I am writing to express my concern with the funding being cut for Virtual Schools in the State of Kansas. This year we made the decision to homeschool our children using the Maize Virtual Prep School (MVPS). It has been an amazing experience for our family.

Our youngest child, a first grader, was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at the age of 4. It is a life threatening autoimmune disease which requires her caregivers to act as her pancreas 24/7. She has to prick her finger and check her blood sugar 12+ times per day. Everything she eats or drinks has to be weighed and measured with the carbohydrates counted and then she must be given an injection of insulin for those carbs. If her blood sugar is low she has to be given sources of fast acting sugar to quickly bring it back up so she does not have a seizure, go into a coma or worse....Lows must be closely monitored and if they are not coming up or she goes unconscious a life saving injection of Glucagon must be administered. When she is high, her urine must be checked for ketones and extra insulin and fluids must be given to bring her blood sugar down into a safe range. High blood sugars must be closely monitored so she does not end up with damage to her eyes, kidneys, limbs, etc. Also so she does not end up in Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) which can lead to coma and even death. When she was diagnosed we thought she had the flu, she was actually in DKA she spent 4 days in the PICU and another 4 in the hospital. As if that is not enough, even when a care plan is followed exactly many things can affect blood sugar which no one has any control over, including but not limited to, the weather, activity level, internal or external stress, etc.

Last year she attended Glenwood Ridge Elementary in the Basehor Linwood USD 458 School District. The school only has a nurse two days a week. Unfortunately Type 1 Diabetes is a 24/7 disease and not a two day a week issue. She had a para the other days, but I received daily calls and texts about what to do to treat her. I ended up at the school most days to help with some aspect of her care. She ended up missing many days of school and going home early weekly because of blood sugar issues.

This year we decided it would just be easier for her to school from home. That way she would not miss important lessons being taught in class and the school would not have to worry about how they were going to manage her disease. We are able to schedule her class work around her blood sugar issues for optimum learning. Upon hearing the news that we were planning to do a virtual school, our other two children (6th and 8th graders) asked to homeschool through MVPS as well. All three children have had a fantastic, successful year. Our first grader has already tested out of second grade and will be doing the third grade curriculum next year! That's after missing so much school last year and coming out of kindergarten not even able to read! It is amazing what the individualized attention of homeschool can do! Our 6th grader who has always gotten good grades, but I felt was lacking in his writing (not quality 6th grade work) has made leaps and bounds in that subject! We have spent time catching up and filling in the gaps this year and he is actually enjoying reading and writing now! Our 8th grader has always been a great student who likes to add her creative flair to all her work. I have been able to challenge her in ways no teacher has before as well as let her be creative with her assignments. All three children are excited about continuing with MVPS next year and can't imagine going back to brick and mortar classes again!

We are asking you to please not cut the funding for virtual schools. Brick and mortar learning is not for everyone, just as virtual learning is not for everyone. That is why it is so important to have the choice and let each family decide what is best for them. As you read above, our journey with virtual school began out of medical necessity but it has become an amazing experience for our family. I have enjoyed learning along with my children, helping things come to life for them and seeing that light come on when they truly get it and are enjoying themselves! I love when they want to explore subjects and learn more about them instead of being tired of school and learning because they had to sit in "boring" classes all day. We are thankful to have this opportunity in the great state of Kansas!

Thank you for taking the time to read our story!