

Highlands Today

School district to offer full-time virtual school

By MARC VALERO

July 13, 2009

The Highlands County School District will offer a full-time virtual school in the fall for students in grades kindergarten through grade 12.

The state now requires all districts to have a virtual school available to students, according to Rebecca Fleck, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

Currently Florida Virtual School is used by students in the district who want to take one to three online courses. The students are still enrolled in one of the district's schools.

Under the new requirement, a student can be enrolled full time in the virtual school.

Connections Academy, which has partnered with Florida Virtual School (FVS), will provide online classes from kindergarten through eighth-grade.

Also, K-12 virtual school will provide a full-time opportunity for K-8 schooling.

Florida Virtual School will provide grades nine through 12.

Those who are eligible for enrollment in the virtual school include: students who have been enrolled full time the previous year in a traditional (brick and mortar) school, students moving to the area whose parents are in the military and those who have been previously enrolled in a virtual school.

A child who has been homeschooled does not qualify for the online schooling.

Homeschooled students can apply to the virtual school, but it would not be free, Fleck said. The parent would have to pay the tuition.

Virtual kindergarten would be available for students repeating the grade and students who attended preschool.

"The difference in all this is that now this is actually our school; although we contracted with other schools it's actually considered Highlands County's virtual school program," Fleck said.

Details about the program will be posted on the district's Web site soon (highlands.k12.fl.us), according to Fleck.