



## River View Local School District

*"Building Educational Excellence for Tomorrow... Today"*

*Office of the Superintendent*

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### ***Written Testimony To The Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education***

Co-Chairmen Cupp and Patterson and other members of this committee, let me begin by thanking each of you for allowing me the opportunity to provide this testimony on behalf of not only the River View Local School District, but also as a member of the "Ohio Fair School Funding Work Group." I would have preferred to present this testimony in person, however, due to other district commitments, I was unable to attend this hearing.

My name is Dalton Summers and I am the superintendent of the River View Local School District in Coshocton County. I am also a sub committee chair for transportation with the "Ohio Fair School Funding Work Group" lead by representatives Cupp and Patterson. As I am certain you are all aware, this workgroup has been meeting for over 15 months taking a research, student-centered approach to defining what it cost to educate a child. I can attest to the sincere and universal approach that each subcommittee has put into their respective areas. This product is the most accurate, comprehensive, fair, explainable and logical plan I have seen in my nine years as a school superintendent. I feel honored to have had the opportunity to work with these State Representatives and educational professionals who have committed themselves to creating an Ohio student-centered plan.

Transportation is the area I had the privilege of studying and making recommendations for consideration. I assume I was selected because I represent a rural district of 376 square miles. Transportation is over 10% of River View's total budget. What I have learned through this entire process was that school transportation is a challenge in all types of districts. While the challenges are different and often unique, the common components are rising costs; the state demands are ever increasing and higher than any of our neighboring states; and our funding is lower and has continued to decrease over the years.

Everyone can agree that we can't educate students until we get them to school. We all understand prices of buses, costs to fuel them, expenses to maintain engines, costs to purchase tires and just typical wear and tear expenditures. We all drive. Our studies examined these costs in all types of districts. We studied the ever-increasing requirements and burdens placed on the districts to transport kids outside of district boundaries. We examined Ohio's aging fleets and the inefficiencies in operations of them. We looked at the advantages providing school transportation has for the entire state. We confirmed that Ohio's mandates were greater than others but funding was lower. In our final report and recommendations, we believe we have identified and

targeted the needs to truly address the costs of transporting Ohio's students to and from their deserved places of education.

I am certain that my colleagues can address the specifics of the points in our recommendation as they are present with you today, and I would be more than willing to answer any questions from you as a committee or individually at your convenience. For the purposes of this written testimony, I only ask that you examine and consider the absolute need for the following recommendations:

1. Resolve transportation service requirements for asynchronous calendars and bell schedules.
2. Limit the obligations for public schools to serve only within their boundaries unless additional funding can be established for the district.
3. Create grants to promote collaboration among school districts to improve and create efficiencies.
4. Grant local boards the authority to operate their buses for trips other than education purposes.
5. Modify, as recommended, the transportation funding formula for all riders, making it understandable, promoting efficiency, accommodating special conditions and paid through a single funding stream back to 60%.
6. Move transportation funding outside of the funding formula.
7. Once returned to 60%, eliminate the supplemental funding stream.
8. Increase available funds for the high growing costs of special education transportation.
9. Re-establish a school bus purchase assistance program.

As I stated earlier, complete details and explanations for these recommendations can be fully explained and are included in our final report. The service of school transportation is imperative to the educational process and must be adequately funded no matter what type of district is being considered. Our recommendations are sound, research based and essential. Please consider these as the standard that must be met to safely, efficiently and adequately transport Ohio's children to schools.

Thank you for this opportunity and please feel free to contact me for any additional information.

Respectfully,  
Dalton Summers  
River View Local Schools Superintendent