

December 2013



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Virtual Education Newsletter

Happy Holidays!

In between these holiday seasons of Thanksgiving and many blessings, I am indeed thankful to be working in the virtual education arena in Florida. A large part of that is because of you; my colleagues in Florida's many virtual education options. 2013 was a year of change and challenge for all of us, yet you persevered and succeeded in providing expanded opportunities for your students, including sometimes a last resort for some of our most fragile students and families. Through the successes and setbacks of 2013, you and your students have accomplished much and should feel proud. I don't know what lies ahead, but I know no matter what I am fortunate to be working with so many dedicated and wonderful individuals. I look forward to 2014 and our continued work together on behalf of Florida students.

May you, your family and your students have a wonderful winter break and experience many blessings and much success in the new year. Sally



Parent Involvement at FLVS Full Time



Parent involvement has always been an integral part of the success of the students at Florida Virtual School Full Time. With the belief that parents are the first teachers in a student's life, we have launched a Parent Involvement Plan with a goal of strengthening the partnership between the school, family and community through training and support for our parents. Throughout the school year, parents will be provided multiple means and opportunities to be involved in their children's academic career.

Continued meaningful parental engagement will help our district's goals for high student achievement.

Submitted by Sally Fernandez, Connections Education

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"The important thing is not to stop questioning."

Albert Einstein



Blended Learning Labs in Palm Beach Growing



Florida Virtual School (FLVS) worked with Palm Beach School District to develop a model of blended learning that supports the students with a certified teacher in the classroom and a FLVS virtual teacher routinely spending time with the students in the classroom, too. The Christa MacAuliffe teacher and FLVS teacher support the students by sharing teaching responsibilities, providing students with high levels of access and differentiation. This model provides a highly personalized learning environment for students and also serves to build capacity for blended learning at the school.

The transformation began in an older industrial arts room that was cleared out and painted. Student desks and chairs were replaced by large Yoga balls and gaming chairs situated close to the floor. Traditional school tables were placed around the perimeter of the room and some were lowered and organized in three pods in the center of the room. The computers and monitors are on the tables. Fifty student stations are in this lab classroom. Each student has two monitors; one for coursework navigation and one to maintain their online notebook. A lounge-like area used for small group meetings is set up next to a large glass wall overlooking a planted outside area. For more information contact Debra Johnson, Principal for Virtual Learning (561.568.7212) or Jeff Silverman, Principal of Christa MacAuliffe Middle School (561.374.6600).

Bringing the Pride to Hernando eSchool

Hernando eSchool is piloting a new project as a part of our School Improvement Plan which targets middle school students for participation in a high school level course, Computing for College and Careers. The intended outcome will be that upon completion of the online course, middle school students will have the opportunity to earn Industry Certification in Microsoft Office. It is an exciting endeavor for both the students and our school.

Students are learning Microsoft Office 2010 Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. They will sit for the first of three Industry certification tests, *Word*, in December.



Students are currently enthusiastic about using real world examples as templates to use while completing assignments. They are also challenged to earn high school credit and fulfill the online high school graduation requirement while in middle school. Their instructor is quite confident that the students will perform well on the exams and earn Industry certification.

Submitted by Sheri Padgett-Giorda, Ed.S Language Arts Specialist

Let us showcase your virtual world! Email us at: virtualeducation@fldoe.org



Pasco eSchool in the Wild!



Pasco eSchool ventured out from behind our computers, and into the wild world of animal encounters at Busch Gardens this October! It was truly an awesome experience for students and teachers alike!

Prior to our visit, Busch Gardens provided us with some great pre-visit activities. The activities helped introduce students to the types of animals they might see, as well as the concepts of “adaptations” and “conservation”. The two concepts were discussed quite often during our day at Busch Gardens, and provided students with an opportunity to make real world connections.

After our awesome train ride, we were escorted to the Stanleyville Theater for an innovative Wildlife Theater presentation. We took a journey through the layers of the tropical rainforest with the help of two amazing Busch Gardens' educators. We learned so many interesting facts about the emergent layer, canopy layer, understory layer, and the forest floor. But that's not all! With each layer, we were introduced to some of the animals that live there! We met a Madagascar Hissing Cockroach, Burmese Python, Macaw, Three-toed Sloth and more! to observe the animal care experience. Students were immersed in examples of how Busch Gardens cares for its animals, from nutrition to treatments and X-rays to surgeries. Do you know what Busch Gardens uses as catnip for its large cats? Taco seasoning! During our stop, we were able to whip us a batch. On our way out of the park, we were able to swing by and see the tigers. We saw the “taco seasoning ball” in action!

We all agree that this was our best field trip yet, and plan to make it an annual trip!

Submitted by JoAnne Glenn

FLVS K-1 Learning Program



Native American Medicine Bag
Designed by student in the Art Class

The FLVS part-time elementary courses for kindergarten and first grade children are popular, innovative, multi-modality oriented with videos, songs, books, stories, and hands-on activities. The students sign-on and work with highly qualified teacher, Martha Crosier, then continue independent curriculum for reading and mathematics. Control-Click on the below links to watch the recorded lessons.

[Social Studies/Art Class #3](#)

[Math/Reading Class #3](#)



Candy Wrapper Project

Designed by student in the Art Class

For more information call 407-513-3604 or email us at : elementaryhome@flvs.net, and we'll follow up with all the information you will need to join the fun and great learning experience. Students may sign up for courses individually or for all of the courses.

Submitted by Jill Metcalfe

Somerset Virtual Academy Student Communities

The Domus program allows students to become affiliated to “Houses” based on geography, program and age. Houses are envisioned to be places where students are encouraged to work together to engage, discuss, share and collaborate. Faculty are assigned to a House so each House has two “Fellows” to supervise specialized programs, activities, and community development endeavors. The main purpose of the program is to build a sense of cohesiveness and community with our students which translates into academic achievement, learning gains and overall program satisfaction. - Contributed by, Doug Rodriguez, Principal



Virtual Charter Schools in Florida

K12 currently has charter schools in 5 districts. Florida Virtual Academy is now open in Osceola, Broward, Palm Beach, Pasco, and Duval counties. Most of the schools are currently K-8 but will add a grade each year of their five- year charters. The charters are managed by non-profit boards with community members from around the state.



Students and teachers work in their homes most days but also get together monthly for fun face-to-face outings allowing the students to meet each other and build school community. The brand new Kissimmee Marina was the sight of this year’s Back to School event for students and families of Florida Virtual Academy @ Osceola. Everyone had a hand in our Sail into School Regatta!

This month we will be hiking in Duval county at Jacksonville’s Arboretum and visiting Pioneer Florida Museum and Village in Dade City. Next month, we have a variety of events to celebrate winter!

Information can be found at flva.org. Submitted by Patty Betoni

