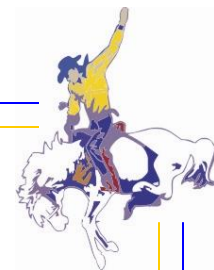


# St. Marys City Schools



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May 4, 2021

Written Testimony

RE: Pupil Transportation items and school safety funding

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written proponent testimony on transportation and school safety related items in House Bill (HB) 110. I am Dan Grothause, Transportation Supervisor with the St. Marys City Schools in Auglaize County.

## **Transportation:**

HB 110 contains many changes related to pupil transportation that are beneficial including but not limited to the following:

- The funding formula is fair and reflects the needs of transportation while encouraging efficiency.
- Increase in Special Education funding for transportation is much needed. The current funding level has remained basically the same since 2009.
- Allowing districts to take greater of the average riders counted in morning or afternoon. Currently restricted to morning counts only but must develop routes based on ridership that may be higher in the afternoon.
- Moving deadline for reporting student counts to November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Allowing districts to count preschool students and students who live less than one mile away from school. Due to safety concerns many districts are already providing this service but not receiving funding.
- Adjusting the low density calculation to be based on qualifying riders instead of total ADM.
- School bus purchase grants are much needed and will allow districts to update and modernize fleets with cleaner more fuel efficient buses, local money normally directed to school bus purchases could possibly be directed into the classrooms.
- The allowance for student delivery 30 minutes prior to school beginning and no later than 30 minutes after school could allow for more efficient bus routing.
- Permitting schools to contract, in writing, to operate school buses to assist local governments or nonprofit organizations or political subdivisions in the fulfillment of its legitimate activities and in times of emergencies. This basically reinstates language that was in Ohio Administrative Code prior to 2013.

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**Suggested items related to transportation:**

- Moving transportation funding outside of cap and guarantee. Making it a standalone formula, therefore districts get funding for the services they provide.

**Problematic items related to transportation:**

- Transportation for community and chartered nonpublic schools – transportation plans.
  - The required dates of June 1<sup>st</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> may create a difficult timeline to meet since not all districts have year round transportation staffing and in particular the months of June and July.
- Limit on use of mass transit
  - While this may not affect rural districts as much as urban districts the unintended consequences may be that districts have to add additional yellow bus service and in a time of limited drivers this may actually lead to a reduced service levels.
- Payment in lieu of transportation
  - Same as transportation plan and would create timelines that may not be achievable for districts that do not have year round transportation staffing.

**School Safety:**

- The additional of SPSCD25 School Safety provision along with GRF appropriation 769501 is a good addition and will provide much needed assistance to school districts as we develop and maintain our School Emergency plans and the requirements that go with them.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 110 and I'm available as needed for additional questions.

Sincerely,

Dan Grothause  
Transportation Supervisor  
St. Marys City Schools

