

Dixie District Schools

Virtual School Policy

School districts are allowed by the Florida Department of Education to offer a full time online learning option for students in grades K-12. In accordance with statute, Dixie District School provides an opportunity for interactive learning environment created through technology, in which the student and teacher are separated by time, space or both. Students access lessons and assignments and receive assessments through the Internet. Using technology, teachers communicate with students and parents in many different ways. Our virtual school options meet all Florida public school standards and obligations. Instructors are highly qualified and/or certified teachers, as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, including background screenings. Students completing graduation requirements will be awarded a Dixie County High School diploma.

Dixie District Schools contracts with outside vendors approved by the School Board. Dixie District School offers the following virtual programs:

MyDistrict Virtual School (MDVS)

K¹² courses for grades K-5

FLVS courses for grades 6-12

Edmentum

Credit recovery courses for students needing to make up graduation requirement classes

Dixie District Schools (District Operated virtual)

Career Research & Decision Making (grade 7)

Outdoor Education (grades 9-12)

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year and thereafter, all students in grades K-5 are eligible to attend virtual school. Students in grades 6-12 are [eligible](#) to attend the virtual school if they spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school in the state and was enrolled and reported by the school district for funding during October and February are dependents of a member of the U.S. military transferred to the state within the last year, or who are siblings of students in SVS. According to [Florida Statute](#), **students in grades 6-12 who were home-schooled during the previous school year are not eligible.**

For more information contact Denee Hurst, Director of Curriculum, at 352-498-6138 or via e-mail at deneehurst@dixie.k12.fl.us.

FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

In general, what are the provisions of Florida's virtual instruction legislation?

- State-approved curriculum
- Instructional materials, computer and on-line access
- Highly qualified/certified teachers as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law including background screenings.

Which students are eligible for the virtual program?

- Eligible students for the first and second semesters are those who will be in grades K-12 who:
 1. were enrolled in a Florida public school (traditional, charter or alternative school) since October 1, of the previous school year, or
 2. are dependents of a member of the United States Armed Forces transferred to the state within the last year, or
 3. were enrolled during the prior school year in a virtual instruction program, or
 4. are siblings of students who were enrolled in the full time program during the previous school year.
- According to Florida Statute, students who were home-schooled during the previous school year are not eligible.

Will parents be notified of when to enroll in virtual school?

- Yes. Parents of students in grades PK-11th grade will be mailed a noticed of open enrollment for MDVS in the spring of each year. Please make sure you update your address on file at your child's school.
- Enrollment opens in the fall of each year and remains open throughout the school year. The last day of MDVS is the same through Dixie District Schools.

Are Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students eligible for the virtual program?

- Yes. Parents of students in special programs are advised to carefully consider the appropriateness of a virtual instruction option.
- ESE services for students may be limited in the SVS environment.
- The district's ESE/ ELL departments work with the district's Curriculum office and with the virtual school providers to ensure that appropriate accommodations and services are provided to these students in a virtual environment.
- Parents of students with IEPs (and 504 Accommodation Plans) should arrange for an IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan review meeting at their districted school *prior* to enrollment in virtual school.

How is curriculum structured and how is instruction delivered through the virtual program?

- The curriculum covers all state-required courses for grades K-12.
- The district contracts with K¹² through our NEFEC Consortium to provide instruction to students in grades K-5.
- The district contracts with FLVS through our NEFEC Consortium to provide instruction to students in grades 6-12.
- Teachers monitor student progress and give assignments online and through physical materials shipped to and from students.

- Students who are served through K¹², Florida receive books, learning materials and manipulative tools to use in conjunction with their online resources.
- Student attendance is monitored, based on online activity and completion of coursework.
- Textbooks and traditional instructional materials are used, but much of the content will be delivered via the provider's Web sites for K¹²

What are the Pros of Taking an Online Course?

- Flexible schedule.
- Flexibility of time to work on a course.
- Work at own pace.
- Convenience and freedom to access course at anytime and from anywhere.
- Use internet skills.
- The comfort of working at home with parents' assistance and support.
- Can review materials and course work with parents.
- Parents have the opportunity to be actively involved in their student's education.
- Parents serve as the learning "coach" and will be able to oversee instruction.
- Available individualization offered may be a valuable asset.
- Non-threatening atmosphere; reduces stress; less anxiety or worry.
- Can learn to be more focused, self-motivated, independent, and/or disciplined.

What are the Cons of Taking an Online Course?

- Lack of face-to-face and personal contact with instructor.
- Requires access to computer and Internet.
- Technical Problems (including computer, server, network, power).
- Requires a tremendous amount of self-discipline, self-motivation, time-management and organization skills to be successful.
- Technical/computer literacy and keyboarding /typing skills are required.
- Communication, directions, or discussions may be unclear or more difficult.
- There may be a lack of immediate help or feedback from online teacher.
- Distractions and interruptions; hard to focus on work.
- No before or after class meeting with online teacher.
- May become overwhelmed or confused.
- Limits certain kinds of class instruction (modeling, demonstrations, spontaneous interactions).
- Team activities online may be somewhat awkward.
- Physical problems: Stiff neck, headache, lack of movement.
- The degree of socialization is far less than what is found in traditional schools.
- There are limited services and support available to students in a virtual learning environment.
- Parents must have the time to devote to the virtual school experience; they will have an extensive role as the learning "coach."
- Consideration must be given to unique family needs and the student's attributes in order to determine the appropriateness of the option.

- **What are the responsibilities of parents?**

- A virtual instructional option is home-based. This gives parents additional responsibilities for providing instructional support, monitoring student engagement and progress, and communicating with teachers via e-mail and telephone.
- Parents must store and ship instructional materials and set up the computer.
- Parents must help maintain a computer, printer and Internet access for their student's work.
- Parents must establish an environment that is conducive to a student's learning.
- Parents must ensure that students log in to courses, so attendance can be taken daily.
- Students in grades K-9 must have a learning coach (parent) commitment of at least 4-6 hours per day.
- If a student enrolls in virtual school and is not compliant with attendance or progress requirements, the district may revoke the reassignment and return the student to their districted school.
- Parents must be aware that a student's are expected to follow the district's attendance policy and attend (complete) their virtual courses regularly. Dixie District Schools verifies attendance through FLVS and MyDistrict Virtual School. A student's failure to sign in to his or her learners account daily *and/or* demonstrate academic progress may have a negative impact on a student's driver's license status [F.S. 1003.27 (2b)].

Will my student receive a diploma if he or she completes graduation requirements in virtual school?

- Yes, students completing graduation requirements will receive a standard high school diploma from Dixie County High School.
- Credits, grade point average and any other requirements for graduation from virtual school are identical to those of the traditional high schools in Dixie County
- Credits are transferable within the state so students do not lose completed course credits if they move from one public school to another
- Honors and Advanced Placement courses are available online.

Will my student be required to take FCAT and other standardized tests?

- Yes, students in grades three and above must take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), just as students at all schools are required to do.
- MDVS is required to participate in all Florida testing requirements.
- Parents are notified of the times and locations of those tests.
- Some tests to monitor the progress of students can be completed online.
- Students taking AP tests will usually take those tests at their districted school.
- The virtual school will be graded, just as all schools in Florida receive a grade each year.

How is my student counted for attendance in the Virtual School?

- Students are required to log into the computer daily

Dixie District Schools verifies attendance by students signing in to their virtual courses and making successful academic progress.

- Students in grades K-5 have required hours to log in during a school week and may complete work in addition to those times.
- Middle and high school students have the ability to log into their courses at any time. Attendance is determined by the student's level of progress toward completion of the coursework. A minimum of 25 hours per week are recommended for satisfactory progress. A student's failure to sign in to his or her learners account daily *and/or* demonstrate academic progress may have a negative impact on a student's driver's license status [F.S. 1003.27 (2b)].
- Parents are subject to the Florida compulsory student attendance law and are accountable for compliance in virtual school just as they are in traditional schools.
- Students with attendance problems may be returned to their districted school.

Is my student eligible to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities?

- Students in virtual school are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at their brick-and-mortar school.
- Students and parents must work directly with their districted schools to make arrangements for participation in extracurricular activities. Students are required to log into the computer on a regular basis.

If I try Virtual School and it does not meet my student's needs, what are my options?

- Parents should make the decision to enroll in virtual school in a very thoughtful manner. Virtual education is a tremendous option for most students but some find the demands too strenuous.
- While students may always return to their districted school, it is important that parents work with the school district in the timing of the return to ensure a good transition for the student.
- Students will be permitted to return to their district school at the beginning/ending of a semester.

• May I enroll my student in virtual school for one year only? May I enroll my student at the change of semesters?

- A student may be enrolled in virtual school for one year or all of their school years.
- Enrollments at midyear are offered. Individual student needs are considered when determining the appropriateness of a mid-year enrollment.
- Teachers and administrators from virtual school will evaluate students every year to determine the effectiveness of the option for individual students and for the progress that they have made during the year.
- Students who are not successful in virtual school may not be able to return to the virtual school in subsequent years.

Who is the district's contact for questions and additional information?

- The school district contact is Denee Hurst, Director of Curriculum. She may be reached at 352-498-6138, or via e-mail at deneehurst@dixie.k12.fl.us.

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