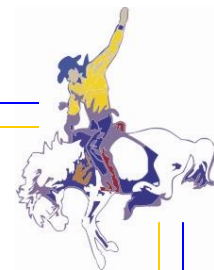


# St. Marys City Schools



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## Written Testimony Only

May 14, 2019

Chairman Terhar, Vice Chair Lehner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Finance – Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee.

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 the Governor’s Executive Budget and House of Representatives on HB 166 for the inclusion of items related to school safety and pupil transportation. These items are greatly appreciated and I would like to ask the Senate to support or include the following items in their substitute version of HB 166.

### **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.

Several recommendations that would benefit pupil transportation in Ohio are:

- A state bus purchase program to provide \$50,000 grants toward purchase of new buses. The House has recommended \$20 million for FY 21 and I would advocate for an increase in this amount and fund it in both FY 20 and FY 21
- Restore the state’s minimum transportation share by increments to 60 percent by 2023
- Increase special education transportation allocation which has not increased since FY2009
- Encourage funding based on efficiency to help reduce costs

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- Permit ridership counts to be based either on AM or PM ridership
- Reimbursement for transportation provided on days local schools are not in session.
- Support language in HB 166 allowing 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.
- Maintain the current low density supplement which is used to offset the higher transportation cost 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 a few 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. The inclusion of Student Wellness and Success Funding in both the Executive budget and HB 166 will greatly help with school safety and security but may be too restrictive and not address all of the local needs.

It may better serve districts to broaden the permitted uses and allow a percentage of the funds to be used for security enhancements while maintaining a focus on student wellness and success.

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