



By [ADAM EMERSON](#) | The Tampa Tribune
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One of Florida's fastest growing public schools isn't built with bricks and mortar. It offers lessons in English, math, social studies and chemistry online.

Now a decade old, the Florida Virtual School and its franchises enroll tens of thousands of students in grades K-12.

Tuition is free, and the programs are accredited by the same agency that puts its stamp on traditional schools in Florida.

The Hillsborough County School District runs a franchise of the virtual school, called Hillsborough Virtual School.

Some facts:

Last year, Florida Virtual School enrolled more than 113,000 students in grades 6 through 12. Many took courses online to supplement their courses in traditional middle and high schools. The program, however, is open to public and private school students, as well as those who are home-schooled.

Florida Virtual School offers more than 90 courses that range from the GED level to Advancement Placement. The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The Hillsborough Virtual School offers the same curriculum as the state school, but its teachers are hired locally. The school enrolled more than 3,500 last year. The school district also offers an online diploma program from Blake High School for students enrolled anywhere in the district.

The state offers online education for earlier grades at two online academies: Florida Connections Academy and Florida Virtual Academy. Combined, the academies enrolled nearly 1,400 students in

grades K-8 last year.

The academies are graded by the state the same as any traditional school. Florida Connections Academy received A grades for the past two years. Florida Virtual Academy got an A last year, but received an incomplete mark from the state this year. The Florida Virtual School and its franchises offer supplemental online education, and therefore are not graded.

For information about the Florida Virtual School, visit www.flvs.net. For information about the Hillsborough Virtual School, visit online.mysdhc.org.