

MARCH 2014

Happy Spring!

This school year is moving along at lightning speed! Second semester is well under way. Spring is on the horizon and with it comes fun and relaxing spring breaks for your and your students. Enjoy the well deserved time off!

The 2014 Legislative Session begins Tuesday, March 4th. Please remember to share your thoughts on pending legislation with the DOE Virtual Education Office as we will do bill analyses for all bills with virtual sections included. We need your perspective to provide a complete picture of the possible impact of legislation on your virtual students and schools. The voices of your students are heard through you. Please send your comments and thoughts to VirtualEducation@fldoe.org. Thank you! Sally

News from the Tower

- Virtual Program Provider Approval for the 2013-14 school year is nearing at end. Stay tuned to see if we have additional approved providers.
- Legislation passed in 2013 requires the DOE to develop a Florida online course catalog. This catalog will include online courses offered by school districts (including approved private providers) and Florida Virtual School. The Department has been working diligently to create this catalog and hopes it will be available in time to include your courses for the 2014-15 school year.



Lee Heads to Manatee Park!

On Tuesday, February 18, the Lee Virtual School hosted its Fourth Annual Canoe with the Manatees event at Manatee Park in Fort Myers. More than 100 students, families and guests joined the school staff for a day of canoeing with or watching the manatees, exploring the park, playing games, and enjoying a barbeque lunch, courtesy of an LVS parent and owner of the Hard Times Ranch. Even Mother Nature did her part by providing cool weather over the preceding weekend to ensure the presence of the manatees! All participants agreed this event is definitely one to be repeated for years to come! Ann Taylor



Inside this Issue:

Lake County	2
FLVS Part-time	2
Orange County	3
K12	3
FLVS Full-time	4
Lake County	4
Julie Young	4

"I am not a teacher but an awakener"

Robert Frost



Lake County Heads to A Natural Farm

On Thursday, February 6th, a group of students from Lake County Virtual School spent the afternoon at A Natural Farm and Educational Center on State Highway 19. A Natural Farm and Educational Center prides itself on growing their crops organically, which means their produce is chemical and pesticide-free. In addition, the seeds they use are not genetically modified or altered in anyway, reminiscent of the vegetables from our grandmother's garden. The owner, head farmer and cultivator, "Luc," provided a fun, informative tour through his five acres of land. A space typically zoned for housing development, Luc turned the once empty field into a gardener's dream.

After a brief meet and greet, we walked through multiple rows of strawberries (which we later got to pick, eat and bring home), as well as a large, handmade greenhouse in which tomatoes, carrots, peppers and herbs are grown. The best part about Luc's Farm is that you can bring a small piece of it home, by purchasing various plants and produce on-site.



As Luc walked us through his farm he helped students identify each plant, spoke about the good bugs that actually benefit his land and thoroughly outlined what it means to be an "organic" farmer. As we walked through each row of produce, Luc would pull out weeds and pick off edible, ripe foods for us to try on the spot.

Appropriately named, it was truly an educational experience for our students. Not only did it bring our students closer

to their food, it also helped them learn about growing chemical-free produce and gave them an opportunity to see careers outside an office. Submitted by Wendy Bridges

Florida Virtual School Part Time on the MOVE!!!

Florida Virtual School launched a new mobile-ready science course on Feb. 1. In Anatomy & Physiology, students explore the human body through the eyes of field experts and clinicians. Using clinical applications, students learn new terminology and the effects of diseases and study the structure, location and function of various systems within the body and how these systems interact. The Anatomy & Physiology course is fully compatible with mobile devices. Students can access all course materials, interactivities and assessments from their tablet or smart phone. [CLICK HERE to read more.](#) Students interested in registering in the Anatomy & Physiology course or any of the other 120 courses FLVS offers should visit www.flvs.net.

Upcoming Event:

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Come joineth us for an event that the Bard himself would be proud to attend! The FLVS Shakespeare Festival will take place on March 12 and 13 from 9-11 a.m. and 6-8 p.m. For the full schedule, [CLICK HERE](#).

Photo: Blended Learning Communities consist of Palm Beach students working on computers with a virtual teacher and a live teacher in the room doing mini-lessons. Suzan Kurdak



Orange County Buzzing with Activities!

Orange County Virtual School has been buzzing with exciting activities this school year! Students have a place of their own in OCVS' new building where they can work in a safe environment, meet with teachers, and socialize with other classmates. Students in grades 6-12 have the opportunity to attend Student Work Days every Monday-Thursday from 9am-3pm. There are two full time teachers assisting the students every day (the teachers rotate throughout the month) and laptops are provided, as well as lunch. Students in grades K-5 also have their own creatively decorated room for face-to-face activities with their teachers.



Student Work Days are just one of the many events that OCVS offers its students. OCVS has clubs and organizations such as the Do Something Club (where students and parents have an opportunity to participate in community and volunteering events), the Science Club (which just recently had a field trip to the CSI: The Experience), the Spanish Club, as well as SAC and PTSA organizations. OCVS also offers a mentoring program which pairs up students to business role models in the community, and the Great Speaker Series which brings successful community members to OCVS for an intimate Q&A session with students.

The newsletter committee stays busy with keeping OCVS parents & students up to date on all of the activities going on throughout the school year. Some committee members recently got a chance to interview Dorina Sackman, Florida's Teacher of the Year and National Teacher of the Year finalist.

OCVS continues to engage students not only in the virtual classroom, but beyond! Brandi Gurley

FL K¹² Students Are Ready to Make the Grade this Testing Season

Testing season – here we come! FL K¹² district partner students have been diligently preparing for the upcoming FCAT 2.0 and EOC Tests in a variety of ways.

This year K¹² has focused on implementing personalized learning experiences for students. Students' knowledge and skills are evaluated through a variety of state and K¹² assessments. Teachers regularly analyze data and place students in need of extra help in small groups for interventions. There, students are provided additional instruction and given multiple opportunities to show mastery of standards and content. These opportunities are provided above and beyond the multiple, weekly synchronous sessions already in place.

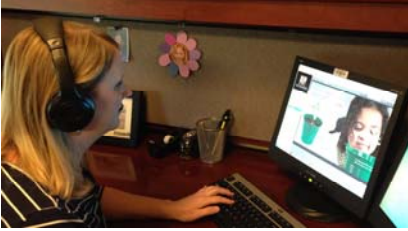
In addition, K¹² has been using a variety of resources to help prepare its students. FCAT Explorer has been implemented to help students practice FCAT-style questions. Students have also been participating in Study Island pathways and have earned a significant amount of blue ribbons, leading students in other K¹² programs. Teachers have also held their own contests to see which classes can be the leaders in Study Island participation and achievement.



Teachers also participated in a FL DOE writing professional development opportunity to learn methods of assessing writing with the FCAT 2.0 writing rubric, as well as practices for teaching writing in their classrooms. Students have experienced a number of timed writing opportunities, and FCAT-style writing questions are being implemented in language arts courses.

Testing season? No sweat! K¹² students are ready to make the grade. Lisa Watkins

Always Something Exciting Happening at FLVS FT



Florida Virtual School Full Time (FLVS FT) K-8 teachers enthusiastically took the pledge to support the use of technology to improve education by joining with educators across the country in Digital Media Learning Day. Members of our Reading Leadership Team implemented creative use of digital learning tools in their lessons to teach a multitude of standards, keeping students engaged in learning and having fun! In one 2nd grade classroom, teachers demonstrated a measurement and distance lesson through the use of eBook technology. Around the corner, another exciting

Math opportunity was taking place as 5th grade students used the "Ten Marks" site as a resource to solve math problems live on a virtual dry erase board. While down the hall in middle school, teachers used embedded book trailers during their lessons and discussions to captivate their students, along with student-led virtual book talks to promote the love of reading.

With Math-on-the mind, the monumental 100th Day of School was marked in a *measurable* way by both students and teachers. In addition to students celebrating the excitement of completing over half of the school year, it was an outstanding opportunity for teachers to recognize and reinforce many concepts their students have learned so far. Students were engaged in joyful counting songs as a whole group introduction, and then moved into separate grade level break-out rooms for age appropriate and engaging learning experiences. In addition to math-based games, students were also able to hear stories, poems, and participate in several cross curricular literacy-based activities which used numbers as the theme. By Sally Fernandez



Lake Visits Trout Lake Nature Center



On January 22nd, a group of students from Lake County Virtual School visited Trout Lake Nature Center to learn about the natural habitat of the Florida Black Bear. Often labeled as either a "cute teddy" or deemed a dangerous predator, bears are often presented as drastically different from their true nature. The goal of this field trip was to get students properly acquainted with the rich wildlife right here in the heart of Eustis. Our instructors guided us through the food and shelter of many birds, bears and bugs that call Trout Lake their home. Students learned how to live like a bear, how to spot their tracks when walking in the wild and understand the loss of their natural habitat throughout the years. This trip provided students with the ability to carefully observe their surrounding environment and critically think while interacting with nature.

Thank you Julie Young!!

We bid a fond farewell to Julie Young, who led the way in creating the first, largest and most successful state virtual school in the nation. Thank you, Julie, for getting out of the box in 1997 to create a new and exciting way of learning that puts the student at the center of every decision. We have learned from you and have built upon your foundation to create many virtual education opportunities for students in Florida today and will continue to do so in the future. We wish you well as you pursue other opportunities to innovate on behalf of students.



Share your article and pictures for the newsletter in June! Send to VirtualEducation@fldoe.org