

# Polk Virtual School Parent Survey 2007

As part of its Franchise Agreement with The Florida Virtual School (FLVS), Polk 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 248 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 248 emails sent to parents, 38 surveys were completed for section one or fifteen percent (15%) and 75 surveys were completed for section two (18%).

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  | 11    | 28.9%                          | 28.9%                      | 28.9%                      |
| Private education student | 2     | 5.3%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| Charter school student    | 4     | 10.5%                          | 10.5%                      | 10.5%                      |
| Home-school student       | 18    | 47.4%                          | 47.4%                      | 47.4%                      |
| Other                     | 3     | 7.9%                           | 7.9%                       | 7.9%                       |

**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   | 2     | 5.3%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| Both school and home, but mostly from school | 4     | 10.5%                          | 10.5%                      | 10.5%                      |
| Equally from school and home                 | 6     | 15.8%                          | 15.8%                      | 15.8%                      |
| Only at home                                 | 24    | 63.2%                          | 63.2%                      | 63.2%                      |
| Only at school                               | 2     | 5.3%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| Other  | 0     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                       | 0.0%                       |

**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                            | 0     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                       | 0.0%                       |
| To take a course not offered at his/her school     | 1     | 2.6%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |
| To raise a course grade/ grade forgiveness         | 0     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                       | 0.0%                       |
| To balance academic and extracurricular activities | 0     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                       | 0.0%                       |
| Hospital Homebound                                 | 0     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                       | 0.0%                       |
| Personal preference                                | 24    | 63.2%                          | 63.2%                      | 63.2%                      |
| To accelerate graduation/ get ahead                | 5     | 13.2%                          | 13.2%                      | 13.2%                      |
| Other  | 8     | 21.1%                          | 21.1%                      | 21.1%                      |
| 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    | 13    | 34.2%                          | 34.2%                      | 34.2%                      |
| No     | 25    | 65.8%                          | 65.8%                      | 65.8%                      |

**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            | 12    | 34.3%                          | 31.6%                      | 31.6%                      |
| No             | 1     | 2.9%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |
| Not applicable | 22    | 62.9%                          | 57.9%                      | 57.9%                      |

**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           | 8     | 21.1%                          | 21.1%                      | 21.1%                      |
| He/she sometimes has technical problems that interfere with getting work done       | 26    | 68.4%                          | 68.4%                      | 68.4%                      |
| He/she often has technical problems that interfere with getting work done           | 2     | 5.3%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| 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  | 2     | 5.3%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |

**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  | 18    | 48.6%                          | 47.4%                      | 47.4%                      |
| Within 2 to 3 days   | 6     | 16.2%                          | 15.8%                      | 15.8%                      |
| In a period greater than 3 days  | 3     | 8.1%                           | 7.9%                       | 7.9%                       |
| This question is not applicable because my child never has technical problems. | 2     | 5.4%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| Don't know   | 8     | 21.6%                          | 21.1%                      | 21.1%                      |

**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 | 21    | 55.3%                          | 55.3%                      | 55.3%                      |
| Good      | 13    | 34.2%                          | 34.2%                      | 34.2%                      |
| Fair      | 4     | 10.5%                          | 10.5%                      | 10.5%                      |
| 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    | 33    | 86.8%                          | 86.8%                      | 86.8%                      |
| No     | 5     | 13.2%                          | 13.2%                      | 13.2%                      |

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

| Choice | Count | Percentage of Sample Answering | Percentage of Sample Asked | Percentage of Total Sample |
|--------|-------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yes    | 37    | 97.4%                          | 97.4%                      | 97.4%                      |
| No     | 1     | 2.6%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |

**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    | 36.8%                          | 36.8%                      | 36.8%                      |
| Any Place | 7     | 18.4%                          | 18.4%                      | 18.4%                      |
| Any Path  | 3     | 7.9%                           | 7.9%                       | 7.9%                       |
| Any Pace  | 14    | 36.8%                          | 36.8%                      | 36.8%                      |

**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    | 4     | 10.5%                          | 10.5%                      | 10.5%                      |
| No     | 34    | 89.5%                          | 89.5%                      | 89.5%                      |

**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 | 16    | 42.1%                          | 42.1%                      | 42.1%                      |
| Associate's Degree | 4     | 10.5%                          | 10.5%                      | 10.5%                      |
| Bachelor's Degree  | 8     | 21.1%                          | 21.1%                      | 21.1%                      |
| Master's Degree    | 8     | 21.1%                          | 21.1%                      | 21.1%                      |
| Doctoral Degree    | 1     | 2.6%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |
| Other              | 1     | 2.6%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |

**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                                    | 14    | 36.8%                          | 36.8%                      | 36.8%                      |
| a friend  | 9     | 23.7%                          | 23.7%                      | 23.7%                      |
| 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                               | 1     | 2.6%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |
| a home school meeting or convention                   | 3     | 7.9%                           | 7.9%                       | 7.9%                       |
| my child  | 2     | 5.3%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| an Internet search                                    | 3     | 7.9%                           | 7.9%                       | 7.9%                       |
| a family member                                       | 1     | 2.6%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |
| a community event or meeting (festivals, Rotary, etc) | 1     | 2.6%                           | 2.6%                       | 2.6%                       |
| other   | 4     | 10.5%                          | 10.5%                      | 10.5%                      |

**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    | 30    | 81.1%                          | 78.9%                      | 78.9%                      |
| no     | 7     | 18.9%                          | 18.4%                      | 18.4%                      |

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## **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    | 1     | 1.4%                           | 1.3%                       | 1.3%                       |
| 1 - 2 hours   | 7     | 9.7%                           | 9.3%                       | 9.3%                       |
| 2 - 4 hours   | 38    | 52.8%                          | 50.7%                      | 50.7%                      |
| 5 - 10 hours  | 15    | 20.8%                          | 20.0%                      | 20.0%                      |
| Over 10 hours | 11    | 15.3%                          | 14.7%                      | 14.7%                      |

**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      | 32    | 44.4%                          | 42.7%                      | 42.7%                      |
| Good       | 29    | 40.3%                          | 38.7%                      | 38.7%                      |
| Fair       | 9     | 12.5%                          | 12.0%                      | 12.0%                      |
| Poor       | 2     | 2.8%                           | 2.7%                       | 2.7%                       |
| 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           | 44    | 62.0%                          | 58.7%                      | 58.7%                      |
| Telephone       | 27    | 38.0%                          | 36.0%                      | 36.0%                      |
| Instant Message | 0     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                       | 0.0%                       |
| Other           | 0     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                       | 0.0%                       |

**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      | 17    | 23.9%                          | 22.7%                      | 22.7%                      |
| Good       | 19    | 26.8%                          | 25.3%                      | 25.3%                      |
| Fair       | 4     | 5.6%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| Poor       | 4     | 5.6%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| Don't know | 27    | 38.0%                          | 36.0%                      | 36.0%                      |

**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   | 46    | 63.9%                          | 61.3%                      | 61.3%                      |
| Within 2 to 3 days  | 20    | 27.8%                          | 26.7%                      | 26.7%                      |
| In a period greater than 3 days   | 3     | 4.2%                           | 4.0%                       | 4.0%                       |
| This question is not applicable because my child never has questions about the course content or assignments. | 1     | 1.4%                           | 1.3%                       | 1.3%                       |
| Don't know  | 2     | 2.8%                           | 2.7%                       | 2.7%                       |

**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. | 31    | 43.7%                          | 41.3%                      | 41.3%                      |
| My child learned the same in this online course as most of his/her traditional courses.  | 29    | 40.8%                          | 38.7%                      | 38.7%                      |
| My child learned less in this online course than in most of his/her traditional courses. | 4     | 5.6%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |
| Don't know   | 7     | 9.9%                           | 9.3%                       | 9.3%                       |

**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    | 68    | 94.4%                          | 90.7%                      | 90.7%                      |
| no     | 4     | 5.6%                           | 5.3%                       | 5.3%                       |

**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    | 59    | 81.9%                          | 78.7%                      | 78.7%                      |
| no     | 13    | 18.1%                          | 17.3%                      | 17.3%                      |

## **Conclusion**

Parents responding to the Polk Virtual School Online Survey appeared to be generally pleased with the educational experience their child received this year. 55.3% of parents rated the quality of their child's experience with Polk Virtual School as "excellent," a shift for the better over last year, wherein only 39% gave an "excellent" rating; also this year, 34.2% rated their child(ren)'s quality of experience as "good." 86.6% stated they would encourage their child to participate in other online courses, and 97.4% also said they would recommend Polk Virtual School to other parents.

Communication, in general, received improved and positive feedback this year with 84.7% of parents rating it as either "great" or "good," (as compared with 81% last year) and 94.4% stating that teachers met the expectation of contacting their child at least once per month (as compared with only 80% last year).

It has been another successful year for Polk Virtual School. Parents had many positive things to say about their child(ren)'s experience, including comments like these:

- *I think it has changed my child's life. And has given him another chance to succeed in life. Thank you again.*
- *We have found that by our son utilizing the FLVS & Polk VS, we have full control over his progress. This is a very important factor, considering it is not always easy to have access to our son's progress through his previous school, with the teachers being busy. Here we can look and read the information at the click of a button.*
- *The virtual school process is wonderful because we can take it with us when we travel or have other personal conflicts.*
- *Works well for a full time working parent trying to home school student.*
- *Good job all around.*
- *It's great that she can take a course at no charge to us and get high school credit.*
- *It has allowed our daughter to re-focus herself without all of the distraction that she was dealing with in the school she was in.*