

St. Marys City Schools



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Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee.

I am currently the transportation supervisor for the St. Marys City School in Auglaize County and have been in that position since 1995. I began driving bus in 1988 and have worked on school buses since 1982 while still attending Fort Jennings High School. My parents were bus drivers; I rode the "yellow bus" to school, and my son rides the bus in St. Marys. The yellow bus has been a major part of my life and providing safe and efficient transportation is my job and passion. I am also actively involved with school safety and security in the St. Marys City School District, the world we live in today has required districts to put every increasing time and effort into maintaining student safety and security.

I commend Representatives Cupp and Patterson for the comprehensive analysis of school funding in Ohio they have undertaken over the last 15 months. They assembled a group of individuals from around the state which included Superintendents, Treasurers, and subject matter experts to provide them with recommendations that are fair to students and taxpayers.

Based on these recommendations they have developed the Fair School Funding Plan which I would like to provide proponent testimony on two of the components within this plan, they are pupil transportation and school safety and security.

Pupil Transportation

My main job responsibility is pupil transportation, and it is big business in Ohio. Throughout the state we provide transportation to nearly 800,000 students daily utilizing 15,000 buses. In St. Marys we transport 1,286 students daily utilizing 17 route buses, these buses travel 1,232 miles daily for annual mileage of 231,480

These students are our future and most precious cargo, and they are the reason for providing safe and efficient transportation.

I had the privilege of being involved in many of the transportation subgroup meetings and believe that the recommendations from the subgroup are what is best for students and taxpayers in Ohio.

- Implement a state bus purchase program to provide \$50,000 grants toward purchase of new buses
- Restore the state's minimum share by increments to 60 percent by 2023
- Develop a grant program that promotes collaboration among districts

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Ronda Shelby
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- Grant local boards the authority to operate their buses for trips other than educational purposes
- Increase special education transportation allocation which has not increased since FY2009
- Encourage funding based on efficiency to help reduce costs
- Permit ridership counts to be based either on AM or PM ridership
- Eliminate mandates on service to non-traditional schools outside the district or on days we are not in session without reimbursement
- Establish drop-off and pick-up window of thirty minutes prior to school start time and thirty minutes after school end time.
- Eliminate the one mile restriction
- Grant local boards the authority to operate their buses for trips other than educational purposes such as community events and evacuations during local and or state emergencies.

I would also ask the committee to consider maintaining the current low density supplement which is used to help offset the higher costs that rural districts face.

Safety and Security

School safety and security is a priority for the St. Marys City Schools and will continue to be a priority. Over the years funding to enhance and increase safety and security has been scarce and recently there have been some grant opportunities:

- HB 318
- OSFC/OFCC
- Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation

These grant opportunities are very welcome and helpful but do not address all of our needs.

I am very pleased to see the recommendation of a school safety and security component included in the base cost. This will allow us to continually enhance and improve safety and security in our district.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. If there are any questions, I will be happy to answer to best of my ability.

Thank you,

Dan Grothause
 Transportation Supervisor
 St. Marys City Schools