

# Collier County Virtual School Parent Survey 2007

As part of its Franchise Agreement with The Florida Virtual School (FLVS), Collier County Schools has agreed to survey parents of its online students annually to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of its virtual education program. In April 2007, an email letter was sent to 125 parents throughout the state notifying them about the online Parent Survey and pointing them to the web-based instrument via its URL address.

The surveying process was comprised of two sections; section one posed school-specific questions as well as several questions about the learners and parents themselves. Parents completed this portion of the survey only once and then were redirected to the second section of the survey, where they were asked specific questions about their child's course and teacher. Parents were encouraged to complete section two as many times as necessary given the number of courses in which his/her child was enrolled. Of the 125 emails sent to parents, 26 surveys were completed for section one or twenty-one percent (21%) and 26 surveys were completed for section two.

The two-step surveying process described above allows stakeholders to have distinct information on the virtual school, as a whole, as well as feedback on the overall quality of courses and teachers. The remainder of this report shows parents' responses to all of the survey items.

## **Section One: General Feedback & Student/Parent Information**

### **Which option best describes your child?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Public education student	19	73.1%	73.1%	73.1%
Private education student	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Charter school student	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Home-school student	6	23.1%	23.1%	23.1%
Other	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%

**How does your child access his/her online courses?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Both school and home, but mostly from home	8	30.8%	30.8%	30.8%
Both school and home, but mostly from school	4	15.4%	15.4%	15.4%
Equally from school and home	5	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%
Only at home	8	30.8%	30.8%	30.8%
Only at school	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%

**The main reason your child enrolled in the virtual school was:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
To take an extra course	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
To take a course not offered at his/her school	10	38.5%	38.5%	38.5%
To raise a course grade/ grade forgiveness	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
To balance academic and extracurricular activities	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Hospital Homebound	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Personal preference	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
To accelerate graduation/ get ahead	2	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Other	5	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Has your child spoken to a guidance counselor regarding the virtual school experience?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Yes	15	57.7%	57.7%	57.7%
No	11	42.3%	42.3%	42.3%

**If your child spoke to a guidance counselor regarding the virtual school experience, was the guidance counselor helpful?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Yes	10	43.5%	38.5%	38.5%
No	1	4.3%	3.8%	3.8%
Not applicable	12	52.2%	46.2%	46.2%

**Please rate the level of technical problems experienced by your child in his/her online course(s):**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
He/she never has technical problems that interfere with getting work done	9	34.6%	34.6%	34.6%
He/she sometimes has technical problems that interfere with getting work done	14	53.8%	53.8%	53.8%
He/she often has technical problems that interfere with getting work done	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
He/she has a great deal of technical problems that interfere with getting work done	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Most questions relating to technical problems are resolved:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Within 24 hours	12	48.0%	46.2%	46.2%
Within 2 to 3 days	3	12.0%	11.5%	11.5%
In a period greater than 3 days	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
This question is not applicable because my child never has technical problems.	6	24.0%	23.1%	23.1%
Don't know	4	16.0%	15.4%	15.4%

**Please rate the quality of your child's experience with his/her virtual school:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Excellent	10	38.5%	38.5%	38.5%
Good	11	42.3%	42.3%	42.3%
Fair	5	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%
Poor	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Would you encourage your child to participate in other online courses?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Yes	20	80.0%	76.9%	76.9%
No	5	20.0%	19.2%	19.2%

**Would you recommend this virtual school to other parents?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Yes	23	88.5%	88.5%	88.5%
No	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%

**What part of the virtual school motto, "Any time, any place, any path, any pace," is most important for your child?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Any Time	14	53.8%	53.8%	53.8%
Any Place	2	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Any Path	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
Any Pace	7	26.9%	26.9%	26.9%

**Has your child experienced any school or district level barriers that have kept him/her from taking courses with the virtual school?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Yes	5	20.0%	19.2%	19.2%
No	20	80.0%	76.9%	76.9%

**What is the highest degree earned by your child's mother, father, or guardian?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
High School Degree	8	32.0%	30.8%	30.8%
Associate's Degree	4	16.0%	15.4%	15.4%
Bachelor's Degree	10	40.0%	38.5%	38.5%
Master's Degree	2	8.0%	7.7%	7.7%
Doctoral Degree	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1	4.0%	3.8%	3.8%

**I found out about this virtual school from:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
a school counselor	16	61.5%	61.5%	61.5%
a friend	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
an ad in the high school newspaper	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
a newspaper article	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
a TV news report or advertisement	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
a radio advertisement	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
a home education office	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
a home school meeting or convention	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
my child	2	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
an Internet search	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
a family member	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
a community event or meeting (festivals, Rotary, etc)	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
other	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%

**Do the virtual school courses engage your family in the learning process?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
yes	15	57.7%	57.7%	57.7%
no	11	42.3%	42.3%	42.3%

## **Section Two: Course/Teacher Items**

**On average, the number of hours per week your child spends/spent on this online course is:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
0 - 1 hour	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1 - 2 hours	4	15.4%	15.4%	15.4%
2 - 4 hours	4	15.4%	15.4%	15.4%
5 - 10 hours	12	46.2%	46.2%	46.2%
Over 10 hours	6	23.1%	23.1%	23.1%

**Communication between your child and the teacher of this course is:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Great	9	34.6%	34.6%	34.6%
Good	15	57.7%	57.7%	57.7%
Fair	2	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Poor	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**What communication mode did you/your child find most helpful with this particular virtual school course and teacher?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Email	16	61.5%	61.5%	61.5%
Telephone	5	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%
Instant Message	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	5	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%

**Communication with your child and other students enrolled in this course(s) is:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Great	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
Good	9	34.6%	34.6%	34.6%
Fair	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
Poor	2	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Don't know	9	34.6%	34.6%	34.6%

**Most questions relating to course content or assignments are resolved:**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
Within 24 hours	14	53.8%	53.8%	53.8%
Within 2 to 3 days	10	38.5%	38.5%	38.5%
In a period greater than 3 days	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
This question is not applicable because my child never has questions about the course content or assignments.	2	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Please rate your child's learning experience in this online course(s) as compared to most traditional high school courses.**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
My child learned more in this online course than in most of his/her traditional courses.	9	34.6%	34.6%	34.6%
My child learned the same in this online course as most of his/her traditional courses.	13	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
My child learned less in this online course than in most of his/her traditional courses.	3	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%
Don't know	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%

**The online teachers are required to speak to their students and parents once per month. Do you feel this expectation has been met?**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
yes	22	88.0%	84.6%	84.6%
no	3	12.0%	11.5%	11.5%

**My child's teacher has shown a special interest in my child's success with his/her online course.**

Choice	Count	Percentage of Sample Answering	Percentage of Sample Asked	Percentage of Total Sample
yes	25	96.2%	96.2%	96.2%
no	1	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%

## **Conclusion**

Results from the 2007 Virtual School Parent Survey reflect previous evaluation findings that Collier County Virtual Education parents were satisfied overall with the virtual school, its quality of courses, and the quality of its teachers.

Parents were generally pleased with the quality of their child's experience with FLVS, with 80% of respondents saying that their experience has been either "excellent" or "good." Most open-ended comments were positive, citing the convenience of the school, the fun of the curriculum, and their satisfaction with the teachers. Of the almost 20% who rated their child's experience with FLVS as "fair," some open-ended responses included that the student(s) liked regular classes better and that the site was too difficult to navigate within.

Eighty percent of respondents would also encourage their children to participate in other online courses, and another 88.5% would recommend this virtual school to other parents because it has helped their own children.

According to parents, student-teacher communication was favorable, albeit not stellar: only 34.6% responded great, 57.7% responded good, 7.7% said fair, 0% said poor, and 0% said don't know. Responsiveness of communication was generally perceived as good. Regarding specific student questions relating to course content or assignments, 53.8% of parents said that most of their child's questions were resolved within 24 hours and 38.5% said that resolution usually came within two to three days. Most parents surveyed (88%) said that online teachers did speak to students and parents once per month, as they are required to do.

When asked to rate their child's learning experience in this online course(s) as compared to most traditional high school courses, 34.6% said their child learned more in this online course than in most of his/her traditional courses, 50% said they learned the same, 11.5% said they learned less, and 3.8% said they didn't know. Open-ended commentary suggested individual learning styles and preferences for a particular learning environment as the reasons for either excelling or not excelling with the FLVS: "Learning is accelerated when he is able to take charge;" "Better concentration and less distractions;" "He was more engaged since he is challenged;" "He learns better with personal direction;" "If she met with him in person he could explain it to her where she was able to understand it."