

For Immediate Release

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Florida Virtual School® Changing Misconceptions About Online Learning

Orlando, FL (Oct. 24, 2018) – Online learning has been an educational option in Florida that has expanded over the last 21 years. In 2017-18, more than 207,000 students took an online course through Florida Virtual School (FLVS®), a statewide online public school district in Florida. Although the number of students in grades Kindergarten–12 taking online classes continues to grow, there are still common misconceptions about online learning around topics such as rigor, pace, instructional support, socializing and acceptance.

Misconception: Online courses are easy.

Reality: Just like in a traditional school, some courses may be easier, but others, more challenging. As a fully accredited public school district, FLVS courses are built on the foundation of state and national standards and are designed to provide the rigor necessary to ensure college readiness and real-world success. Robust online curriculum includes a variety of NCAA-approved core, world language, specials/elective, honors, and Advanced Placement® courses. Engaging and interactive content provides both online and offline experiences. FLVS Full Time offers dual enrollment opportunities, which allow students to take college courses and earn college credits while also applying credits toward high school graduation requirements.

Misconception: There are a lack of deadlines.

Reality: While online courses may be taken at the student's own pace, students must maintain pace by typically completing three to four assignments weekly per FLVS course. Students may work at an accelerated pace or maintain the traditional pace for the course. This ensures that a student is retaining the material, building on their knowledge, and mastering content.

Misconception: Students are on their own.

Reality: FLVS teachers provide students personalized instruction and one-on-one support in the online learning environment. Students communicate with teachers regularly in the online classroom and via phone, email, online chats, discussion forums, webcams, and texting. FLVS teachers are Florida certified in the subject matter they teach, and they provide direct instruction during interactive live lessons online where they teach the material in real time.

Misconception: There is no social interaction.

Reality: FLVS offers students more than 50 clubs and organized student activities. Students meet online to plan events, collaborate on projects, play games, hear from guest speakers, and more. School clubs allow students to develop leadership skills, engage in community service opportunities, and in some cases, even attend face-to-face gatherings or academic competitions. Throughout the year, FLVS hosts special events and celebrations for students, including Celebrate Literacy Week, World Fest, Spirit Week, Shakespeare Fest, and college and career exploration opportunities. In addition, students and parents are able to attend regional meetups and field trips. FLVS also holds an in-person graduation ceremony for FLVS Full Time seniors.

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-2-

Misconception: Colleges and universities do not accept or like online courses.

Reality: Online skills are an asset for college and beyond, and students who choose online courses can find themselves more prepared for college or the workforce. According to the Online Learning Consortium, more than 6 million higher education students took at least one online course in 2015. In a 2016 article, *Politico* indicated that 40 percent of courses for undergraduates are projected to be delivered online by 2025. Students who graduate from FLVS Full Time have been accepted to a wide array of colleges, including University of Florida, Stetson University, University of Central Florida, Harvard University, United States Naval Academy, United States Military Academy and the University of Alabama.

Online learning goes beyond academics, too. According to FLVS School Counselor Anne Flenner, “Students who have experienced FLVS gain important soft skills such as time management, acting honestly, appropriate online behavior, being able to collaborate with others in a virtual setting, and more. Experiencing online education will help students understand the value it provides to their educational journey and future career or college opportunities.”

On Oct. 15, FLVS Full Time opened enrollment for students in grades Kindergarten-12. Families interested in enrolling their students are encouraged to attend an upcoming information session to learn more about the school. These helpful sessions are great opportunities to connect with principals and staff, have questions answered, and learn about the enrollment process. Families should visit flvs.net/fulltime/more to register for a convenient online information session.

FLVS Full Time students attend school from August to June, take six courses per semester, participate in required state testing, and those who meet all graduation requirements are eligible to receive a Florida diploma from FLVS Full Time. Combining Florida-certified teachers, a proven curriculum, technology tools, and community experiences, FLVS Full Time delivers a high-quality online education to students who benefit from an individualized approach to learning.

Families interested in enrolling their students for the spring 2019 semester should visit flvs.net/fulltime.

About Florida Virtual School Full Time (FLVS Full Time)

FLVS Full Time is a statewide, online public school serving students in grades Kindergarten-12. As a fully accredited public school with a traditional academic calendar from August to June, FLVS Full Time offers comprehensive, full-time, tuition-free online learning for all Florida students. The school delivers a structured schedule with built-in flexibility. Courses are available online 24/7, allowing students the flexibility to study any time and any place. In addition, students meeting Florida graduation requirements are able to receive a standard Florida diploma. The combination of certified teachers, a proven curriculum, technology tools, and community experiences creates a supportive and successful online learning environment for families and students who want a personalized education. To learn more, visit flvs.net/fulltime.

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