



Learn from Florida Virtual School

BY HANNAH BUNNING Special to the News

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Do you ever wish you could learn more in high school than the curriculum offers? If so, then Florida Virtual School may be for you!

Florida Virtual School is a way for students to accomplish their goals and further their education by taking online classes.

"There are advantages for students who want to complete classes quickly and take courses not offered by their school," said Beverly Livingston, a guidance counselor for Gulf Breeze High School.

Livingston says she encourages many students who want to take classes through Florida Virtual School, but not all.

"Some students just want to take online classes because they think it is an easy way to earn credit, and it's not," Livingston said. "They have to be motivated and manage their time well in order to succeed in virtual school classes."

Livingston says she advocates virtual school classes to students lacking the necessary graduation credits and to those looking to enrich their studies.

"I have found Florida Virtual School guidance counselors and teachers to be very responsive. They always get back to me very quickly," Livingston said.

She says that it is very important to keep track of her students' progress throughout their classes.

According to www.flvs.net, Florida Virtual School aims to provide students with what they want from a learning environment. They strive to give personalized instruction and allow students to have a say in what they learn.

Katie Estes, a University of Florida sophomore, said she found what she was looking for at Florida Virtual School.

"I decided to take virtual school classes in high school because they fit my schedule better," Estes said.

She said she liked taking online classes because she could log in and work on her assignments at any time.

"The classes I took through Florida Virtual School prepared me a lot for college because they taught me to be organized and time efficient," Estes said. "I had to learn how to be more independent because there was no teacher making me do the work."

Suzie Long, a UF teacher's assistant for an online educational technology class, said, "Online classes are good for high school students because they often require students to work at a college level. The students can attend high school during the day and after school they can get a college feel."

Long says a student's success depends on how they learn. If students are visual learners they might benefit more in a classroom setting, but if they are auditory learners an online class might be more suited for them.

"Taking virtual school classes takes self-discipline because you have to motivate yourself and make sure you don't fall behind," Long said.

The Florida Virtual School website gives potential students a lot of insight into what they offer.

"Our commitment is to deliver a high quality, technology-based education that provides the skills and knowledge students need for success in the 21st century," according to the Florida Virtual School mission statement.