

GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY

SOLUTIONS FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Major Funding Change for Florida Virtual School

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Building upon a tradition of national trendsetting for online education, the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) announced a major change in the way it is funded by the state legislature. Under the new law, FLVS will now be included in the statewide funding formula for K-12 Education, the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), instead of relying on a line-item appropriation in the state's annual budget.

"This is a groundbreaking step for online education," said Julie Young, executive director, FLVS. "Not only does it provide a viable way to fund online learning (or distance education), it also means virtual learning options are here to stay in Florida." Accompanying the funding change is a tougher accountability measure for FLVS, which sets the school apart from a brick-n-mortar school. While traditional public schools receive state support based on the number of students physically present in the schools, FLVS will only receive support for students who successfully pass and complete their courses. Under FLVS' performance policy, students who complete their coursework receive credit for courses only if they pass the course's final examination. A typical one semester course, depending on the level of complexity, can have 40 to 60 assignments, which must be completed and graded by the instructor.

"While it may seem like a double-tough standard, we find it works well. To balance our academic accountability measures, we provide more flexibility so students can complete online courses at their own pace, rather than be tied down to a traditional academic schedule," explained Young. "Basing our funding on course completions and mastery of standards allows for the flexibility inherent in distance learning."

"I am very pleased that the legislature approved my recommendation to include FLVS in the state's funding formula. As the proven national leader in online education, FLVS will now be able to serve and offer many more Florida school children an opportunity to learn in a non-traditional manner," said Gov. Bush.

The new funding formula went into effect on July 1, 2003. The new measure is designed to increase educational opportunities while also offering traditional schools an avenue for reducing class size.

About Florida Virtual School (FLVS) Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is an established leader in developing and providing virtual K-12 education solutions. A nationally recognized e-Learning model, FLVS was initially funded by the Florida Legislature as a pilot project in 1997. At that time, FLVS began course development with limited student enrollment, pioneering Florida's first Internet-based, public high school complete with online high school curriculum. In 2000, the Florida Legislature established FLVS in state law as an independent education entity with a gubernatorial appointed governing board. Today, FLVS serves the state of Florida and beyond, offering virtual education options for grades 7 through 12 as well as adults seeking GED alternatives. For more information visit the [Web site](#).

