

First Coast News (WJXX - ABC 25 in Jax; WTLV - NBC 12 in Tampa)

Students And Parents Protest Cuts to Virtual Education Program

TALLAHASSEE, FL -- Dozens of students and parents raised awareness about virtual education, and they're asking lawmakers to continue funding the program, despite budget cuts.

Like so many special interest groups, this one is hoping to minimize the proposed 15% cuts towards virtual education.

Students and parents rallied at the capitol, asking lawmakers not to cut any money from virtual schools. They say this education allows teachers to reach more students in a cost-effective way, while students can learn at their own pace.

"They can master the material, the bell doesn't ring and make them move on," said Barbara Turpish, a parent who combines virtual education with home schooling. "I would think that it would be better to reduce the brick and mortar schools because you can access so many more children online, and the teachers are so committed, it's really a blessing, it's like having a tutor for every class, for every child."

More than 5,000 students and parents from across the state signed a petition, asking lawmakers to avoid making cuts to Florida's virtual education program.

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