

I support removing the 3% cap regarding the number of students a district is required to release from enrollment, before they can deny their intent to enroll request.

First I consider why this cap is in place? It seems the main purpose is to ensure the local school district's enrollment remains intact with minimally funding dollars being lost to Online Public Schools. It really is that simple, it keeps the funding in place at the local district, which is great, I understand the concept, and value our local teachers, but I think school choice is important and should be allowed when possible.

Here is my story. We chose Baker Web last July, and were offered spots Aug 31! On Sept 2 we were denied, and began the appeals process with the state of Oregon. The state upheld the district's denial on Oct 6, 3 days after the required notification date. I felt I had stated a pretty good case for our appeal. I noted we had attended Baker Web for first grade; we had a relationship with the teacher, who had an established understanding of my son's reading concerns. One other point I made in my appeal was the difference between my local district and Baker Web. With my local district we would have prerecorded video from their teacher, and live online options as well, and the material would be taught and paced by the teacher. We also had no choice in curriculum. Through Baker Web the family gets to choose from several curriculum options, set the pace, and actually teach the subjects. Baker Web has teacher contact several times a week via email, phone call or visit which provides opportunity to ask questions, monitor progress, etc. Baker Web for our family offered an option similar to traditional homeschool, but with teacher support and paid for curriculum. Baker Web is what my family needed last year, with its flexibility, teacher support and assistance in purchasing curriculum. Unfortunately it was felt that keeping the funding local was more important than our family's needs, so we were denied. That means after almost 6 months of no income from our private preschool, we pulled our son from the local school district and took on the responsibility and financial aspect of traditional homeschooling, because the local virtual option was not working. It has been a long year and we have done our best. I write this because something needs to change if not the cap, how about financial assistance for families who do not want to attend their local district, but can't choose another option because of the cap. I often wonder where does the funds my kid didn't use end up? Back at the state somewhere I suppose. I would love to see it land at the local ESD to support homeschooling families with funds and possible access to a certified teacher. Or maybe reconsider how the funds are allocated, maybe brick and mortar school (with higher overhead) get more per student, and online gets a lower number? I do think it is time that the publicly funded old school systems of education have some healthy competition. Virtual Public school Platforms give all families a choice, if we remove the cap.

Sincerely,

The Rittenbach Family