

Happy Holidays!



I hope everyone had a very happy Thanksgiving and some time off to share with loved ones. I am so thankful for all of you and the wonderful opportunities you provide for your students. This newsletter is our way to show others what great things your schools, students and teachers are doing and to help foster understanding about what a virtual school can offer. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and if you have not contributed an article lately, please let us know what you are doing so we can brag on your school, also.

We have two new faces in the virtual education office who are eager to know and help you.

Lisa Luna has worked in the educational arena since 2000 and has been with the Department of Education since 2008. One of her duties in our office will be to function as the administrator of Florida's Online Course Catalog. She stands ready to assist you with entering and managing your courses in the catalog.

Meagan Presley is our new OPS student. She is working on her degree in Biology and plans to become a science teacher. She will often be the initial point of contact for our office and will work diligently to provide the information you need on a timely basis. She will also work with you to keep all contact lists current.

I wish all of you a very happy holiday season and all of us in the virtual education office look forward to working with you in 2015. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year! Sally

Lee Virtual School Surpasses SAT Expectations

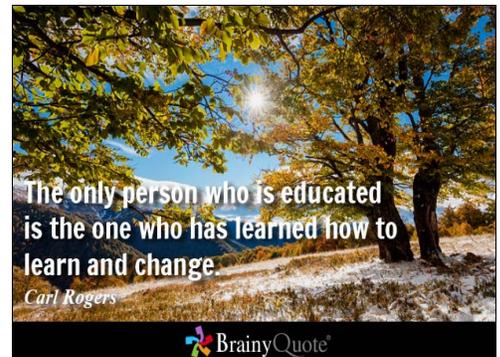


With an average score of 1518, Lee Virtual School exceeded the national average SAT score of 1497. Full time virtual students taking the SATs chalked up the 3rd best scores of all public and charter high schools in Lee County, showing that LVS is the place where great kids get a great education.

Submitted by Al Shilling

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Bay's Spanish Class Luncheon



On November 7th, a group of 11 Bay Virtual School Spanish students went to Pepper's Mexican Grill and Restaurant in Panama City, FL. The students were provided with a lesson, a podcast, and a menu from the restaurant so they could prepare for the visit. The students had two waiters from Mexico who worked very well with the students. The students had a great time practicing their vocabulary while interacting with the staff and with each other. Ms. Kathy Jones, math teacher, Ms. Belinda McLane, BVS's counselor, Mr. Aldo Redaelli, Spanish teacher, and Ms. Carra Summers, school principal, attended the event as well. At

Mr. Redaelli's request, they all had to learn the lesson and be prepared to participate in the activity. The students had a lot of fun listening to their teachers and the school's staff trying to speak Spanish!

Bay Virtual Meets Daniel Hinz

On Monday, October 20, students of Dr. Schwartz's *Economics with Financial Literacy* class met at the Bay Virtual School for guest speaker, Daniel Hinz. Dan is a financial planner and coach. He is also known as "Dan Hinz, the Financial Coach," on the Miguel Show (Island 106; 105.9).

Dan shared with the students a number of concepts about financial planning that would benefit high school students' financial futures. One area he emphasized was the idea of compound interest. He shared the "Penny Commission Plan" for which a commission payment, beginning with just one penny the first month, is doubled each subsequent month. At the end of the 24th month the monthly wage is nearly \$84,000! His message: the earlier one begins to plan for a secure financial future and pursues that plan actively, the more likely financial security is to achieve.

Bay Virtual School Attends "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

On November 14th, a group of Bay Virtual School's faculty and students attended Arnold High School Theatre's performance of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream". The BVS group was entertained by a unique cast of characters as they performed their interpretation of Shakespeare's humorous tale of love, trickery, and drama for the audience. After the performance, the BVS students and faculty met to complete an English collaborative activity in the media center. Bay Virtual School's very own Dave Schwartz led our students in a discussion on the meaning of the play and the student's interpretation of Shakespeare's work. Following the collaborative assignment, the faculty and students enjoyed lunch and fellowship.

Articles submitted by Carra Summers



Pasco Hosts Virtual Great American Teach In Event

On November 19, Pasco eSchool hosted its first annual Virtual Great American Teach In event. Organized by Pasco eSchool's lead teachers, this event was available to students throughout the state, showcasing speakers from around the country who had experiences to share with students. Speakers included a best selling author, a motivational speaker, a Hollywood actor, cyber architect who works on sensitive government projects, and more! Broadcasted on Pasco eSchool's YouTube channel, students had the chance to text questions to moderators and interact with the speakers in real time. This event attracted participation at more than 100 schools throughout the state, and recordings of those sessions are available on Pasco eSchool's YouTube channel. The hope is to grow this event for 2015, and welcome collaboration with virtual school programs throughout Florida to expose our students to a world of careers and experiences. Be sure to like our Facebook page or follow us on Twitter to get the updates about the 2015 Virtual Great American Teach In. Submitted by JoAnne Glenn



Volusia Teacher Wins Blackboard Catalyst Award



Amy Blowers, Volusia Online Learning teacher, was named a winner of a Blackboard Catalyst Award for Exemplary Course. The award recognizes faculty and course designers from schools, colleges and universities around the world who develop exciting and innovative courses that represent the very best in technology and learning. Amy created and developed English 4: FL College Prep for Volusia Online Learning.

“I am so blessed to be able to represent the amazing things happening in Volusia Online Learning,” said Amy Blowers. “To receive international recognition for my creation of the English 4: Florida College Prep online course is truly an honor.” “It’s an honor each year to recognize forward-thinking educators who are helping create a world inspired to learn through the work they do every day,” said Jay Bhatt, Blackboard CEO. “We congratulate

Catalyst Award winners on their vision and innovative approaches to education, and celebrate their accomplishments with them.”

Submitted by Amy Blowers



K¹² Weekly Coffee Chats



K¹² is continuously looking into how they can further their support and help all families be successful by holding weekly coffee chats for parents. In these online sessions, parents come and chat about a topic with other parents and K¹² specialists. Parents work as a support group for each other with the help of the staff by sharing ideas and stories of what works and does not work. The goal is to help each family have a successful year and K¹² is doing this by surrounding each family with a strong support system. All families need someone that they can talk to about their struggles and successes throughout their online journey and this gives them the outlet

to do so. Some of the topics have included: Organization, Making Learning Fun, Learning and Teaching Styles. These have been so successful, K¹² will continue to offer them throughout the school year. Everyone is enjoying this weekly time with the families. Submitted by Traci Hill

Florida Virtual School® (FLVS®)

Secrets to Student Success Revealed – for Parents

Florida Virtual School® (FLVS®) has created a free e-learning opportunity where parents can learn quick, useful tips and tricks to help their student maximize his/her learning potential. The “Secrets to Student Success Revealed” is a free course offered on Udemy.com. The "secrets" revealed in this course apply mostly to children in second grade through high school, however, much of the content is relevant to any age. This course is available to all parents. [Click here to learn more.](#)



New Suite of Student Success Courses Launched

FLVS recently expanded collaboration with Mawi Learning to offer students courses designed to enhance student success. Recently, the Peer Counseling and the Career Research and Decision Making courses came online, joining the award-winning Leadership Skills Development course to create a powerful suite of courses for FLVS students. [Click here to learn more.](#)

FLVS is Joining the Largest Learning Event in History

FLVS is celebrating Computer Science Education Week (Dec 8-14) by participating in an *Hour of Code* through code.org. The goal is that every student should have the opportunity to learn computer science. Many FLVS teachers are incorporating an hour of code and other computer science activities to support this global effort. Submitted by Suzan Kurdak



FSDB joins MyDistrict Virtual School

The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) will be offering MyDistrict Virtual School's Marine Science course to high school students who are deaf/hard of hearing across the NEFEC districts. Michael Stultz, an instructor at FSDB and an adjunct professor at UNF teaching ASL courses to future educators, will begin teaching the Marine Science course in January. Students who are deaf/hard of hearing within the NEFEC districts will be eligible to participate in this course.



Florida School for the Deaf & the Blind

Do More. Be More. Achieve More.

This STEM opportunity, funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, enables students to be college ready and offers the ability to earn dual credit from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). RIT serves as the headquarters of the national DeafTEC Project. Additionally, students will benefit from video based American Sign Language (ASL) resources that Stultz is creating to support greater understanding of scientific concepts. This opportunity is also a collaborative effort between FSDB, a member district of NEFEC and the Florida Virtual School.

Submitted by Karen Hanson

Palm Beach is Expanding!

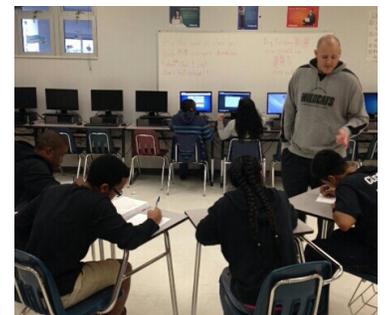
What a year of growth in Palm Beach! The School District of Palm Beach County has expanded the Edgenuity Blended Learning program for FY15 to include 22 middle and high school sites serving over 2,500 students. Many students are taking senior level courses which are in place to assist them in meeting the high school virtual graduation requirement. The blended learning model combines online delivery of educational content with classroom interactions such as direct instruction and small group learning for an individualized approach. This allows for differentiation of instruction for a diverse group of learners.

Each class is taught during the school day by a teacher from the school site certified in that course's content. Students enjoy the opportunity to take the course as part of their regular school day while having the teacher present to assist. This also builds the school's capacity for blended learning while having Palm Beach Virtual there to provide full support of the implementation. Mr. Kai Lee (Seminole Ridge HS), Mr. Bart Wible (Royal Palm Beach HS) and Ms. Kathleen Thomas



(Seminole Ridge HS, are shown working with the students in their blended learning classes.

Submitted by Heidi Putre



Leon's Middle School + 1 Program has Launched!



Led by four dynamic Leon County middle school teachers, the Middle School + 1 Program successfully launched in August at three local middle schools. Mr. Drayton at Griffin MS, Ms. Cumpton and Mr. Sims at Nims MS and Mrs. Parker at Cobb MS have implemented a blended model class into their current curriculum that seeks to give students a chance to earn a high school credit before actually enrolling in high school. This blended model class uses the Leadership Development class on the FLVS platform that was designed by Mawi Asgedom. The class is centered on his book *Of Beetles and Angels* and seeks to empower students to take action in their lives and their communities. Additionally, this program will allow students to meet

the online requirement for graduation and hopefully maintain a pace that will ultimately lead them to graduation with their classmates. Many of our top performing students leave middle school with multiple opportunities to earn high school credits in foreign language, math and science. This class opens that same door to all students. Based on current research, the single best indicator of graduating on time is finishing ninth grade and being on track to graduate.

Leon and Pasco Make a Good Team!

Through an inter-local agreement with Pasco County, Leon County's Godby High School football team is taking American Sign Language 1 & 2 online from Pasco instructor Elias Goutoufas. Mr. Goutoufas drove to Tallahassee to work with the students at the school all day on Friday, October 24. He taught the students sign language that is relevant to football. He stayed for the student's football game that



night. A big thanks to Joanne Glenn for her leadership and help getting this special event set up.



Articles submitted by Jessica Lowe

Orange County Virtual School Elementary Happenings!

OCVS Elementary students have been very active! OCVS elementary students boarded the Sun Rail at Church Street Station and had a picnic lunch in Winter Park. They have had Activity Days, Math Madness, and Writing Workshops, both online and face to face. Their Harvest Activity Day is coming up, and they are preparing for the Scripps Spelling Bee, and the Noetic Math Competition.

OCVS students are busy, busy, busy!



New Programs at OCVS



Blended Model

In August 2014, OCVS launched the Blended Model classroom in nineteen OCPS high schools which is increasing instructional technology usage within the traditional schools. OCVS has partnered with FLVS to provide the digital curriculum using Economics with Financial Literacy and U.S. Government.

IMPACT Team

OCVS initiated a new model for course recovery for the 2014- 2015 school year. OCVS is working with nineteen Orange County public high schools. Students who need to recover courses to earn credits toward graduation are taking their recovery class online using Edgenuity during the school day in a lab at their high school. Each student is assigned to a content certified teacher at OCVS. These IMPACT teachers work with the students providing virtual and face-to-face interventions for students, including live weekly web lessons, phone conferences, and face-to-face tutoring at the high school labs. The goal is to improve the graduation rate, and the program is well on its way to doing just that!

Articles submitted by Brandi Gurley



Florida Virtual School Full Time Celebrates Parent Involvement!

Florida Virtual School Full Time (FLVS FT) looks for many opportunities to get parents involved in their children's education. Recently, students, teachers, and families came together to celebrate literacy and the joy of reading in an effort to break the world record for the most people reading the same book on the same day. Readers across the country united in big cities, small towns, and everywhere in between to read the children's book *Bunny Cakes*, by best-selling author and illustrator, Rosemary Wells. Our Live Lesson attendance for the day was 106 total -- including staff members and family members who were present during the reading of the story. We were excited to allow our virtual voices to be heard from FLVS FT!



Our enrolled families have always brought with them such great energy and passion for our school. In an effort to harness the great energy and passion that families have for FLVS FT, we have created FLVS FT Club Orange, a parent involvement group for enrolled caretakers. In less than a year, FLVS FT Club Orange has reached 422 members! When families join FLVS FT Club Orange, they get a small box of fun items that will help them show off their school pride but also help tell others about virtual learning. FLVS FT Club Orange families are invited to participate in exclusive webinars and focus groups. They also host Parent to Parent meetings and attend school parties to help answer questions for newly enrolled and prospective families. Our school is lucky to have dedicated, supportive parents willing to spread the word about our school and help support newly enrolled families! Submitted by Sally Fernandez

News From the Tower



◆ Thanks to the 35 districts that have already entered courses into the Florida's new Online Course Catalog! This catalog is a great resource for parents and students to see the course choices available to them. We are currently working with individual districts to help them enter their courses into the catalog. If you would like assistance, please email OnlineCatalog@fldoe.org, or call Lisa Luna, Administrator of the course catalog, at (850) 245-0502.

◆ Florida Approved Course and Test (FACT) Initiative is underway with the first Course Provider Approval process beginning December 15. The approval process will be similar to the VIP Provider Approval process that is currently underway. In the fall we will run both approval processes simultaneously beginning in September.

- ◆ **National School Choice Week is January 25-31, 2015.** Did you know that iNACOL published a guide to help parents choose the right online program for their children? You and your parents can access this guide at: <http://fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7509/urlt/0085373-parentsguideop.pdf>
- ◆ **The next newsletter will be published in March 2015. Please submit articles and pictures by March 13, 2015!**

HAPPY NEW YEAR