learning. Our motto, "Any time place, any path, and pace" recognizes that learning is an ongoing activity not confined solely to classrooms and class schedules. Just as important is our understanding that students must be given the opportunity to be active participants in the learning process. Learning starts with the learner. That understanding is at the core of "reinventing education."

Now known as Florida Virtual School (FLVS), the school is currently in the midst of a major evolutionary step in its development as a unique public educational institution. The 2000 Florida Legislature enacted 228.082, Florida Statutes, which established FLVS as an independent educational entity with a separate governing board. In most respects, FLVS now has a comparable legal status to the 67 school districts that make up Florida's public school system. In 2000, the Governor appointed the seven-member governing board of FLVS, and the transition to independent status was completed at the end of the 2000 calendar year.

A milestone in the development of Florida Virtual School came on October 31, 2001, when FLVS received a letter of accreditation as a Distance Learning School by the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

As a national leader in online K-12 education, much attention was focused on Florida and how the state would seek to implement a funding model for FLVS that would allow for continued growth, quality assurance, and continued support by the school districts throughout Florida. What resulted from this effort was the creation of a performance-based funding model that allows FLVS to collect FTE on students who successfully complete online courses taught by FLVS teachers. This landmark funding model for online schools was passed by the 2003 Florida Legislature and went into effect July 1, 2003.



FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL – Any Time, Any Place, Any Path, Any Pace

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is an established leader in developing and providing virtual K-12 education solutions. Now a **nationally recognized e-Learning model**, FLVS was initially a pilot project in 1997. At that time, FLVS began course development with limited enrollment, pioneering Florida's **first Internet-based, public high school**—complete with online high school curriculum. In 2000, the Florida Legislature established FLVS in state law as an independent education entity with a gubernatorial appointed governing board. Today, FLVS serves the state of Florida and beyond, offering virtual education options for grades 7 through 12 as well as adults seeking GED alternatives.

Student Enrollment

Enrollment for 2003-04 exceeded 21,000. Courses are **FREE to all Florida students** and are available to public, private, and home school students. National and international students can enroll in FLVS on a tuition basis.

Coverage Area

FLVS is **affiliated with all 67 Florida school districts**, plus charter, non-public schools, and home schools, providing complimentary and supplemental education options to meet the needs of students, parents and school districts.

Course Offerings

FLVS offers more than 80 courses, including honors and 11 Advanced Placement® courses. FLVS courses are accepted for credit and are **transferable**. Florida Virtual School is **accredited** by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and courses are **NCAA approved**. FLVS will offer **free AP Exam reviews** in April, even if you didn't take your AP course through FLVS.

Faculty

Over 150 FLVS teachers reside throughout Florida. All FLVS teachers possess a valid Florida teaching certificate and are **certified specifically in the subject they teach**. Twenty-one FLVS educators are **nationally certified**.

Delivery of Instruction

All FLVS courses are **delivered over the Internet**. To assure student success with virtual learning, a variety of web-based, technology-based and traditional resources are provided.

Teachers **communicate with students and parents on a regular basis** via phone, email, online chats, instant messaging, and discussion forums.

Excellence in Distance Learning Awards

1999 SouthEast Initiatives Reg. Tech. in Ed. Consortium—SEIR*TEC
2000 Canadian Association Distance Education
2000 United States Distance Learning Association—USDLA
2002 USDLA Excellence in Distance Learning
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2003 Named one of the top Websmart 50 organizations by *BusinessWeek*
Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) "Medallion of the Alliance" award to FLVS President and Chief Executive Officer, Julie Young