

Florida
VirtualSchool

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Florida
VirtualSchool
2007 - 2008

2007 - 2008

SchoolSurvey



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The Florida Virtual School School Survey 2007-08

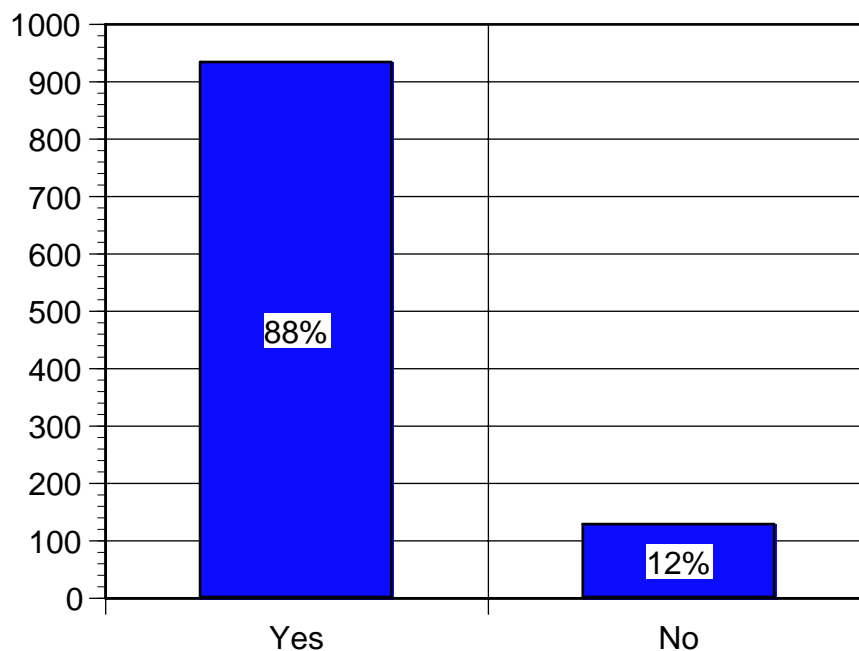
In April 2008, Optimal Performance, Inc. conducted a statewide survey for Florida Virtual School to gather feedback and data from school level personnel in participating Florida institutions. At the end of the school year, an email letter was sent to 6716 school administrators and guidance counselors throughout the state notifying them about the online School Survey and pointing them to the web-based instrument via its URL address. In total, 1079 surveys were completed and returned, providing a 16% return rate for the instrument. Of those 1079, 778 were school guidance counselors and 278 were school administrators; the remaining individuals did not identify their position. Exhibit 1 lists the districts providing feedback on The FLVS School Survey. In some instances, more than one person from a school responded to the survey, providing the administrative as well as guidance counselor feedback. Overall, 62 out of Florida's 67 districts are represented in the survey responses. (Exhibit 1)

Exhibit 1 FLVS School Survey Participating Districts	
District	# of Responses
Alachua	20
Baker	2
Bay	10
Bradford	1
Brevard	61
Broward	68
Calhoun	2
Charlotte	9
Citrus	11
Clay	27
Collier	15
Columbia	4
Dade	101
Desoto	4
Dixie	3
Duval	32
Escambia	20
Flagler	6
Franklin	2
Gadsden	1
Glades	1
Gilchrist	2
Gulf	3

Exhibit 1 FLVS School Survey Participating Districts	
Hendry	4
Hernando	16
Highlands	7
Hillsborough	66
Holmes	1
Indian River	7
Jackson	6
Lafayette	1
Lake	19
Lee	27
Leon	22
Levy	7
Liberty	1
Madison	6
Manatee	8
Marion	22
Martin	9
Monroe	3
Nassau	4
Okaloosa	17
Okeechobee	2
Orange	68
Osceola	14
Palm Beach	58
Pasco	29
Pinellas	39
Polk	63
Putnam	5
St. Johns	13
St. Lucie	7
Santa Rosa	11
Sarasota	14
Seminole	29
Sumter	2
Suwannee	3
Taylor	4
Union	0
Volusia	47
Walton	3

This report provides an overview of the responses to all of the School Survey questions. Overall, school level personnel are very positive when discussing their ongoing experiences with FLVS.

**Does your school encourage enrollment
in FLVS courses?**



The large majority (88%) of school administrators and guidance counselors indicate that their school encourages enrollment in FLVS courses. FLVS appears to fill many needs for schools including offering a wide array of courses that many schools are not able to provide, helping students who need to make up credit, and allowing for a more flexible learning environment for individuals in extenuating circumstances. Using the self-reported numbers by administrators and guidance personnel, it appears that approximately nine percent of students from the schools represented by this survey data were involved in FLVS courses over the past school year. This percentage is up from last year's data (5%).

When asked to indicate the ways in which students schedule FLVS courses into their curriculum, counselors say that most students take courses either before or after school, at home, for extra credit or to make up a grade. Also, many students take courses at home as part of their regular school schedule. Most likely these students represent the large home school population being served by FLVS.

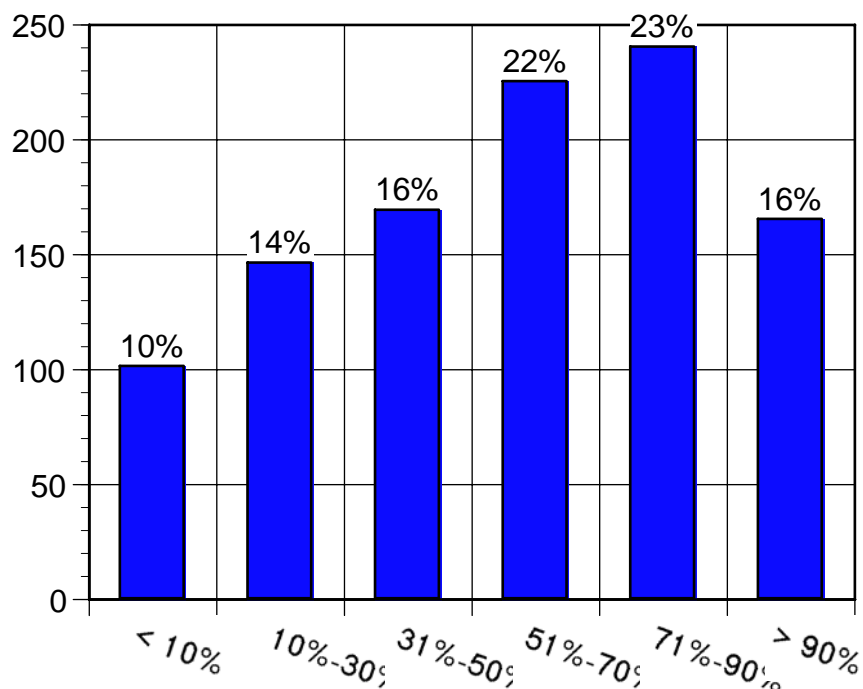
Ways in Which Students Schedule FLVS Courses into their Curriculum

Students take FLVS courses at school as part of their regular school schedule.	243
Students take FLVS courses at home as part of their regular school schedule.	419
Students take FLVS courses before and/or after the school day at school for extra credit or to make up a grade.	256
Students take FLVS courses before and/or after the school day at home for extra credit or to make up a grade.	678
Students do not schedule FLVS courses into their curriculum.	101
Other	95

The comments below indicate the “other” ways in which students schedule FLVS into their curriculum.

- *Students take non-required classes before and/or after the school day at home to earn other credits.*
- *Hospital Homebound, home school*
- *Helps with transfer students either to catch up or continue a course that they were taking in another state.*
- *To double up so they can get accepted in a particular program.*
- *Enrichment; through home school program; take a course needed to get into a high school program*
- *Some students want to graduate early but do not want to use the 18 credit option*
- *Students use FLVS as their home school curriculum*
- *I have a parent who teaches at the virtual school and she wanted her child to take classes during the summer.*
- *Our students use FLVS to keep up when they had extended absences.*
- *Students take FLVS classes such as PF and Health to get these requirements out of the way during summer so they can take electives and other classes they want.*
- *Students take classes not offered to enhance their learning (GPA)& class standing...*
- *Students may take a FLVS course if their schedule will not allow a particular class like Spanish or Algebra I. An 8th grade student may take a few 9th grade courses if they are behind a grade or two.*
- *Expulsion*
- *We also have students repair grades by doing a flvs class at school in a study hall.*

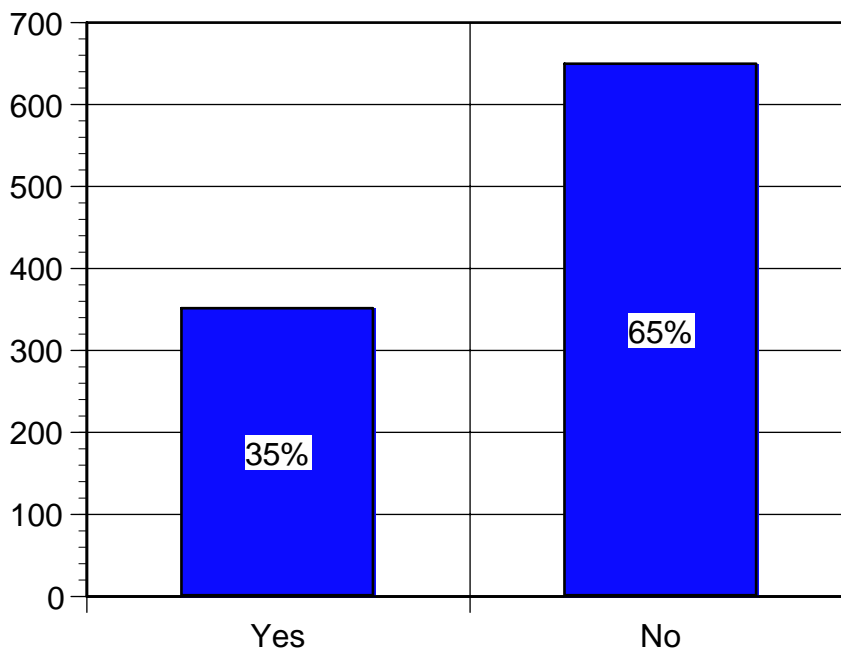
Approximately, what percentage of your school's students is aware of FLVS?



During the 2004-05 school year 46% of school administrators said that fifty percent or more of their student body was aware of FLVS. However, this number has been up over the past three year, with 61% of survey respondents from this year's survey indicating the majority of students possess knowledge of the virtual school option. When asked about the ways in which students learn about FLVS, survey participants indicate that the most common means students learn about FLVS is by their guidance counselors (1002) and the second most frequent source of information is via a friend (747). Dissemination of information about FLVS continues to follow past trends.

How do students in your school learn about FLVS?	
Source of Information	Count
School Guidance Counselor	1002
Friend	747
Curriculum Guide	347
Family Member	343
Home Education Office	195
Internet Search	150
Home School Meeting or Convention	121
Other	112
Community Event or Meeting	63
Newspaper Article	48
High School Newspaper Ad	42
TV News Report of Ad	39
Radio Ad	7

**Do your students take advantage of the
FLVS FCAT Prep course?**

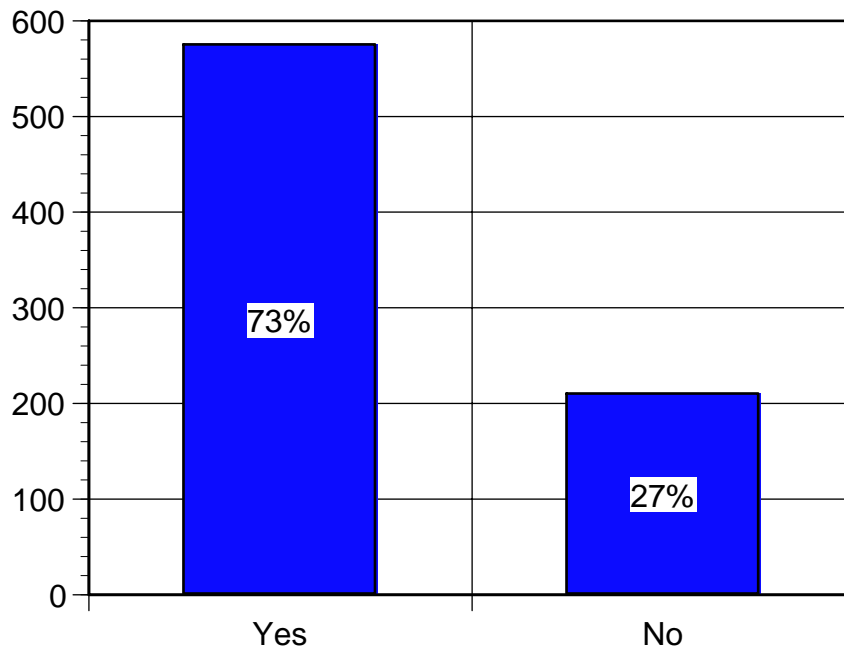


Most individuals (65%) responding to this item say that their students do not take advantage of the FLVS FCAT Prep course. This percent is up from 58% last year. Most individuals responding that their students do not take advantage of this option say it is because their schools provide other FCAT preparation materials/processes. Also, open-ended responses reveal that many of the respondents represent private schools that do not require their students to take the FCAT.

- *Students do not take the FCAT.*
- *We don't use the FCAT*
- *Those classes are built into their schedule at school*
- *Not many take the FCAT prep since we require them to take an Intensive Reading or Math if they fail the test.*
- *We are a Catholic High School and don't offer FCAT*
- *Our students are high school dropouts. We do FCAT reading and math prep lessons in class, and we register them on fcatexplorer.com and encourage the use of it.*
- *Students who have not passed the FCAT are already enrolled in prep courses in school, so few want to take online preparation courses.*
- *We do a lot with FCAT prep here and I think that most of them would rather work on a class for credit.*
- *Only a few students do use the prep class. Our school has really promoted the FCAT Explorer program offered by DOE.*

- *I think because lower scoring students are forced to take intensive courses here, they've just had enough and don't want to see it at home. Others use FCAT Explorer.*
- *The kids are drowning in FCAT resources so there is an aversion to anything FCAT related.*
- *Since we are a private school, we do not take the FCAT.*
- *We tried to. When we enrolled a student into the course, the course was no longer being offered. We would love to have students participant in that course.*
- *I was not aware of that class.*
- *The initial sign in was too confusing and I lost teacher interest very quickly.*
- *Although we let our students know of the opportunity, they are not interested in additional FCAT prep work after completing what is required of them during the school day.*

Are you familiar with the Florida Services/ Guidance Area of the FLVS website?

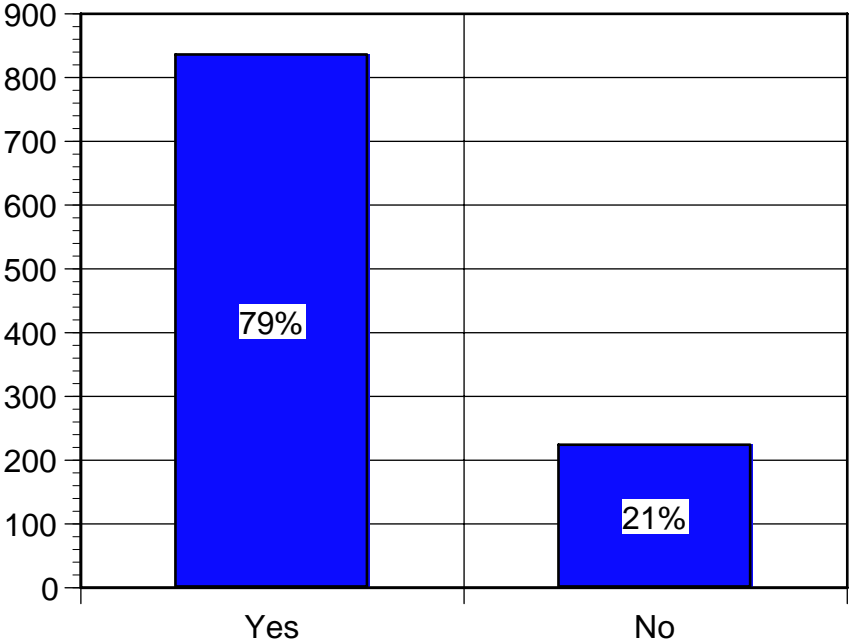


Approximately, $\frac{3}{4}$'s of guidance counselors indicate that they are familiar with FLVS' website, in particular the Florida Services and Guidance Area and some comments provide evidence that these school personnel use the site to monitor students. However, many of those who are aware indicate they do not use it often because they are too busy and have not had time to explore the site.

- *I tried to access. Was unsuccessful. Tried to get help, was unsuccessful at hearing a voice on the phone.*
- *I am checking the site daily. I am and have been having trouble accessing my account.*
- *I have used it to check records.*

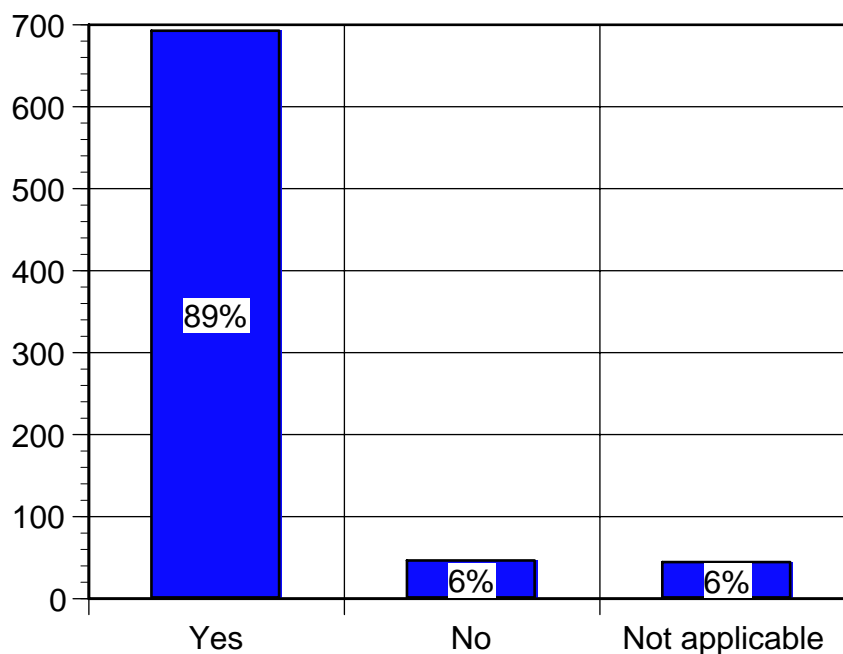
- *I'm new in this position and have honestly only worked with FLVS on a need to basis. I haven't had the time to explore all FLVS has to offer.*
- *Used to monitor progress*
- *As a counselor, there are so may duties and responsibilities, therefore, you have a tendency to focus on information that deal with students, credits and graduation.*
- *I am an academic advisor and teach 6 classes a day. I have not had the opportunity to check this service out.*

Are you familiar with the "Terms of Agreement" between your district and FLVS?



The majority (79%) of administrators and guidance counselors responding to the survey are familiar with the Terms of Agreement between their district and FLVS.

**Does FLVS provide you with the information you need
to monitor the progress of your FLVS students?**

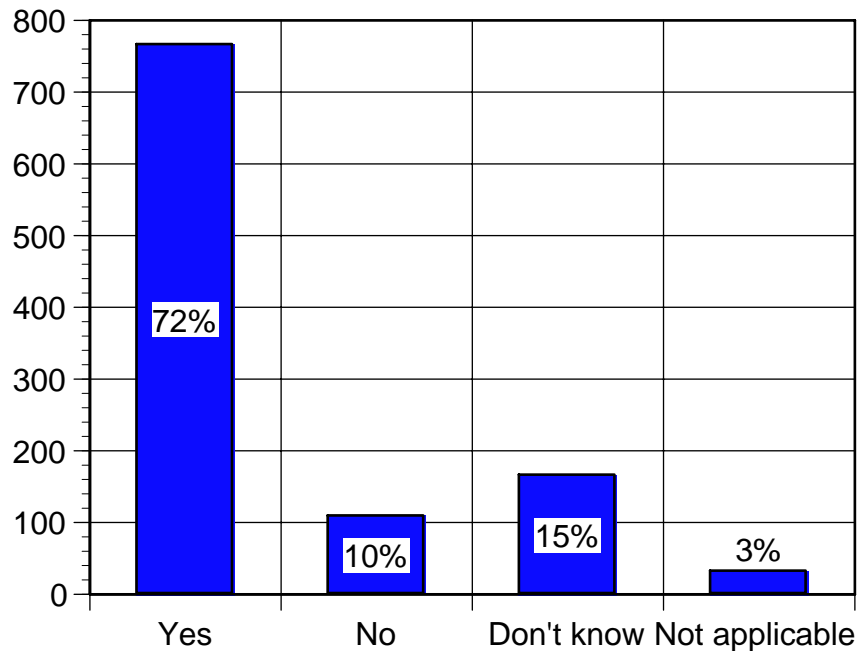


While most guidance counselors agree that FLVS provides them with the information necessary to monitor student progress, many suggestions are provided in the comments section regarding ways in which the process should/could be improved. Several individuals express that the system is not user-friendly, especially the way student information is sent to all the school counselors for all FLVS participants, not just the students for which each counselor is in charge. Also, many counselors express resentment towards FLVS for making more work for them expressing how it is not their job to monitor FLVS students.

- *I have an account that I frequently access. Also, FLVS teachers contact me when there are students that they are concerned about.*
- *Our district has taken the stand that we are not counselors for FLVS and when students takes classes thru FLVS then FLVS deals directly with the student and parent. The same rule applies to Dual Enrollment with the local community college. We are not college counselors.*
- *Basically yes, but the emails coming to all the counselors instead of the specific counselor cause some problems. I have to open them all to see which ones are for me.*
- *I do not have the time to monitor students' FLVS classes.*
- *I find the reports to be filled with extraneous information and very cumbersome to print. All that is needed for progress reports are student names, course titles, percent completed, and grades. . .4 COLUMNS ONLY.*
- *Again, I don't monitor student progress as it is their responsibility to either complete the course or make contact with FLVS teachers.*
- *FLVS support is outstanding! The site is easy to navigate and the information is current!*

- *I have requested reports and been pleased with the response.*
- *I don't have the time to monitor my students progress - that's what FLVS teachers are paid for.*
- *Just send me the final grade.*
- *FLVS will often send me a e-mail stating that I have messages waiting. When I go to the web-site to access these messages, all of the messages for all of the counselors are included. Sometimes there are none that apply to me. This is a great waste of time as I have over 450 students to keep track of. I have expressed my concern about this but it continues to happen.*
- *This is very helpful with my seniors. I can access the information concerning the percentage of course completed. Also, via emails and phone messages, teachers inform me of students failure to make acceptable progress.*
- *Excellent support services on students whenever it is needed. Such help quickly provided by first contact person instead of long menu and voice mail situations which never give immediate need answers. Great program for this reason.*
- *I don't really have the time to monitor every student who signs up and takes a course. I have 400-500 students that I am responsible for as far as their courses here at school. They have a FLVS teacher who gets paid for teaching them; they should monitor their progress!*
- *I find the progress reports are often out of date. I often must take the time to e-mail the instructor to get an accurate progress report.*
- *Yes but not easily. It's cumbersome to find which students are currently enrolled. It would be nice to be able to have a list on our dashboard that we could just select, rather than having to search for the students. Sometimes I forget a student is enrolled in a FLVS class and I forget to check on them.*
- *Am not able to search students who have not listed us as their school. We are an alternative school and students enter our school during the school year when they could already be in the middle of a virtual course, it would be nice to be able to search by name and see if they are currently taking anything even if they havent listed our school as their school of enrollment.*
- *This might be possible and I might be unaware, but I'd like to be able to print a list of enrolled students so I can know who actually began class(es) and how they are progressing without having to look up each one individually.*
- *FLVS does an excellent job in this area.*
- *I have often had to call with questions that I cannot get answered on-line.*
- *Sometimes I have a hard time retrieving information.*
- *It's sometimes difficult to get the help you need. I leave messages and do not receive a return call. I have to be persistent, calling various numbers before I can get in contact with someone.*
- *However...i get more up to date information if I use my student's log-in information rather than logging on as myself I hate the emails that go to everyone instead of a specific counselor; It is not helpful when the student's name is hidden.*
- *We need an easy way to find out how much of the work is completed and yet to be completed for the student...especially just before graduation (May).*

**Do school personnel use FLVS
administrative accounts to monitor
student progress over the web?**

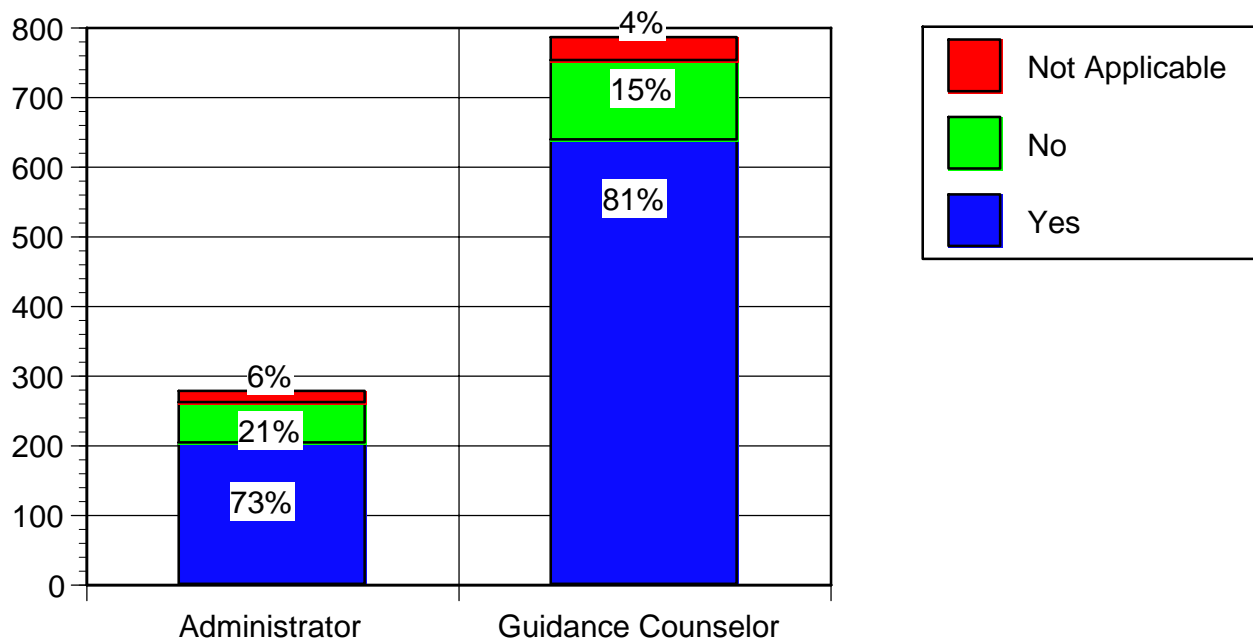


Most school administrators (72%) do use their administrative accounts to monitor student progress over the web and open-ended responses indicate that the majority of individuals use the system frequently and find it easy to use.

- *Several times per week.*
- *Makes a guidance counselor's job MUCH more difficult I frequently check on students' progress and print their final grade reports.*
- *I check periodically to see how my students are progressing.*
- *This is especially helpful with seniors who need a credit for graduation. We can monitor their progress and grades. It is a great tool!!*
- *These adm. accounts are extremely helpful in monitoring our students - especially seniors.*
- *We monitor and track our students monthly to ensure that they are proceeding on time.*
- *It is the student's responsibility to complete the course as it is not part of the normal school day.*
- *I have the parents monitor their students progress. Guidance counselors approve course requests and print out grade reports and warning letters. We also check more frequently on the progress of students who are taking required courses that will affect graduation status.*
- *Each guidance staff member review each student assigned to them.*

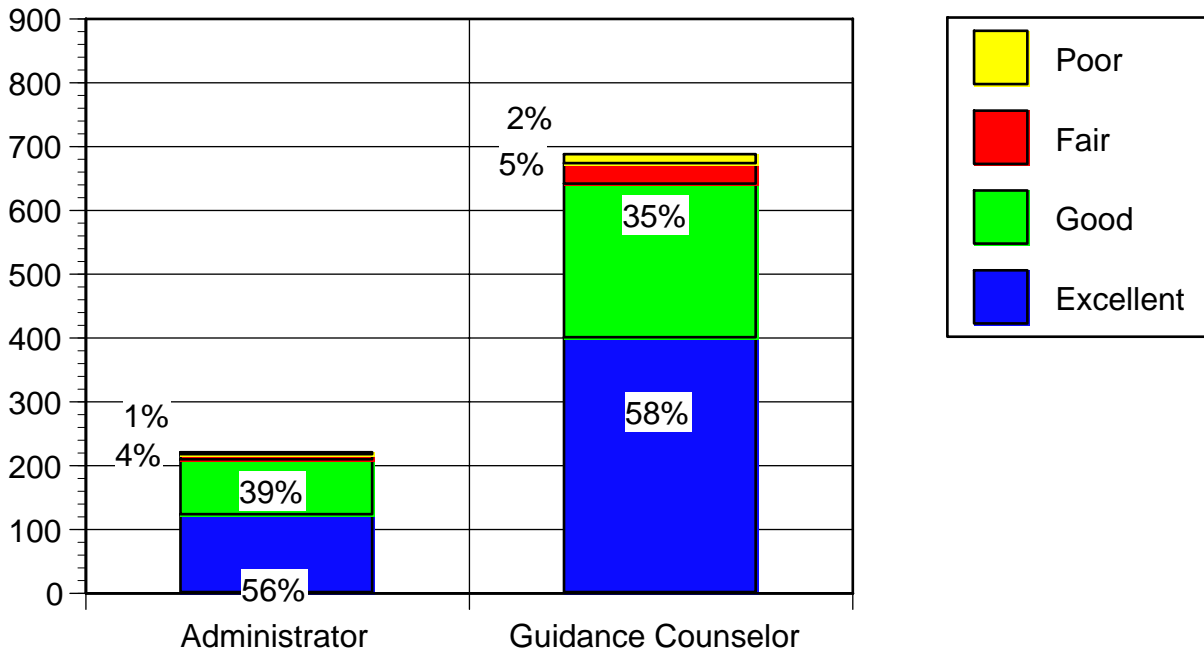
- *An Assistant Principal reviews FLVS every morning*
- *As Guidance Counselor, I check many of the students on a regular basis to see how they are working.*
- *I am the contact here and I didn't know I could do this.*
- *We use our accounts to view the progress our students are making in their courses, and also to print out their transcripts upon completion of the course.*
- *The administrator/ counselor keeps track of what courses are taken and the progress in order to track student progress and work with parents toward student academic goals.*
- *Assistant Principal monitors students progress and communicates with the FLVS teachers, students and parents.*
- *I review the documents section & process grade reports and other letters sent to students but do not monitor their progress. I am assuming that their virtual school counselor, teachers & parents would be involved with the monitoring of course progression.*
- *I use it nearly everyday to check on progress and on the status of students' course requests.*
- *It is difficult to monitor exactly where the students are in their class. The automated progress reports don't give any details. I would love for my user account to have the abilities to check on my students pace along with what assignments they need to do.*
- *I don't always have time to figure out where all of my students should be on their pace chart.*
- *Our administrative account requires monitoring at least once or twice per week.*
- *Following Spring Break, there was an accumulation of 48 Official Documents that needed to be downloaded, distributed, entered, and filed. I would estimate that I spend approximately 40-60 minutes of my time every week to instruct students and parents on the registration procedures, course expectations, monitoring student accounts, and processing official documents. This is staff time for which our school or district receives no compensation.*
- *The Librarian gives a weekly spreadsheet on the progress of each student directly to the Principal.*

Have you or other school personnel been in touch with your primary FLVS contact?



Most guidance counselors (81%) and school administrators (73%) have had some form of communication with their primary FLVS contact during the course of the year. Furthermore, almost all of the survey respondents that had interactions with their primary FLVS contact rate those communications as either “excellent” or “good.” Open-ended comments vary tremendously however, with many validating a high level of service and providing compliments to FLVS while others indicating that FLVS’ response regarding assistance to school personnel could be improved. Also, several individuals appeared unclear on who was their primary FLVS contact.

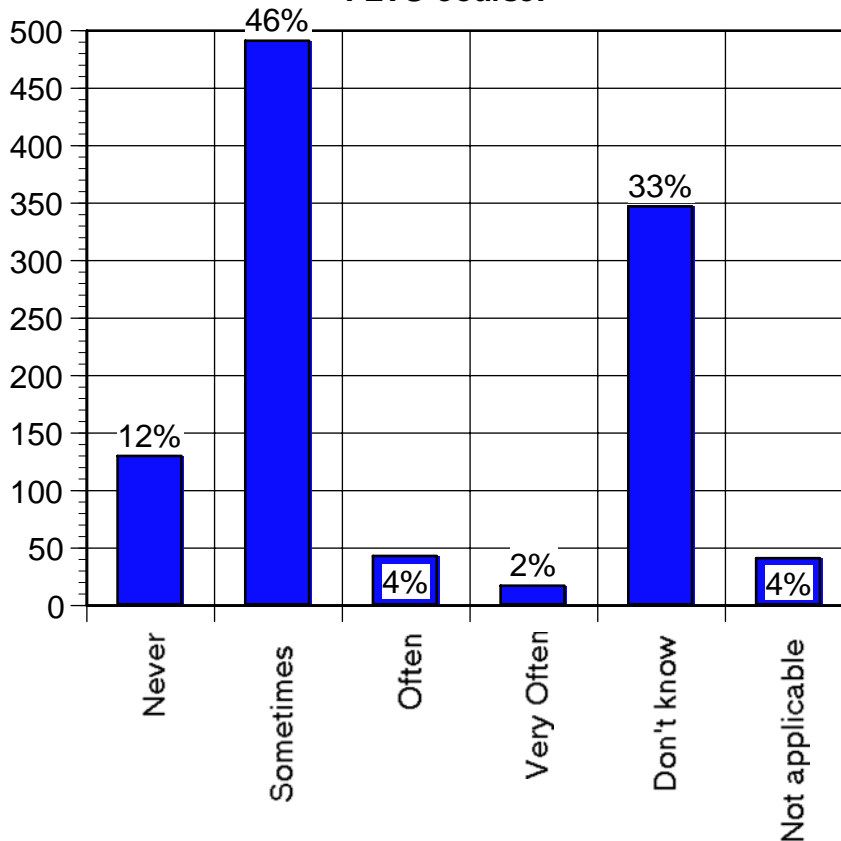
Please rate the level of service you receive from your primary FLVS contact.



- *I am frequently contacted by phone and email. There have also been some face-to-face visits.*
- *Have not had phone calls returned.*
- *We have had more than one on site visit from our contact over the years. Not every year, but sufficient information.*
- *Emails are very helpful.*
- *Contact keeps changing. Latest contact offered excellent service. She got back to me the same day with a question I asked her during a guidance director's meeting.*
- *Always quick to call back if I have to leave a voice mail. Always enthusiastic, positive, and smiling!*
- *Face to Face meeting was helpful. Follow-up was needed, but not provided.*
- *Incredible!!! Brenda Finora is absolutely top notch. She has helped me in so many situations! I honestly do not understand how she answers questions and provides help for unusual situations so quickly. This woman deserves more money....I do not care how much she makes now. I actually have a fear that she will be promoted or moved. I need the kind of service that she provides, since I am a high school counselor with 400 students and many, many other responsibilities aside from FLVS!*
- *Plenty of good information and timely responses to questions*
- *FLVS has provided exemplary services for years!*
- *I regularly have contact with Lowell Moore (I think he's our primary contact). He is AWESOME!! Always responds quickly.*
- *I have not heard from anyone this year. The person I spoke with last year is no longer with FLVS. I don't know who our primary contact is at this point.*

- *Visited school and met with us as a group and provided feedback when we needed the answer to a question.*
- *Have not had a face to face meeting in 2 years. I believe one is planned for the end of the year.*
- *I don't even know who that is-- I receive emails-- is that my primary contact?*
- *I can never get in touch with a FLVS counselor. When I call the help desk, they usually try to answer the question. However, it would be nice to have better contact with the FLVS counselors.*
- *Every call I have placed for assistance has been handled immediately. Staff are polite, friendly and professional. Sometimes, they can be difficult to reach.*
- *Our experience with teacher has been good. Our experience with those answering general questions regarding registration, re-registration, etc. has been poor. Often times the person we speak with gives very little information and is generally unhelpful. Other time, we may call three times for clarification, get three different people, and get three different answers. I would rate your customer service as poor.*

Please rate the frequency of technical problems experienced by students in their FLVS course.



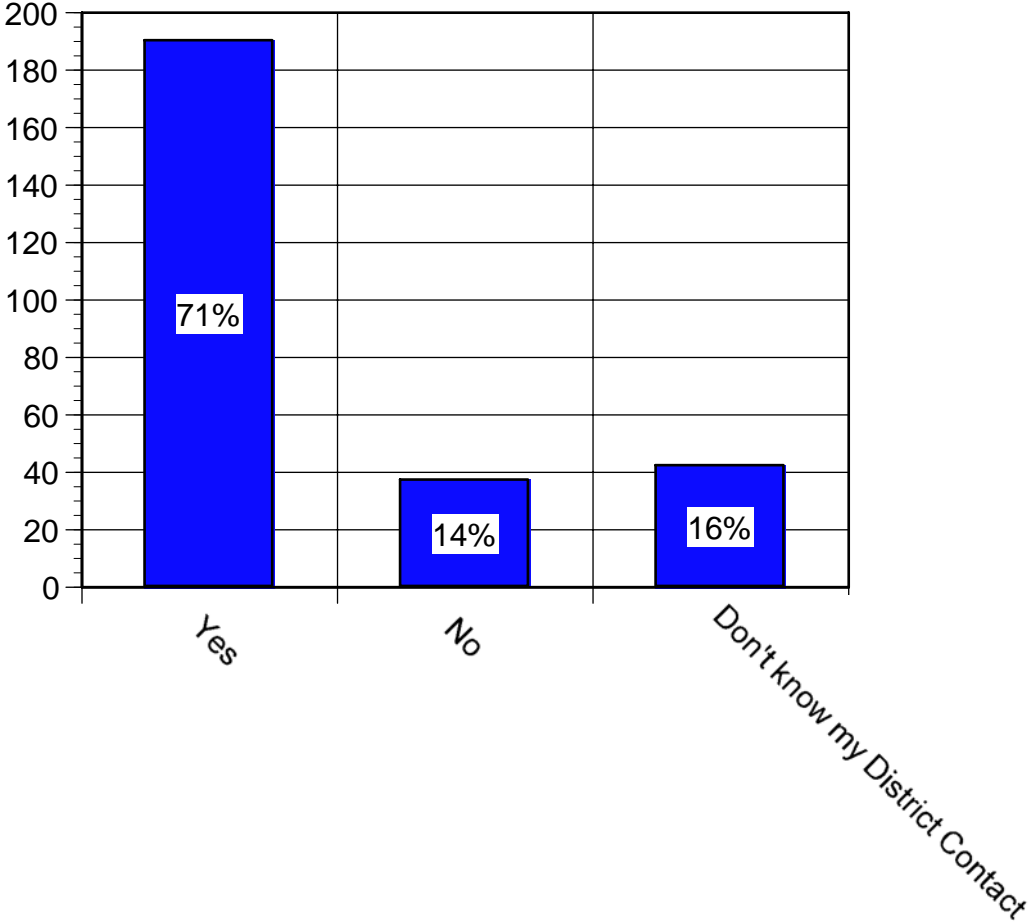
Forty-six percent (46%) of school administrators responding indicate that their students “sometimes” have technical problems interfering with their online course. However, most of these issues are related to the user’s end, like slow/faulty internet connections and/or computers. The other issue seen repeatedly was about the registration process and how many students and parents are confused by the procedure.

- *Our students are in a lab situation. If we are having server problems, then it interferes with their work.*
- *Usually it's because the student is unfamiliar with what they need to do, it's not on the Florida virtual end of it.*
- *Most technical problems seem to be problems with the students' computer service/provider.*
- *I have heard no complaints.*
- *I've had parents call that they cannot submit work; they think it was submitted but the teacher did not receive.*
- *Students very often register for Hillsborough VS instead of FLVS, and it takes time to clear that up. I have talked with Brenda Finora and James Pirotta about this issue. We all hope this is something that can be corrected. Registering is very complicated for the students. It shouldn't be.*
- *We had a handful of kids who were not able to get through the registration process, but eventually the problem corrected itself.*
- *Issues with receiving response from teachers on whether they got into a class or how long the wait is.*
- *Many of our students are not as computer literate as they should be, because of lack of exposure to the technology, so they tend to run into problems.*
- *Most of the problems are computer problems at home, not technical problems with FLVS.*
- *Minor things like internet access freezing and then they would have to restart it.*
- *There is a concern with students not being able to register on FLVS as Polk Virtual seems to be the one viewed first. This does cause a registration problem. Could this be changed making it more user friendly?*
- *Generally the "technical problems" come about because of the way the web site is set up to automatically direct our students into Okaloosa Online (a franchise).*
- *Kids become frustrated at the length of time and complexity of the registration process.*
- *I have not heard of any trouble interfering with their work but they get very anxious with the delay between signing up and getting started.*
- *Only a few mention having trouble, but corrections are handled efficiently.*
- *Most problems we have encountered have been easily corrected; usually, the student or parent simply needs explanation.*
- *I have not seen students have technical problems once the course is begun. Students and parents often have difficulty with properly completing the registration process. The most frequent problem is clicking on the course title rather than "Select" when completing their course request. This results in the student thinking they have completed the course request when they have not. All of our counselors also receive frequent contacts from parents when students are in limbo waiting for a teacher to be*

assigned. We waste a lot of our staff time reassuring parents that a teacher is usually assigned withing several weeks time. Perhaps some automated message from FLVS would help save us a few phone calls and e-mails; something like, "A teacher is not yet available but you will be notified as soon as we are able to assign a teacher for your course. If you have been on our waiting list for longer than three weeks, please call..."

- It has improved greatly over the past.
- The only technical problems that I have heard from students is their not knowing HOW to "sign up" for courses. I have directed them to the "demo" video several times though.

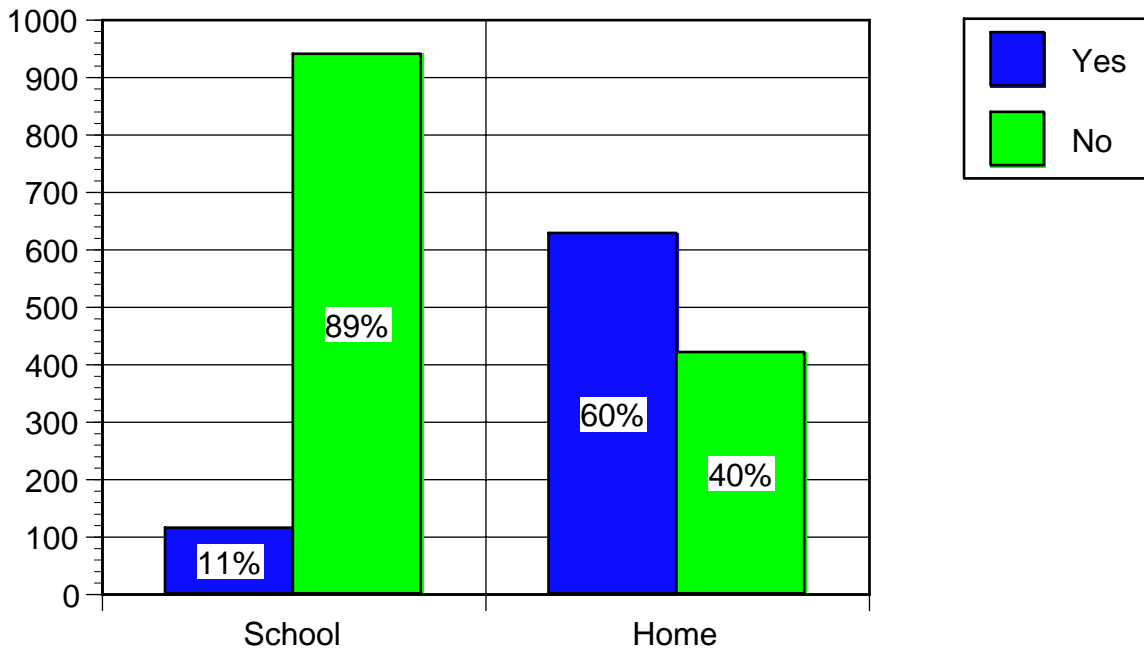
Do you receive information from the FLVS District Contact person in your district?



Most school administrators (71%) receive information about FLVS from their FLVS district contact. However, several others report that their schools are not part of the public school district and therefore do not have a FLVS district contact.

- *We are a private school and have no global oversight person.*
- *Via e-mail*
- *The information is relayed through our Student Services Department Chair.*
- *I speak with a contact at the State office but not one locally.*
- *I am the district contact person. I distribute e-mails from FLVS, flyers and any other materials/information available - to principals and counselors in our district.*
- *The Miami-Dade School District Student Services personnel make periodic contact with counselors.*
- *We are a private school; to my knowledge we have not been contacted by anyone from Citrus Virtual School--except through an alert regarding security/cookies, etc.*
- *We are a PRIVATE school and not a part of the Duval County School Board system of schools. We have not received any direct contact from the District FLVS contact person.*

Has lack of school or home technology been a barrier for some students in accessing FLVS courses?



Eighty-nine percent of school personnel think their schools are adequately equipped for students to access their FLVS courses. However, the response is quite different when asking about home access and whether or not lack of computers/connectivity gets in the way of students' use of FLVS. Sixty percent of school administrators/guidance counselors believe that lack of home technology does keep some students from using the online option. In particular, students in rural area and from low income homes tend to struggle with having the necessary technology to access

FLVS. In some of these cases, the school helps out by providing technology access at the school site or by providing laptop computers, however there are other situations in which students are not provided school-based access and therefore are not able to take online courses. While use of community libraries is oftentimes cited as a means for getting around this equity issue, feedback on this survey indicates that the library option is oftentimes not viable due to transportation issues. This disparity between low income and/or rural students and individuals from more affluent and/or urban/suburban homes continues to be an issue that should be addressed by FLVS and/or the state of Florida.

Comments related to lack of school technology:

- *Students usually do not use the school's technology. Occasionally, we may have a student who will use the internet at lunch to do some assignments.*
- *Any student has access to the Internet and computers in the classroom and the Media Center.*
- *The public library system has computers that can be accessed. Also, if a student does not have a computer, someone in the family has one that can be used for the program.*
- *Yes but they have access to computers on campus.....*
- *Students do not access FLVS from school.*
- *We have 2 complete computer labs at which they can do FLVS work.*
- *We have a laptop for almost every child at the school.*
- *Because we do not receive FTE for students taking FLVS we do not encourage them to complete the work here at school.*
- *Not all of our students have access to a computer at home and are unable to take advantage of flvs.net.*
- *There is only a limited number of computers available to students and only at certain times.*
- *Most of our students have access at home.*
- *I have not been made aware of any student who is unable to access FLVS due to a lack of access.*
- *N/A If a student has a problem with home computers I refer them to the County Library. They have plenty of computers for Home School students.*
- *We don't use school technology. Students do this entirely at home.*
- *Some students do not have access to internet has prohibited some of our students from taking FLVS courses.*
- *We simply don't have enough computers that are up to date to allow more of our students to take advantage of it.*
- *Some students do not have access to the internet at home. They can access FLVS at the community library but sometimes transportation is difficult.*
- *The economic level of our students hinders the computer to be available for many of our students. Even transportation to a library to do the work is difficult for many of our students.*
- *If students do not have home access to the internet, we encourage them to use our school computers or use the public library.*
- *Our internet connection this year has not been reliable enough for students to access FLVS from the classroom.*

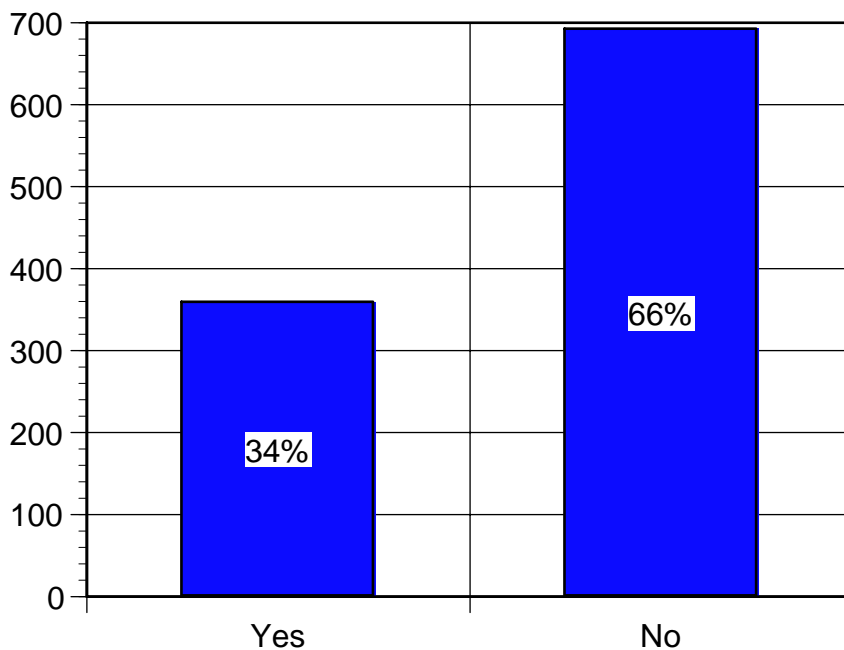
- *We have school computers. The public library system is available. We recycle used computers to give to students who have not got one.*
- *Some students experience difficulty because they do not have adequate computer access at home.*
- *The media center has made provisions for students to use the computers during their lunch period or after school.*
- *More computers would allow students who do not have computers at home the opportunity to be able to use this resource.*
- *Low income students do not have computer and have to go to the library. Florida has poor public transportation so this is difficult for them.*

Comments related to lack of home technology:

- *This is a very rural town with many residents living at or below the poverty line. Consequently, computers do not exist in some homes.*
- *This is a huge problem.*
- *Possibly, but those students usually don't sign up for classes.*
- *I think most of our students have computers at home.*
- *Not all of our students have DSL or the capability of doing the work at home.*
- *Obviously, in our poor community, many students do not have computers at home. We live in a low income area where there are still a few families that do not have computers.*
- *One student had difficulty because his home computer was broken for some time. Many students and parents explain that their home computers/hardware are malfunctioning. This is used as an explanation for lack of progress at regularly scheduled portfolio meetings.*
- *Students equipment breaks down and the students don't have the economic ability to replace the equipment.*
- *Most of our students cannot afford a computer at home.*
- *I have students without computers at home. When I have mentioned going to the library, they don't have reliable, consistent transportation to get there.*
- *Many of our students do not have internet access at home. They have babies, so child care issues arise if they choose to use the computers at the public library.*
- *We would provide computers to families if necessary.*
- *I have had students say that the process is difficult if they don't have "high speed" internet access.*
- *On several occasions I have had students fall behind pace due to a computer "crash" or if their printer is down.*
- *Students know in advance that they must have access to a computer to participate in any online class.*
- *Some of our parents can afford to pay the monthly internet bill and has transportation problem getting their child to the County Library.*
- *The students must have internet access at home and some students do not have this available to them.*
- *West Putnam County is VERY poor. Interlachen HS has a free/reduced lunch population at approx. 78%. Many students have no computer. If they do, usually dial-up...*

- *We have a significant low income population who can not afford internet service at home. Many times their home phones have been disconnected as well. We do ditribute free computers to many students here.*
- *With our location close to the Ocala National Forest, many of our students do not have access to broad band internet service and experience frequent interuptions in dial up service. Also, we are in a low socio-economic area and the parents often cannot afford either a computer or internet service.*
- *Sometimes parents have allowed internet service to lapse or may live in a rural area with no high speed access.*
- *Most of the students who would benefit from FLVS come from homes with no computer and/or no high-speed internet.*
- *Only very occasionally-then we allow the student to do the work during a study hall at school.*
- *A small perecentage of our students do not have computer access at home, therefore we encourage all students to utilize our labs as needed.*
- *We have a poor community- some parents can not afford a computer at home - kids can go to the public library, but they can only work a limited time before they get knocked out.*

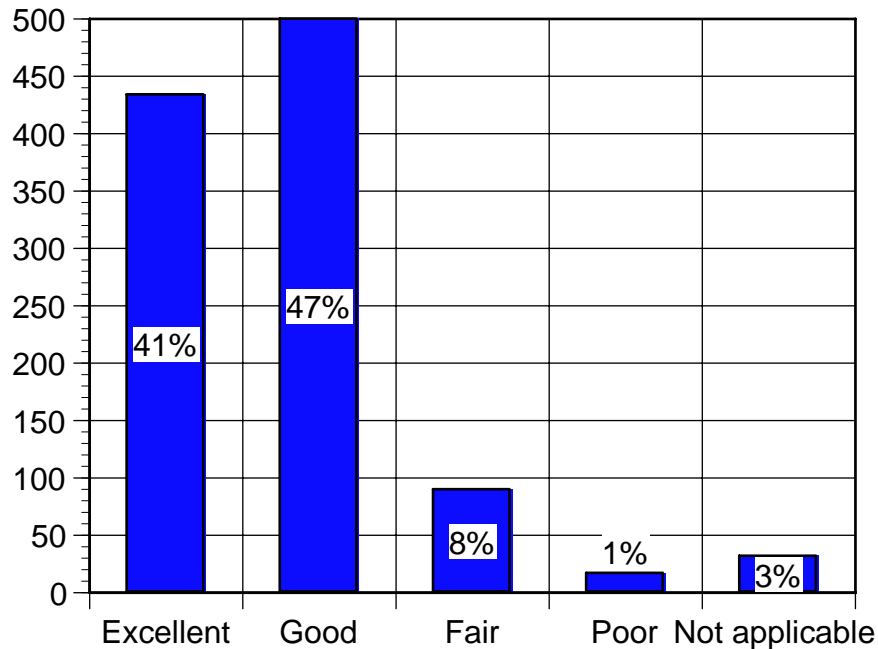
Does your school place any specific limitations on students regarding access to FLVS?



Sixty-six percent (66%) of guidance counselors state that their schools do not place limits on students regarding FLVS enrollment. The remaining 34% list several ways in which their school incorporates restrictions, but the most frequently cited limitations include:

1. Allowing students to enroll in only one or two classes per semester.
2. Allowing students to take only courses which are not offered at their home school.
3. Allowing students to enroll in FLVS only if the prerequisite skills have been met.
4. Ensuring that students understand the rigor of FLVS courses.
5. Allowing only students with good grades to participate in FLVS.
 - *Counselors will not approve high school classes for middle school students unless they meet appropriate readiness requirements*
 - *Students, during the school day, can only take courses through FLVS that our school does not offer.*
 - *They can take whatever they want on FLVS.*
 - *Guidance will only approve 2 or 3 courses per student, per session, maximum.*
 - *We try to get them to use common sense in taking a load that is manageable.*
 - *They cannot take the same courses that are offered here unless they are re-taking them or taking them in as a pre-requisite for another course.*
 - *A student can not earn more than 8 credits a year.*
 - *We look at prerequisite courses. Completing level one of a course before doing level 2.*
 - *Cannot take courses that are offered here at school if they are enrolled here.*
 - *Only that they do not take courses to get ahead in credits, unless approved.*
 - *We prefer that students take one credit at a time because taking much more than that can interfere with school work, but students can take more credits if they can handle the work.*
 - *We use it primarily for grade recovery and schedule conflicts.*
 - *After a semester begins, we will not let students drop a course with us, to pick it up at FLVS. Just as we do not change schedules after a semester begins.*
 - *We have been told that we cannot deny students access.*
 - *it is a case by case basis. We look at the whole student and see what would be best for them (and use parent input, sometimes teacher input).*
 - *We prefer for them to not take more than 2 at a time.*
 - *3.0 gpa to complete in school as part of schedule lined to specific classes.*
 - *Students with low or failing grades are encourage not to take additional courses for advancement.*
 - *For seniors, no courses may be begun at the end of the first semester due to grad requirements and time constraints.*
 - *We do try to make sure students meet the prerequisites for the FLVS courses.*
 - *They have to be able to work independently.*
 - *Must have strong gpa and teacher recommendation.*
 - *They need to have completed prerequisites in order to register for certain courses.*

Please rate the quality of your school's experience with FLVS.

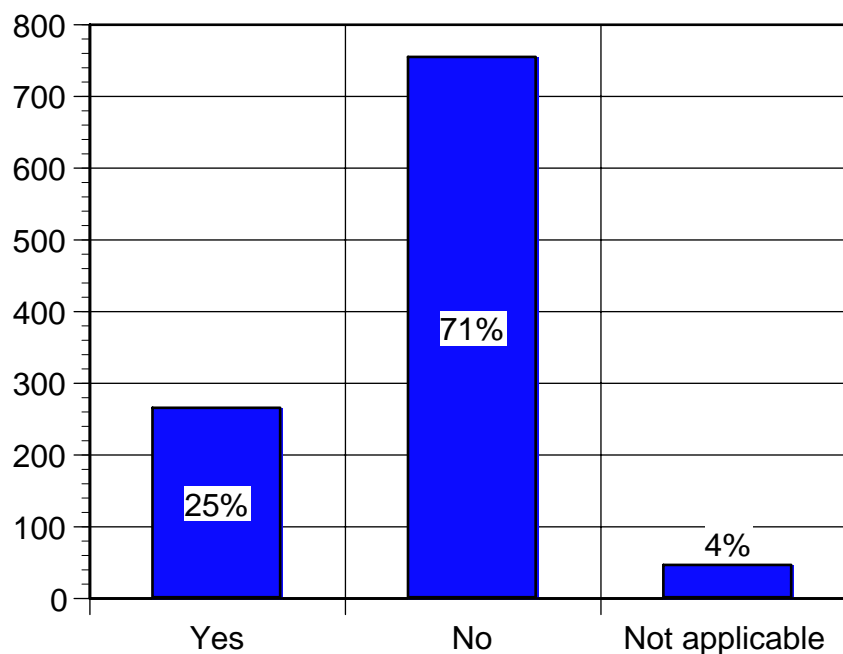


Quality ratings from school personnel continue to stay high, with 88% of administrators and guidance counselors reporting the quality of their FLVS experience as either “good” or “excellent.” However, many of the comments provided are from the nine percent of respondents whose FLVS experience was not stellar. Their feedback varies tremendously, though several individuals do mention dissatisfaction with the long wait times.

- *The intent of FLVS was good when we first got involved however it has become a burdensome machine to manage. I realize the benefits to students but it has become another time consuming element to counselors.*
- *The wait time is too long.*
- *We have had a quality working relationship and feel the FLVS is a viable and productive option for selected students who can manage the discipline.*
- *Availability of courses is a problem. Sometimes there is a long wait for a student to begin course work.*
- *If students are counting on the course to make-up credit or prepare for a course for the following school year, and they are not able to get into the course it causes that school problems.*
- *One parent told me today that the FLVS teacher for her daughter was only available from 10am-4pm -- how does that help a student access services after school? Again, I am troubled with the enrollment process so confusing to the students and parents.*
- *Wonderful resource, however, some students cannot be trusted to enroll in online courses (academic integrity).*

- *We get TOO many messages - I don't care about someone's ski trip. I think I have to do too much work for FLVS and read too many messages. Just get me the grade and credit information.*
- *Teachers of the virtual classes allow unlimited time and students report that the courses are much easier than taking them as school. Also, students take a virtual course, such as English 3, then come back and take English 4 here and struggle. I do not believe they are receiving a quality education through virtual courses.*
- *Availability of courses has sometimes been an issue.*
- *Cannot speak directly at the 800 number. Difficulty accessing teachers with student problems. Student not receiving timely contact.*
- *All personnel are helpful and pleasant. I have had numerous contacts initiated by teachers or counselors expressing concerns about my students. I'm thankful for the help.*
- *Honestly, I feel FLVS has become a new part-time job but we were not given any directions on how to approach it. Just trying to come up with a set of directions for parents to follow in order to register for a class has been a burden. Parents think if they bring in the signed form the process is done and they think if they create a guardian account it's done (not checking the box for guardian approval).*
- *The quality was excellent last year, but has deteriorated this year, due to understaffing on FLVS' part.*
- *Whenever I had technical difficulties or needed the answer to a question, I always received a call.*
- *I've had students using FLVS almost since its inception and have always been very pleased with my experiences.*
- *I am tired of being badgered about accessing my account at what you feel is the appropriate level. I am a counselor for my school, not for FLVS. I have added accessing FLVS to my list of the MANY things I do. I have a very bad taste in my mouth for FLVS at the moment. If it were not for the positive feedback that I get from students, I wouldn't be promoting it at all.*
- *Wait time for students to be accepted into classes is excessive.*
- *FLVS was an excellent school to recommend to parents of students. It has recently become a fair to poor school. Students now have to wait months to start classes. They are getting little to no support from guidance in getting into classes. The only thing keeping FLVS in the FAIR rating is the wonderful teachers at FLVS once students finally make it into classes.*
- *One student you say was enrolled was assigned classes over a year past where she is. For example, 9th grade courses when she had not even had 8th grade. You wanted my approval and I could find NO way of contacting you. Went to the link and it said it was not available. Tried to email but there was only noreply address given. I tried repeatedly to respond to your request to no avail, finally giving up after the 4th attempt.*
- *The only reason it is not excellent is due to FLVS not offering all the courses we need for our students.*
- *FLVS is a wonderful option for our students. It is a quality program.*

Have you had any concerns about FLVS courses?



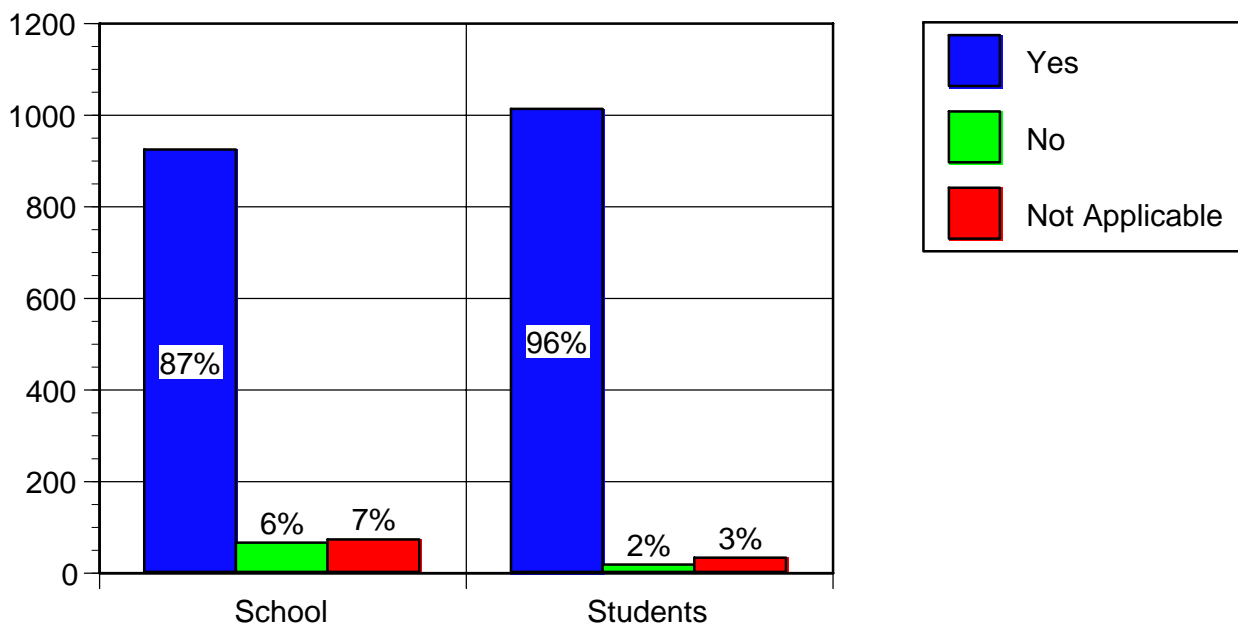
Most respondents (71%) did not have concerns about FLVS courses, but for those who did, three concerns seemed to occur consistently throughout the comments. These included counselors' concerns over students cheating their way through their courses, the long wait time between registration and course initiation, and the additional work required of school-based counselors to serve FLVS students.

- *Cheating. I think some students get coursework from others who have completed a course and then use it when they take the course at a later date.*
- *The lag time between registration and implementation has been of concern. Sometimes I wonder about the difficulty of the courses, some of our foreign language teachers have said that students who take a language online are not as well prepared to continue in a course at school.*
- *Some Ivy league colleges won't take on line courses. FLVS needs to promote self. We question how students can do so well on FLVS and not produce the same in our school. One student passed Spanish II with FLVS, while he was enrolled in Spanish I at school. This was a senior who needed both, but I wondered how difficult Spanish II could be when he did not have the background. Also, how can you teach Physical Education? Or Driver Education. Our Dr. Ed. is driving experience, not just helping to get a Driver license.*
- *How is it verified that the student enrolled is doing the work?*
- *I periodically receive messages from teachers that they want me to follow up with students. I do not do this as that is not part of my job responsibility. IF FLVS would like to pay me a stipend to help them with their success rate then I'd be happy to. The wait*

time is often too long and since the classes are meant to take time to complete, this often eliminates FLVS as a viable option for students during senior year.

- *I work with ESE students and the rigor of FLVS courses is often too difficult/fast for them.*
- *I worry about other students doing the work for the enrolled student. I have heard students say they can "buy credits". I assume they mean paying someone else to sign on and do the work, but I don't have evidence of this...only comments I have heard from students.*
- *Occasionally I'll have a student who finishes a tremendous amount of work in a very short time. It doesn't seem right to me.*
- *I find it interesting you can offer a physical education credits on line. That's outrageous.*
- *Many Guidance Counselors are not comfortable with your method of registering for an honors level class. If a student wants honors, we have to approve standard level. Then later the student indicates he/she wants honors. There are situations where we do not recommend standard but do recommend the honors level. However, we are forced to approve the standard level. Why not just list the courses separately... World History being one class and World History Honors being another class?*
- *A few FLVS teachers want us to do too much follow up with students here. Much of that should be handled by the FLVS counselors. I cannot contact every student who gets a warning letter....do you mail them to the parents? We had six counselors; we are going to have four next year. There is only so much one person can do.*
- *Many students are cheating on these courses even some are paying others to complete the entire course for them.*
- *Sometimes the teachers do not understand the timelines we are working under considering seniors trying to graduate with necessary credits.*
- *The waiting time (4-6 weeks) is the most common concern expressed by students/parents.*
- *Virtual school is NOT for everybody, but it is marketed that way. The poor students who are making up credits are expected to be motivated to sit at home at a computer and teach themselves. That is unrealistic.*
- *Our students normally have IEPs. As a result, there are accommodations specifically with time and required follow up. While some teachers have been able to assist our students, others have not. Simple things like extended time to work on certain projects, etc. can mean a great deal to a student with dyslexia who is trying to get thru the material but just needs an extra few weeks.*
- *I don't believe that in most cases online courses are as good as face to face courses. I believe that FLVS does as good a job as anyone, but I don't think you can replace the personal interaction and face to face discussions that go on in classrooms. I believe that online classes also contribute to the isolation that plagues many of our students.*
- *I have three students who have been waiting for Spanish I for over three months.*

Does FLVS benefit your school/ students?



Survey participants are very pleased with FLVS and believe that the online learning environment provides an array of benefits to schools and students. Eighty-seven percent of guidance counselors say FLVS benefits their schools and almost all (96%) indicate the virtual school option helps students.

- *Excellent way for student to do forgiveness on courses.*
- *Students could not earn foreign language credit without FLVS.*
- *Gets students caught up for graduation.*
- *It helps us to move kids to another grade level and it helps us to give parents another option for their children.*
- *The online courses are very important for our curriculum.*
- *We are unable to offer certain courses like foreign language and other elective courses.*
- *Having the FLVS and their options along with Dual Enrollment options with FCCJ , we are able to have a variety of avenues for our students to follow.*
- *Student are able to complete course work any time - day or night- still work or participate in sports.*
- *Increase graduation rate for the school.*
- *Our students take AP courses which boosts the number of tests we give.*
- *It has benefited some of our high achieving students who have taken high school level math courses beyond Algebra 1.*
- *FLVS is our most important means for credit recovery and taking courses we do not offer.*
- *7 students who would have been retained last summer were promoted based on finishing their FLVS 1/2 semester course. The teachers worked and worked with these students to accomplish this task.*
- *Lowered our retention rate with students making up courses.*

- *It has come in very useful for personal fitness at several of our sites that do not offer PE in our facilities.*
- *This is a benefit to students especially in our small school with limited staff and class offerings for electives.*

What are the major issues or challenges associated with FLVS?

Several issues reoccur when reviewing school-based personnel's response to this survey item, these include:

- √ Students having a difficult time differentiating between their franchise district virtual school and FLVS when registering for a course. Many students sign up under the wrong virtual school.
- √ The level of work is too advanced for some students, especially those who could best benefit from wider educational options.
- √ Students need to be self starters to be successful in this venue.
- √ The long wait time between the time a student enrolls and when he/she actually begins the course.
- √ Difficulty accessing the courses for less fortunate students who do not have updated technology at home.

Below is a subset of school counselor and administrator comments revealing these concerns.

- *Assessibility for those who need it most*
- *Lack of technology access in student homes (>51%FRL); reading level of materials too high for ESE and at-risk students with reading difficulties.*
- *The wait time for class assignment of teachers. Parents are very impatient about this aspect.*
- *Our district's virtual classes are on the same website as FLVS. Often students are confused about whether to sign up for Hillsborough Virtual or Florida Virtual, there should be 2 different sites.*
- *Students need to be capable of success and aware of expectations.*
- *Students need to be organized and a self starter to move through the program in a timely manner.*
- *The uncertainty that exists about whether a student will or will not get scheduled in an FLVS class in a timely manner.*
- *More teachers needed in this program so more students can participate - I hear the core-curriculum courses are often filled quickly.*
- *More teachers needed for faster registration and full classes.*
- *It creates a lot of work for the counselors who have to go to a seperate website to check their students' status and then when you get to the official documents sections you have to weed out all of the useless no contact notifications to get to the grade. We also have a hard time explaining to kids that just because the course is on-line, doesn't mean that it is any less difficult. Students feel they can do it when they can't.*

- *FLVS teachers are constantly calling us asking for our help when they are getting paid more than we do to teach the students. FLVS has placed even more demand on school counselors.*
- *Often, students needing this service are not the type who possess the maturity to work as independently as needed to be successful.*
- *The only problem I can think of is that parents often confuse FLVS with PVS and sign up through the wrong virtual school. FLVS needs to take responsibility for student's progress just as we do for student's at the physical schools.*
- *The amount of time counselors spend monitoring, approving, urging, threatening, encouraging.....*
- *Students think it will be easier and for many of our students it is more difficult for them to be successful in an online course because of the level of commitment that it demands.*
- *FLVS expects the guidance counselors to do too much work. Many times I get messages about students who aren't even in our school. It takes too much time to correct FLVS mistakes.*
- *The problem we have is that Polk COUNTY students are automatically sent to the Polk Virtual School and even though we have told the students to scroll past the PVS courses - many still register with the PVS rather than with FLVS.*
- *Grades and credits need to be transferred to our TERMS system automatically. Also, as mentioned above... cheating is a major concern. The pe online is especially a joke between most students. They all say that they don't do what the course asks of them, they make it all up.*
- *Student integrity/honor code. Burden on counselors.*
- *Sometimes students don't hear from FLVS for several weeks after they have registered.*
- *Many parents do not understand the program.*
- *Students not having internet access at home.*
- *We are a poor community. For the less fortunate students,,, maybe lack of internet access.(affordability)*

Recommendations for how FLVS may serve your school better:

- *Provide the means for the student who can't afford a computer to buy, rent or borrow one to complete courses. When schools discard old systems possibly FLVS could provide these computers for those that need them most.*
- *Perhaps, we can have a representative come out to the school on Open House night to inform parents about the program that FLVS offers.*
- *It would be nice if they could give AP exams to their students. Sometimes we don't teach those classes and it becomes our responsibility to order and administer the tests. One more thing to do!!*
- *Overall, we are pleased with the program and what it offers.*
- *Possibly a faster assigning of a class/teacher when the courses are approved by a counselor.*
- *Make the website more user friendly. I need an easy, fast way to see who is enrolled in what...I need lists, not just individual names. I would like to have some specific statistics and information to share with students about each course i.e. what is the average amount*

of time required to complete this course? what is the average grade earned in this course?

- *Have a way we as counselors can change them from Hills to FL or vice versa when they register incorrectly, or change the process to make it more clear for them.*
- *Have an assembly for students where FLVS representative speaks directly to students interested in FLVS.*
- *If you need school based counselors to help make your program a success then you need to provide some monetary incentive.*
- *Thank you for the wonderful service and education that you afforded for our students. The instructors are commendable for their availability and constant encouragement of the students.*
- *If there was enough money..... hire more instructors for additional course sections.*
- *It would be nice if we could be made aware of the length of waiting lists for classes and approximate wait times. It is very difficult to plan for a student to take one of your courses because there is no way to know if and/or when the student will get in.*
- *Please send us information that only pertains to our students. It is very difficult to juggle all of the responsibilities we have in addition to the FLVS courses.*
- *I would like to see families notified periodically the status of their application request. The wait period is rather lengthy right now for teacher assignment; and I think if families were notified their application is still being processed it would help.*
- *PVS needs to be on a different path, determined initially. I have spent time contacting FLVS, and they do change it speedily, but I would like this glitch fixed. I should not have to spend my time doing this.*
- *Excellent program None.*
- *FLVS is great for our students because we can't offer a lot of higher level courses. Advanced students love it.*
- *I wish that FLVS would issue diplomas.*
- *FLVS needs to take more responsibility with keeping track of students and not expecting the school to continually be in charge of final transcripts. Also parents and students can not get in contact with FLVS by the published phone number.*
- *School should be sent an email when a students actually gets into a class. We don't have time to look this up daily.*
- *FLVS should give a list to the schools of who needs to take the AP exams instead of expecting students to one by one come in and let our testing person know their status.*
- *My biggest problem with FLVS is the amount of responsibility you expect the public school to take in administering your classes. You folks get the FTE but school counselors do a lot of your tracking and leg work. The summer is a nightmare when we have a skeleton crew. Our first responsibility every day we are on campus and it is not everyday in the summer is to approve students FLVS course requests.*
- *Coming up with a direct email alert when students have been placed or when there is a problem.*
- *Is there literature (hard copy) that can be used to give out to students/parents?*
- *Limit the number of times you allow students to sign up for a course. Some students sign up time after time for a class like Spanish and never finish.*
- *Would it be possible to put the registration "schedule" on your welcome page?*

Conclusion

The 2007-2008 Florida Virtual School – School Survey provides ample evidence that schools throughout the state are better able to meet the needs of their students as a result of their partnership with FLVS. The expanded course curriculum and flexibility provided by FLVS is a definite added benefit to schools and their students. Concerns cited are similar to the past couple of years with things such as long wait times between registration and initiation of course and added responsibilities for school-based guidance counselors being cited most often. Also, there seems to be confusion for students during the registration period when they have an option to choose their district’s virtual school or FLVS. School-based personnel requested that this system be improved in order to minimize confusion, incorrect enrollments, and thus added work on school guidance counselors. Overall, however, school-based administrators and guidance counselors appear to be grateful for the services provided by FLVS.