

My name is Betina Frost and my family is a virtual school family. My son has been attending Oregon Connections Academy for almost 6 years. I'd like to explain our situation; why the option of virtual school is so important to us, how ORCA has been a blessing, and how the 3% cap has already affected us.

My son was diagnosed with Asperger's, ADHD, and Tourette Syndrome in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. By 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we knew brick and mortar school just wasn't going to work. It just isn't set up for my child who's prone to meltdowns and has impulse issues. It wasn't good for him, for the teachers and staff, and for his classmates. We were desperate to have a change so he could have the opportunity to learn like everyone else should have, in a way that works for him.

I am eternally grateful that we discovered Oregon Connections Academy. Because he's in our home, I'm able to be there right away when he needs help. The burden doesn't fall on overworked teachers and staff, and because of that, there are almost no meltdowns, he can concentrate on school, and has excelled! He's currently halfway through his freshman year of high school and we don't regret our choice to go with ORCA one bit. Never will.

I love my son and I want to be there for him, and ORCA gives me that chance. It also allows me to slowly back away as he grows and matures, so he can learn how to be independent. I know life is going to be challenging for him when he's an adult and out of school, but he'll be so much more prepared for it since ORCA allows us to ease him into adulthood with the safety and comfort of home.

Because of the accessibility and flexibility of virtual school, it'll be possible for him to get a part time job while still attending school and learn how to cope with all the difficulties that come with that before he graduates.

My daughter is currently in kindergarten and the 3% cap has forced me to do traditional homeschooling with her. It's become so important for us to have our kids at home for school that I am resolute about not placing them in a brick-and-mortar school. The virtual school takes away financial burden and stress of "will I be able to teach her long term?" I'll do it if I have to. I'll find a way. But being able to have her in a virtual school that I already know and trust makes it infinitely better for her.

I haven't worked in almost 6 years in order to make virtual school possible for our us. My husband has taken on the responsibility of being the sole provider, and our entire family has made countless sacrifices for all of this to be successful.

The burden of doing traditional homeschool; buying supplies, seeking out curriculum and probably having to do that multiple times until we settle on one that works for us, plus the already cost of breakfasts and lunches that we have to pay for even now (we have no free or reduced lunches available at home), all of the things that "regular" schools are struggling with will become my own personal struggle.

Currently, my local school district will be asking for more money from taxpayers. I promise you, if the district's 3% cap places a heavier financial burden on my family, I will vote "no" to alleviate any financial burden on the district. I just won't be able to afford it.

If neither of my children went to virtual school, it would be too difficult for us to get by. Because of my son's situation, I had to arrange school meetings almost weekly. That meant asking for time off, or

using my lunch breaks, driving back and forth, coming back to work emotional, having to find someone watch him if he had to take time away from school, teaching him the lessons at home anyway!

All these things and more would be placed on my family if the cap told us "no" some 5 years ago. And we can't be the only ones. My son never would have survived the COVID epidemic with all the changes that came into place. I can't imagine the struggles other families in our situation and worse have been through over the past 2 years. It could be for their benefit if they had the same option to attend virtual school, but I know they didn't because my own daughter was told no.

Please repeal the cap. Give us the choice to do what our children need. Place that decision back into the hands of the parents and guardians. We know our children better than anyone and we know what's best for them.

Our society is in the throws of change, of giving everyone the tools and options that they need in so many areas of life. We seem to have concluded that there has to be another way to approach a multitude of areas in our lives. We're rethinking everything we've traditionally done in the past, so why not in education? Why not in how our children are allowed to learn?

My story is just one. This is just one family's unique situation. I hope you're open to understanding how many more are out there; how many families are struggling to make "regular school" work for them and are crying out for a change and the chance to figure it out for themselves.

There are plenty of families who have no interest in a virtual school, or brick and mortar schools work best for them. You trust them to keep attending those schools, you need to trust us also. Please stop forcing us into something that just doesn't work.

If you do, if the 3% cap stays in place, the Roseburg school district still won't have my daughter attending. It will just turn itself into an obstacle. And I'm one of the fortunate ones who is able to make that choice.

What about those who can't? What about those who can't navigate around this huge obstacle? In their case, the school district will turn itself into a hindrance. Please don't do that. Don't put these schools in that position. It shouldn't be us vs them. If the goal is to give these kids the best education they can each have, then let us be free to do that.