

HB 49 Testimony

March 23, 2017

Lori Snyder-Lowe

Morgan Local School District Superintendent

Dear Chairman Cupp and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to offer testimony on HB 49. My name is Lori Snyder-Lowe and I am the superintendent of Morgan Local School District -- a county-wide, rural school district in Southeast Ohio. Morgan Local buses travel almost 4,000 miles per day and cover almost 400 square miles. Last year, our transportation costs accounted for 9% of our general fund expenditures. Approximately \$2 million dollars is spent annually to transport our children to and from school each day.

In the previous budget, you graciously supported a transportation supplement of 60% or state share index which helped districts with the many costs of transportation. This supplement was a huge asset in meeting the needs of our students. We encourage you to continue this supplement so that we can continue to use these funds for our transportation program. It is imperative that this supplement be continued and that it be counted outside the formula.

Another concern is bus purchasing. We recently purchased a new special needs bus and the cost was \$97,000. We also purchased a conventional 72 passenger bus for \$87,000. These costs are a reality and we have seen continual increases in these costs over the last 10 years. Each year, buses get more expensive and it is obvious that districts need assistance in the form of bus purchase funding to be able to replace old, worn out buses. The highest mileage bus we have right now has over 340,000 miles on it and is used each and every day to transport children. Our oldest bus is over 14 years old and the average age of our fleet is 8 years old. We run 23 regular buses and 2 special needs buses each day for a total of 25 buses running dual routes. Obviously, we must be able to develop a replacement cycle

for buses so that we can maintain a safe, efficient transportation program for our children. Reinstating bus purchase funds would go a long way in helping to reduce the financial strains being placed on districts.

In conclusion, I hope you will consider keeping our transportation supplement in place and providing us with bus purchase funds.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.