

Virtual Instruction Programs (2011-2012) Questions and Answers

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VIRTUAL (ONLINE) EDUCATION

1. *What is a 'virtual instruction program'?*

[Section 1002.45\(1\) F.S.](#) defines a 'virtual instruction program' as one that takes place in an interactive learning environment created through technology in which the student and teacher are separated from each other by time, space, or both.

2. *Are online classes offered at a specific time during the school day?*

By their nature, online classes do not have to be offered at a specific time of the day. Online teachers primarily interact with and instruct students on an individual basis using different methods of communication at various times of the day. Online teachers may also set up group sessions at specific times to cover selected topics or to provide additional help for students. Virtual courses offered by school districts to students in district school buildings may be provided during a specific time of the school day, although access to curriculum may often take place anytime.

3. *Do online teachers have to meet the same requirements as other public school teachers in Florida?*

Florida's virtual programs and schools require teachers to hold Florida teaching certificates or district adjunct certificates. In addition, all instructional personnel must go through background screening (fingerprinting).

4. *Does the virtual curriculum and course content in public virtual education programs have to meet state standards?*

Yes. The virtual curriculum and courses are required to meet state standards.

5. *Can students take specialized courses such as Advanced Placement or gifted through virtual programs or schools?*

Yes. Most of Florida's virtual programs or schools offer these types of courses. However, as with other schools and programs, not every course or option is available at every school. To find out the specific options available, interested parents should contact Florida Virtual School or their school districts directly.

- [General Information About Virtual \(Online\) Education](#)
- [Virtual Education Options for 2011-12](#)
- [District Virtual Instruction Program \(VIP\)](#)
- [District Virtual Course Offerings](#)
- [Florida Virtual School Classic](#)
- [FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL SUPPLEMENTAL FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-5](#)
- [Florida Virtual School Full-time](#)
- [District Franchises of Florida Virtual School](#)
- [Virtual Charter Schools](#)
- [Student Eligibility and Participation](#)
- [Exceptional Student Education \(ESE\)](#)
- [Funding and Reporting](#)
- [Online Course Graduation Requirement](#)
- [Role of the Department of Education \(DOE\)](#)

6. *How can those interested in teaching in one of Florida's virtual programs apply for a teaching position?*

Florida has both state-level and district-level virtual programs and schools. Florida Virtual School is the state-level virtual school. The following link to Florida Virtual School's Career Center provides information for interested applicants. <http://www.flvs.net/areas/employment/Pages/default.aspx>

In addition, all 67 school districts offer virtual instruction programs and courses for their students. Sometimes the district hires the online teachers and sometimes they contract with an approved private provider to operate a virtual program for them. In the latter case, the provider hires the online teachers. Interested applicants may obtain information on employment for one of the district virtual options by visiting the following website. This website has two links--one for district virtual contacts and the other for the approved private providers. <http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/DistrictVIP.asp>

VIRTUAL EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR 2011-12 ([BACK TO TOP](#))

7. *What virtual education options are authorized for the 2011-12 school year?*

Options include:

- Florida Virtual School (state-level)
- District virtual instruction programs
- District franchises of Florida Virtual School
- Virtual courses delivered to students in traditional public schools
- District virtual course offerings (outside of virtual instruction programs and franchises)
- Virtual charter schools

8. *Will all of the above options be available for the 2011-12 school year?*

The options provided by Florida Virtual School and district virtual instruction programs will be offered to students in all districts in 2011-12. In addition, many school districts also operate franchises of Florida Virtual School and offer online courses to students in traditional school settings. Virtual course offerings and virtual charter schools are new options created by the 2011 Florida Legislature, so it is not clear which will be implemented for the 2011-12 school year. Interested parents should contact Florida Virtual School (www.flvs.net) or their school districts (<http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/DistrictVIP.asp>) to obtain more specific information about virtual programs offered.

9. *What options are available at the state level through Florida Virtual School (FLVS)?*

- FLVS Classic—offers a supplemental online program (individual middle and high school online courses) to public, private and home education students in grades 6-12 and middle school courses to advanced public school students in grades 4-5. (www.flvs.net)
- FLVS Full-time—offers a full-time grades K-12 public online program at the state level. School districts and virtual charter schools may also contract with Florida Virtual School to provide the FLVS FT program to district public school students. (www.flvsft.com)

DISTRICT VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS (VIP) ([BACK TO TOP](#))

10. *What are district virtual instruction programs (VIP)?*

District virtual instruction programs provide instruction to eligible district students using online and distance education technology in a nontraditional classroom, i.e., primarily outside of public school buildings. In practice, most students access the online instruction from their homes.

11. *What options are available through district virtual instruction programs (VIP)?*

A school district virtual instruction program shall provide the following:

- Full-time virtual instruction for students in grades K-12
- Part-time virtual instruction for students enrolled in grade 9-12 courses that are measured by FCAT, End of Course (EOC), or AP exams
- Full-time or part-time virtual instruction for students enrolled in dropout prevention and academic intervention programs, DJJ programs, core courses to meet class size requirements and community (Florida) college courses which are part of the district's virtual instruction programs

12. *Is the part-time program for students in dropout prevention or academic intervention and DJJ programs; core courses to meet class size requirements; and community (Florida) college courses limited to grades 9-12?*

No. This part-time program is no longer limited to grades 9-12.

13. *Which courses are considered 'core courses to meet class size requirements' that may be offered through the part-time virtual instruction program?*

Section 1003.01(14), Florida Statutes, defines core-curricula courses that are subject to maximum class size requirements as those courses defined by the Department of Education as follows:

- Courses in mathematics, language arts/reading, science and social studies in grades PK-3
- Courses in grades 4-8 that are measured by state assessments at any grade level and courses required for middle school promotion
- Courses in grades 9-12 that are measured by state assessments at any grade level and courses that are specifically named in statute as required for high school graduation
- Exceptional Student Education courses
- English for Speakers of Other Languages courses

'Extra-curricular' courses are not included and are defined as those not listed above including, but not limited to, physical education, career education courses, fine arts, performing arts and courses that may result in college credit.

14. *Do all school districts provide a school choice option for district VIP?*

Yes. Each school district eligible for the sparsity supplement in the public school funding program (before the wealth adjustment calculation) shall provide all enrolled students within its boundaries the option of participating in part-time and full-time virtual instruction programs. Each school district not eligible for the sparsity supplement must offer at least three options ([District Sparsity Supplement](#))

15. *For districts having to meet the three-option requirement, can these options include other virtual options offered by the district and/or at the state-level by Florida Virtual School or must they be provided within the district's virtual instruction programs (VIP)?*

Districts are to provide three options within their district virtual instruction programs.

16. *What options are available to provide district virtual instruction programs and to meet the number of options required?*

Districts may use the following options to offer virtual instruction programs for their students:

- providing a district-operated virtual instruction program
- contracting with FLVS
- establishing a franchise of FLVS
- contracting with an approved provider
- entering into an agreement with another district, community (Florida) college or virtual charter school to provide a virtual instruction program option for district students.

Contracts may include multidistrict agreements executed by a regional consortium for its member districts.

17. *For the districts required to offer three options, must three options be provided for all grade levels?*

Yes.

18. *May districts contract with FLVS to offer FLVS Full-time or FLVS Classic directly to district students as one of the district's required options?*

No. All options must be within the district virtual instruction programs. If the district contracts with FLVS to meet one of the required options, the students must be enrolled in a FLVS-provided district virtual instruction program.

19. *Who are the DOE-approved private providers for the 2011-12 school year?*

The approved private providers are:

- Advanced Academics
- Educational Options, Inc.
- Florida Connections Academy, LLC
- K12 Florida, LLC
- The National Network of Digital Schools (Lincoln Interactive)

For more information on the approved private providers, please visit the following website:

<http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/DistrictVIP.asp>

20. *May districts offer additional enrollment windows for district virtual instruction programs at times other than that specified in law (at least 90 days ending no later than 30 days prior to the start of school)?*

Yes. Districts must offer the enrollment window specified in law but may offer other enrollment windows as well. For example, many districts enroll students for the second semester. or some districts have a window of opportunity at the same time as other school choice options in the district.

21. *Would placing the enrollment period in the district's student progression plan, parent resource guide, and on the website meet that requirement to notify parents of the district's open enrollment period?*

Districts must notify parents in writing about the required enrollment window. This notification may be included in other materials distributed to parents. However, placing the dates of the enrollment window on the website or including the information in documents parents would have to locate on their own would not meet this requirement.

22. *What must parents do and what documentation is needed to enroll their children in their school district's VIP?*

This may vary from district to district. Parents should contact their school district directly to determine how to enroll their children in the district's program and what documents are required for enrollment. The following website has contact information for all Florida school districts:

<http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/DistrictVIP.asp>

23. *Must district virtual instruction program teachers be Florida-certified?*

All teachers providing instruction for this program, including community (Florida) college teachers, must hold valid Florida teaching certificates.

24. *Must online teachers reside in the school district?*

The law does not include residency requirements for teachers; therefore, the teachers can live anywhere.

25. *Are school districts required to provide instructional materials for students in the school district VIP?*

Districts are required to provide the necessary instructional materials for students to participate in this program.

26. *Are school districts required to provide computers, printers, and Internet access for students in the district VIP?*

The district must provide each full-time student enrolled in VIP who qualifies for free or reduced priced lunches under the National School Lunch Act, or who is on the direct certification list, and who does not have a computer or Internet access in his or her home with all equipment necessary to participate in the program. This includes, but is not limited to, a computer, a computer monitor, a printer (if necessary for the program) and access to or reimbursement for Internet services.

27. *If the district provides equipment and connections to the Internet to students in a home environment, how can school districts be protected from liability issues regarding Internet misuse?*

Each school district should determine if additional language needs to be added to existing policies addressing the use of the Internet via district or school equipment.

28. *Will district VIP students be required to register as home education students in their district of residence since they will receive their virtual instruction primarily from home?*

No. These students are district public school students, not home education students. The school district VIP will be the school of record for its full-time students.

29. *Must students enrolled in the district VIP take state assessment tests?*

Yes. These students will take the same assessment tests as their counterparts in other district schools.

30. *How will students in the school district's VIP participate in state testing when they take their virtual classes from home?*

The district of residence is to provide testing facilities for these students. However, the district can designate the testing sites within the school district. Examples include, but are not limited to, assigning each student to the school he or she would have attended, designating a central testing site, or providing regional sites.

31. *How are decisions related to promotion, retention, or grade placement made for students participating in the school district's VIP?*

The district's student progression plan establishes the procedures/requirements with regard to students progressing from one grade to another. The district VIP is simply another avenue for the provision of instruction. All of the existing requirements related to student progression, including retention, promotion, and grade assignment, are the same for school district VIP students as they are for any other student enrolled in the district.

32. *Must students in a district VIP meet compulsory attendance requirements?*

Yes. The law specifies that students meet compulsory attendance requirements. This means attendance must be taken for students in this program and these students have the same guidelines related to truancy as students in brick and mortar schools.

33. *How is the district VIP held accountable for student performance?*

The district VIP is held accountable in several ways:

- It is a school choice program, so parents can choose this option or other educational options for their children.
- Its funding is performance-based—that is, based on “successful completions.” If an elementary student is not promoted, the virtual program receives no funding for that student. If a middle or high school student does not pass a virtual course or earn a credit, the program does not receive funding for that course.
- The provider, the school district or both receive school grades based on student performance on state testing. The provider earns a single grade for the performance of all of its students statewide. If the school district operates its own program or a portion of the program, it will receive a school grade based on the performance of the students participating in its program.

DISTRICT VIRTUAL COURSE OFFERINGS (1003.498) ([BACK TO TOP](#))

34. *May school districts offer virtual courses outside of district franchises of Florida Virtual School and district virtual instruction programs?*

Yes. Districts are authorized to offer such courses by section 1003.498, Florida Statutes. These courses will be reported under school number 7006. If a district plans to offer such courses, it should contact the Department of Education's Education Information and Accountability Services office to activate this school number.

35. *For what courses and grade levels may districts offer virtual courses under section 1003.498, Florida Statutes?*

Districts may offer virtual courses for any courses included in the Course Code Directory. This Directory includes courses from PK-12.

36. *What students are eligible to take these virtual courses?*

District students must meet the same eligibility requirements as listed in section 1002.455, Florida Statutes (see Student Eligibility and Participation section). In addition, a student from another school district may take one of these virtual courses if his or her district does not offer it as an online course at the district level or as a course (online or face-to-face) at the school level. However, if the student does not have access to the course due to a scheduling conflict, he or she may take the online course from the other district.

37. *Will the DOE provide guidance regarding the enrollment, reporting and funding for students taking virtual courses from other school districts?*

Yes. The DOE will provide guidance on the information that should be collected and verified at the point of enrollment in another district's virtual course. In addition, the FTE General Instruction will address the reporting and funding of these students.

38. *If the district does not allow its students to take Algebra IA or Algebra IB, does it have to allow students to take these courses from another school district?*

Yes. A student should be allowed to take a course not offered in his or her school district from another school district if it is an appropriate course for the student based on his or her academic history.

FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL CLASSIC ([BACK TO TOP](#))

39. *Will students still be able to take online courses from FLVS beyond the school day and year and earn funding for those courses in addition to the funding earned in the school district?*

Yes. Students will still be able to take courses beyond the school day and year and earn funding for both the school district and FLVS. The school district may report up to 1.0 FTE for instruction provided by the school district, and FLVS may report FTE for any additional online courses successfully completed.

40. *Will home education students who take six or more classes from FLVS Classic still be required to be registered as home education students in their district of residence?*

Yes. FLVS Classic is designed to be a supplemental program offering individual online courses to public, private and home education students. If a student enrolls in online courses at FLVS and is not attending a district public school or a Florida private school, the student must register as a home education student in his or her school district to meet compulsory attendance requirements.

FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL SUPPLEMENTAL FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-5 ([BACK TO TOP](#))

41. *Can grades 4-5 students take middle school courses from their school districts as well as from FLVS?*

Yes. Districts already were able to provide acceleration for elementary students within the district and receive funding for doing so. This provision was added to ensure Florida Virtual School could receive funding for grades 4-5 students who take their middle school courses.

42. *Can elementary students take the FLVS course in addition to a full school-day curriculum in the district and earn full funding for the district courses and additional funding for the FLVS course?*

No. A student cannot earn more than 1.0 FTE in the district and FLVS combined.

43. *Will the DOE provide guidance related to the enrollment, reporting and funding of district elementary students who take middle school courses from FLVS?*

Yes. The DOE will provide guidance on the information that needs to be collected and verified at the point of enrollment of an elementary student into an FLVS middle school course. In addition, the FTE General Instructions will address the reporting and funding of these students.

44. *Do the middle school courses taken by elementary students count toward the fulfillment of the middle school promotion requirements as specified in s.1003.4156, F.S.?*

Yes. FLVS middle school courses have the same titles and content as those offered in traditional public schools.

45. *If the district progression policies do not allow elementary students to take middle school courses within the district, is the district required to allow them to take FLVS middle school courses?*

The student should be allowed to take a middle school course if it is an appropriate course for the student based on his or her academic history.

46. *Is the provision requiring elementary school principals to notify parents of students scoring level 4 or 5 on the FCAT of acceleration options through FLVS meant to be interpreted as those students who score a level 4 or 5 and who meet district criteria for acceleration into a middle school course?*

The law states the principal is to notify parents of students who score levels 4 or 5 on FCAT Reading or FCAT Mathematics about these acceleration opportunities. However, the principal may provide additional information he or she deems appropriate based on the child's academic history.

FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL FULL-TIME ([BACK TO TOP](#))

47. *Will students enroll directly in Florida Virtual School's newly-authorized full-time K-12 virtual program?*

Yes. Students will be able to register directly and Florida Virtual School will be their school of record (enrollment). FLVS will be responsible and held accountable for their progress.

48. *Will students enrolled in Florida Virtual School's state-level full-time program be required to register as home education students in their district of residence?*

No. Students in the state-level full-time program will be public school students.

49. *Will Florida Virtual School offer all grade levels in its full-time public school in 2011-12?*

The FLVS Full-time Public Program will offer grades K-11 in 2011-12 and add grade 12 the following school year.

50. *Are students enrolled in Florida Virtual School's full-time program required to meet compulsory attendance requirements?*

Yes.

51. *Will students enrolled in Florida Virtual School's full-time public school program be required to take state assessments and if so, where will they take them?*

Yes. These students are public school students and will be required to take all state assessments. Currently only school districts can administer high-stakes statewide assessments, and the law specifies that these students will take these tests in their districts of residence.

52. *Will Florida Virtual School's full-time public school receive a school grade?*

Yes.

DISTRICT FRANCHISES OF FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL ([BACK TO TOP](#))

53. *Will franchises be able to report completions to June 30th as they did last year?*

Yes. Districts may report completions for students enrolled in district franchises until the end of the Survey 4 reporting period (July 1 in 2011).

54. *May district students in grades 4-5 take middle school courses from the district franchise?*

Yes. District franchises were established under section 1002.37, Florida Statutes, (FLVS statute) and can serve the same grade levels as Florida Virtual School.

55. *May district franchises offer a full-time K-12 program like Florida Virtual School?*

Yes. District franchises can offer the FLVS FT Program using district teachers. Franchises could already offer a grade 6-12 full-time program as an option for district virtual instruction programs.

56. *If a school district uses its franchise of Florida Virtual School to meet one of the required options for its virtual instruction program, can the franchise continue to operate as it has in the past and offer courses to other students as well (public, private, and home education students)?*

Yes. A school district may use its franchise as one of its options to provide a district virtual instruction program and continue to serve other students as well. In addition, district franchises may offer programs similar to the new FLVS options (full-time K-12 and online middle school courses for grades 4-5 students).

57. *If a district uses a franchise of FLVS to meet requirements to offer its district VIP, will students be reported under school number 7001 or the franchise school number of 7004?*

Allowing students who are interested in enrolling in a school district VIP to enroll in a district franchise does not change the fact they are enrolling in the district's franchise. Report all franchise students under number 7004.

58. *Do districts require immunization records be filed for home education students attending a franchise of Florida Virtual School?*

Districts have to collect and report immunization information for home education students enrolled in their franchise only if they participate in activities at a brick and mortar school in the district (e.g., those who participate in classes, extra-curricular activities, or state testing).

VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOLS ([BACK TO TOP](#))

59. *Will the Department create a new model charter school application for virtual charter schools?*

Yes. The Department will initiate the rule-making process to either create a new and separate model application for virtual charter schools, or revise the existing model charter school application.

60. *How can a current charter school become a virtual charter school?*

A charter school must submit an application to its sponsor to open a new charter school (virtual) or amend its existing contract. If a charter school submits a new application to its sponsor, the application must include documentation that the applicant has contracted with FLVS or an approved provider of virtual instructions services. ([List of Approved Providers](#))

61. *Can only current charter schools apply to be a virtual charter school?*

No. Virtual charter schools are not limited to current charter schools.

62. *Can virtual charter schools provide part-time virtual instruction?*

No. Virtual charter schools are authorized to provide full-time virtual instruction.

63. *What grade levels may virtual charter schools serve?*

Virtual charter schools may serve eligible district students in grades K-12.

64. *How are virtual charter schools funded?*

Funding for virtual charter schools will be the same as that specified for district virtual instruction programs in section 1002.45(7), F.S. This means virtual charter schools are funded through the Florida Education Finance Program and that the funding is based on 'successful completions' rather than on seat time (attendance and enrollment). Like other virtual programs and schools, virtual charter schools may not receive any funding for the purpose of fulfilling class size requirements.

65. *How are virtual charter schools held accountable for student learning?*

Virtual charter schools

- will receive school grades based on the performance of their full-time students like other public schools in the district and state;
- are funded based on successful completions;
- are school choice options for parents; and
- must meet performance criteria outlined in their charters with school districts.

66. *Can a brick and mortar charter school provide blended-learning?*

Yes. A charter school may implement blended learning courses which combine traditional classroom instruction and virtual instruction. Students in blended learning courses must be full-time students of the charter school and receive the online instruction in a classroom setting at the charter school.

67. *What are the requirements for instructional personnel who provide virtual instruction for blended courses?*

Instructional personnel may be employees of the charter school or may be under contract to provide instructional services to charter school students. At a minimum, the instructional personnel must hold a state certificate as required in section 1012.55, F.S., or a school district adjunct certification under s. 1012.57, F.S., for the subject area of the blended learning course.

68. *What are the funding and performance accountability requirements for blended learning courses?*

These are the same as those for traditional courses in traditional public schools. The funding is based on seat time (attendance and enrollment), and the student's charter school will receive a school grade based on the performance of students enrolled in the charter school.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION ([BACK TO TOP](#))

69. *What are the student eligibility requirements to enroll in district virtual instruction programs, district virtual course offerings and virtual charter schools?*

Students who enroll in one of the above options must meet at least one of the following criteria specified in section 1002.455, Florida Statutes:

- a) The student has spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school in this state and was enrolled and reported by a public school district for funding during the preceding October and February for purposes of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) surveys.
- b) The student is a dependent child of a member of the United States Armed Forces who was transferred within the last 12 months to this state from another state or from a foreign country pursuant to the parent's permanent change of station orders.
- c) The student was enrolled during the prior school year in a school district virtual instruction program under this section or a K-8 virtual school program under Section 1002.415, Florida Statutes.
- d) The student has a sibling who is currently enrolled in the school district virtual instruction program and that sibling was enrolled in such program at the end of the prior school year
- e) The student is eligible to enter kindergarten or first grade.

70. *What are the student eligibility requirements to enroll in the new virtual education options offered by FLVS?*

Students in grades 2-5 who enroll in the FLVS Full-time public school program at the state-level must meet one of the student eligibility criteria listed in section 1002.455, Florida Statutes. Students in grades K-1 and 6-12 do not have to meet these criteria to enroll.

Students in grades 4-5 who take online middle school courses from FLVS must be public school students currently enrolled in district public schools.

71. *What K-12 virtual education options are open to all public private and home education students?*

Public, private and home education students in grades 6-12 may enroll in online courses offered by FLVS and district franchises of FLVS. In addition, students eligible to enroll in kindergarten and first grade students may enroll in all of Florida's virtual education options.

72. *For virtual options requiring prior-year public school attendance, how will this eligibility be verified?*

Student eligibility is determined by either reviewing a district's previous year student history or, for those students who have transferred from another district, using the Student Locator function available from the Department. Specific instructions for using the Student Locator function are available by either contacting a district's management information system staff or the Department's Office of Education Information and Accountability Services (ASKEIAS@fldoe.org).

73. *Do students who were enrolled in a lab school or charter school the previous year meet the eligibility requirements?*

Yes. Lab schools and charter schools are Florida public schools, and their students would meet the prior-year public school requirement.

74. *Do home education or private school students who enroll part-time in a public school for a class (e.g., speech), meet the prior-year public school requirement?*

No. students in grades K-12 attend school full-time and have to meet compulsory attendance requirements. To meet compulsory attendance requirements students are classified in one of three categories—as public, private or home education students. Students who were registered as home education students in their school districts the previous year are classified as home education students, even if they return to the school district to take a class. Likewise, students who attended a private school the previous year are classified as private school students.

75. *Do students attending a private school the previous year with a McKay scholarship meet the prior-year public school enrollment criterion for virtual instruction programs or virtual charters?*

No. Students use McKay scholarships to attend private schools.

76. *How will eligibility of siblings be verified?*

Siblings are eligible if their brother or sister is currently enrolled in the school district VIP and was also enrolled at the end of the previous year. Districts may use paperwork normally gathered at registration/enrollment, such as a birth certificate or adoption papers, to determine sibling eligibility.

77. *What verification will be requested for students who are dependent children of a member of the United States Armed Forces?*

A review of transfer orders will satisfy the verification requirement for dependent children of members of the United States Armed Forces.

78. *May students enrolled in a full-time state-level or district-level virtual program/school participate in extracurricular activities in the school district?*

Yes. Section 1002.20(18)(a), Florida Statutes, states students who meet specified academic and conduct requirements are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. In addition, Sections 1002.20(18)(d) and 1006.15(5)(b), Florida Statutes, state "organizations that regulate or govern extracurricular activities of public schools shall not discriminate against any eligible student based on an educational choice of public, private, or home education."

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (ESE) ([BACK TO TOP](#))

79. *Can exceptional student education (ESE) students participate in the school district virtual instruction program (VIP)?*

Yes. Any student who meets the requirements in Section 1002.455, F.S., is eligible to participate. Since the school district VIP is a public K-12 school (s. 1000.04(1), F.S.), the district cannot restrict participation to only those students who do not have specialized educational plans [i.e., individual educational plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan for students with disabilities; educational plan (EP) for gifted students; ELL plans for students who are English language learners].

80. *What is the school district VIP responsibility to students with disabilities?*

The school district's VIP is primarily a full-time program. However, as with any other public school, the school day for a student with a disability may include more than the basic courses provided to all students. Some accommodations and supplemental services can be provided in conjunction with the school district's VIP. For some exceptional students, the IEP or EP team may determine the need for additional services beyond those provided in the district VIP. Depending on the nature and extent of those additional services, these exceptional students may be able to participate in the school district's VIP and also receive ESE services (e.g., speech therapy) from the district or from the virtual provider, if so stipulated in the contract.

81. *How will ESE students who participate in the district VIP be funded?*

Funding in school district VIP is limited to Programs 101-103, 111-113 and 300. Services for ESE students may also be funded through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) dollars and other funding sources.

82. *How are districts to handle alternate assessment for students in the school district VIP who are eligible students with disabilities?*

If the district has permitted a student who is receiving instruction in the access points (a decision made by the IEP team) to enroll in the school district VIP, then the IEP team would also determine whether the student met the eligibility criteria for the Florida Alternate Assessment. The district's assessment director or alternate assessment coordinator can provide information on the assessment window and assessment procedures.

In the event that the parent pursues enrollment in the virtual program against the recommendations of the other members of the IEP team and the parent revokes consent for services under IDEA, then the student is no longer designated as a student with a disability and would participate in FCAT.

83. *Would the district be obligated to provide transportation to and from the student's home for the purpose of receiving services at the school site?*

No. Since the student is participating in the school district VIP as a choice option, there would not be an obligation to provide transportation.

84. *Could an IEP team determine that a school district's VIP is the least restrictive environment (LRE) for a student to be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE)?*

Yes. An IEP team can determine that enrollment in the school district's VIP with appropriate support available in the home setting represents FAPE in the LRE. In this case, if the student also required some additional services at a school site (e.g., speech therapy, counseling), the district would be required to provide transportation. However, placement in a setting that provides little or no access to peers is generally considered to be a restrictive setting.

FUNDING AND REPORTING [\(Back to Top\)](#)

85. *How are students in district virtual instruction programs (VIP), district franchises of FLVS, virtual charters and FLVS Full-time funded?*

These virtual options are funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Funding is based on successful completions rather than enrollment and attendance (seat time).

86. *What is considered a "successful completions" for district virtual instruction programs and virtual charter schools?*

A "successful completion" for students in grades K-5 is completion of a basic education program and promotion to a higher grade level. Students in grades 6-12 must successfully complete (pass) individual online courses.

87. *How are "successful completions" defined for FLVS Full-time?*

Successful completions are defined as successful course completions or the prescribed level of content that counts toward promotion to the next grade.

88. *Do school districts, virtual charter schools and FLVS Full-time have to wait a year for funding as suggested by the definition of a Full-time Equivalent (FTE) student based on successful completions?*

No. The Department estimates the FTE data necessary for dollars to flow throughout the year to meet their funding needs prior to the reporting of performance for their students at the end of the year.

89. *In what FTE Surveys are virtual students reported for funding?*

Students in district virtual instruction programs and virtual courses, virtual charter schools, district franchises of FLVS and FLVS Full-time are reported for funding in Surveys 2, 3, and 4. In Surveys 2 and 3, students will be reported with 0 FTE; however, based on this reporting, the Department estimates the funding for the year. Virtual students and courses are reported in Survey 4, with the appropriate FTE

assigned to successful completions. Students who do not successfully complete the virtual program or prescribed level of content (elementary students) or course(s) (middle and high school students) do not earn FTE funding for the virtual program or course(s).

90. *If a student in grades 6-12 successfully completes more than six courses, are the excess courses reported with 0 FTE in Survey 4?*

Yes. As for students who take additional classes in brick and mortar schools, virtual students cannot earn more than 1.0 FTE for the school year with the exception of students taking courses from FLVS Classic.

91. *If a student in grades K-5 is enrolled in a district brick and mortar school the first semester, enrolls in the school district's VIP the second semester and is promoted at the end of the year, will the district receive the full 1.0 FTE?*

Yes. The district will receive .5 FTE seat time funding for the first semester and .5 FTE for the successful completion in the virtual program for the second semester totaling 1.0 FTE.

92. *May a student complete a virtual course or program prior to the end of the school year and still earn funding for that course?*

Yes. The student would earn funding for the virtual course or program since the funding is based on successful completions rather than seat time. However, the student is still required to meet compulsory attendance requirements until the end of the year.

93. *If a student in a district's VIP moves to another district before the end of the school year and before completing the virtual courses or program, will the first district receive any funding for that student?*

If the two school districts enter into an agreement to allow the student to remain enrolled in the first district's VIP, then that district will receive funding if the student successfully completes the virtual program or courses.

94. *Do districts also need to report district virtual students in surveys other than 2, 3, and 4?*

Students in district virtual programs and schools are district students, and their information should be reported in all survey periods as for other district students.

95. *If district VIP students' progress in reading is monitored by assessments other than the FAIR assessment, how will this be reported to the DOE database?*

These students will be reported using the Student Assessment reporting format in Surveys 2, 3, and 5. The Assessment Code Table for eligible assessments is located in Appendix I of the Database Manual. http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/student_1011.asp#APPENDICES

96. *The course code for M/J Intensive Reading is the same for grades 6, 7 and 8. If a middle school student is required to take Intensive Reading all three years based on FCAT results, will that student be able to earn funding for the course every year?*

Yes. The student may earn funding as long as the student passes the course.

97. *What reporting formats must districts submit to provide information on teachers who are hired by contracted virtual providers rather than the school district?*

Districts need to submit the Teacher Course reporting format in the Student Information System for all courses taught by these teachers. In addition, if virtual students participate in the FAIR reading assessment, the district must report selected elements in the Staff Demographic reporting format in the Staff Information System for the responsible reading instructor in Survey 8.

98. *If the district contracts with an approved provider to operate its virtual instruction program, will the school district or the provider receive the FEFP funding?*

The FEFP funding will flow to the school district. The school district and provider will determine in their contract how much of the funding per student the provider will receive.

99. *How much funding will a student who successfully completes in a full-year program or six online courses receive?*

The district will receive a minimum level of \$4,800 per student.

100. *How is funding determined for students taking a full load and reported for the full FTE at the home district and is also taking a course from another district?*

Section 1003.498, F.S., specifies that if a student takes a virtual course from another district, the district of instruction is to report the completion of the course for funding and does not allow the student's home district to report funding for that course. Since the student can only earn 1.0 FTE, the home district would report less than that amount for courses taken in the district.

101. *If districts contract with approved providers for full-time virtual instruction services, will districts be able to use funding earned above the contract price to meet other costs associated with offering this program to district students?*

The statute now requires funding over the contract amount to be spent on the district's local instructional improvement system or other technological tools to access electronic and digital materials.

102. *Will district-operated virtual instruction programs (district provides instruction) still use school number 7001?*

No. District-operated VIP will use school number 7023 beginning in 2011-12. Please contact the Education Information and Accountability office in the DOE if your district is operating a VIP to activate this number.

103. *Will blended learning courses offered to students in district brick and mortar schools be based on seat-time funding like those offered in brick and mortar charter schools?*

Yes. District schools already offer blended learning courses to students enrolled in their brick and mortar schools and the funding is based on seat time. In addition, performance results for these students are included in their school of enrollment's accountability.

ONLINE COURSE GRADUATION REQUIREMENT ([BACK TO TOP](#))

104. *What is the online course requirement for graduation?*

For students entering ninth grade beginning in 2011-12, at least one course required for graduation must be completed through online learning.

105. *How may students meet this requirement?*

Students may meet this requirement by completing an online high school course offered:

- by Florida Virtual School
- by a district high school (to include traditional district schools, district franchises, and virtual charter schools)
- as an online dual enrollment course
- by district virtual instruction programs
- by a district middle school

106. *The legislation states that an online course taken in grades 6-8 fulfills this requirement. Does this mean an online middle school course fulfills this requirement?*

No. The course has to be within the 24 credits required for high school graduation.

107. *Can a half-credit online course meet the online course graduation requirement?*

Yes. A half-credit online course may meet this requirement as long as it is within the 24 credits required for graduation.

108. *Can credit-recovery online courses be used to meet the online course graduation requirement?*

Yes. An online credit recovery course may meet this requirement as long as the student earns high school credit through online learning.

109. *If a student takes an online course from a computer lab or classroom in a district school, is the course still considered an online course, or is it a blended course because the student is in a physical setting?*

It is still an online course if the curriculum and a majority of the instruction is accessed online.

110. *Are students seeking diplomas other than the standard 24-credit high-school diploma required to meet the online course graduation requirement (e.g., IB, 18-credit, special diplomas)?*

No. Only students seeking the standard 24-credit diploma must meet this graduation requirement.

111. *Are students required to pass the online course in order to meet the online graduation requirement?*

Yes. Section 1003.428, F. S., specifies the course must be within the 24 credits and completed through online learning.

112. *If a student entering ninth grade in 2011-12 has completed an online high school course for credit in middle school prior to July 1, 2011, will it count towards this graduation requirement?*

Yes.

113. Do district virtual instruction programs (VIPs) have to be approved by the Florida DOE?

No. These are district programs provided to district students. The district is responsible for ensuring students choosing this program have the resources they need to be successful just as they do for students in other district schools and programs.

114. Can a district contract with virtual curriculum providers that are not on the Department's approved provider list?

If a district operates its own VIP, it can contract with other providers for curriculum, digital content and other online resources. In addition, districts may contract with other providers for digital content, curriculum and other online resources for students who are not participating in their district VIP. Section 1002.45(9), F.S., specifically states the latter.

115. What role does the DOE play related to Florida's public virtual programs and schools?

- The DOE approves the private providers school districts may use to provide full-time and part-time virtual instruction programs for their students. Virtual charter schools must contract with these same providers.
- The Department provides information about all of Florida's public virtual education programs/schools to parents, students, citizens, researchers, and others interested in this program.
- The Department provides technical assistance to school districts, virtual schools, and providers related to virtual program, reporting and funding requirements.
- The Department reports information related to virtual programs, schools, and students and analyzes proposed legislation policies related to virtual education.
- Beginning in 2011-12, the Department will also collect copies of district contracts with providers every October to analyze costs for specific services and summarize district reports submitted at the end of each fiscal year related to expenditures above the contract prices.
- The Department calculates school grades for full-time virtual programs and is to develop evaluation methodology for part-time virtual providers and to subsequently evaluate part-time virtual providers.
- This year, the Department is also to:
 - approve the new part-time program for currently-approved providers,
 - revise the current SBE rule, approval process and application to incorporate legislative changes,
 - provide guidance to districts and FLVS for the enrollment, reporting and funding for students who cross district lines to take virtual courses, and
 - prepare and submit a report to the Governor and Legislature related the best methods and strategies for implementing digital learning.