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## **Online Clubs Build Community at FLVS; Students Excel at Local and State Competitions**

*-- School Adds Three New Student Clubs, including Nation's First Cyber Charter of English Honors Society --*

Orlando, FL (January 5, 2006) – Students taking courses online with Florida Virtual School are not just taking classes – they are joining student clubs, entering team competitions and producing a bi-monthly online school newspaper. Over the past eight years student clubs at FLVS have flourished. In 2005, FLVS charted new waters with the launch of the country's first Cyber Scholar Charter of the National English Language Society, a club for students interested in pursuing an English degree, as well as the first cyber chapter of the Future Business Leaders of America and a Spanish Honors Club, one of only two virtual Spanish clubs in the country.

"I am proud of our students and teachers for their innovative spirit and their dedication to growing new opportunities for FLVS students to participate in after-class activities. Not only are they adding new clubs, but they are paving the way for other e-learning institutions to follow suit," said Julie Young, president and chief administrative officer, FLVS. "Meeting online is a common occurrence in today's workplace and by offering students virtual clubs; they can further develop their 21<sup>st</sup>-century communications skills and diversify their online learning experience with real-life collaboration and exercises."

FLVS launched its first virtual student club with about 50 students in 1998 when biology teacher Mary Mitchell organized virtual meetings among students interested in science and environmental issues. The FLVS Science Club is open to all students

enrolled in courses at FLVS. As a member of the FLVS Science Club, students participate in Earth Day activities, attend local science fairs, write articles about environmental issues, and participate in field trips and competitions. For the past five years, Science Club teams have competed at the State Science Olympiad; last year FLVS teams won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Bottle Rockets and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Airplanes.

“What’s most amazing is that FLVS students do not meet face-to-face before any of the activities or competition like the Science Olympiad. All their preparations are completed virtually and it’s not until the day of the competition that they actually sit down in the same room,” commented Mary Mitchell, FLVS teacher and advisor to the Science Club. “Their ability to communicate and collaborate virtually has proven successful because club teams have a consistent record of winning awards each year.”

Two additional long-standing FLVS student clubs have a track record in receiving accolades from both state and national competitions. Students who are members of the FLVS Computer Science Club, which was initiated by students interested in entering competitions, for the past five years have consistently taken top awards in a number of computer science competitions. At the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Computer Contest held in 2005 at University of Central Florida, FLVS Science Club teams took 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and at a recent competition at Stetson University, FLVS students walked away with a combined total of \$144,000 in scholarship awards.

FLVS students enrolled in Latin classes can join the FLVS Junior Classic League, or Latin Club, which enables them to participate in district and state level Latin competitions. As member of the FLVS Junior Classic League, students can participate in competitions hosted by the Florida Junior Classic League and the National Junior Classic League, where individuals or teams face off in various categories including grammar, vocabulary, derivatives, Roman/Greek history and culture, along with various Latin and English speeches and art projects. Since 2002, several FLVS students have placed among the top 10 in the district and state

competitions. Additionally, any FLVS Latin student is eligible to take the National Latin Exam (NLE) where students around the nation compete by level. Several FLVS Latin students who have taken the NLE have scored among the top 10% of students across the nation.

FLVS' other long-standing student club is the Newspaper Club, which produced its first issue of *News In a Click*, the school's virtual paper, in 2001. With close to 100 members, the Newspaper Club presents students with a great opportunity for students to get involved in the school. Newspaper Club members meet virtually prior to each publication to discuss story ideas and to exchange ideas for upcoming publications. During the virtual meetings, students interested and available to write stories are given their assignments and deadlines. In 2002, *News in a Click* won the Spotlight Award from the League of American Communications Professionals.

With the addition of each club, FLVS is creating new opportunities for students to engage in educational field trips, academic team competitions and hone individual skills and interests in specific subject areas. "As a virtual school, it is encouraging that so many students are participating in these extra-curricular activities," said Young. "What we are building is not just additional educational opportunities for students, but a virtual community that provides students with the guidance and support necessary for cultivating communication and networking skills they will use for the rest of their lives."

The FLVS Cyber Scholar Charter of the National English Honors Society will hold its first membership induction ceremony later this month.

Additional information about FLVS' student clubs can be found online at:

[http://www.flvs.net/students\\_parents/student\\_clubs.php](http://www.flvs.net/students_parents/student_clubs.php).

### **About Florida Virtual School**

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is an established leader in developing and providing virtual K-12 education solutions to students throughout the country. Now a nationally recognized e-

Learning model, FLVS began as a pilot project in 1997. At that time, FLVS began course development with limited 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 educational entity with a gubernatorial appointed governing board. Today, FLVS serves schools across the nation, offering virtual education solutions for grades 6 to 12, as well as for adults seeking GED alternatives.

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