



Catholic Conference of Ohio

Senate Primary & Secondary Education Committee (HB 33)

Larry Keough/Catholic Conference of Ohio

May 11, 2023

Good morning Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and Committee Members. My name is Larry Keough. I am the associate director for the Catholic Conference of Ohio and legislative advocate for Catholic schools.

Catholic schools represent the largest system of nonpublic schools in Ohio. Our schools hold a valid charter issued by the State Board of Education and maintain compliance with Operating Standards for students to receive a general education of high quality.

Catholic schools are not publicly-funded schools but serve a public purpose.

The Conference also has advocated for many decades what we consider essential staples for Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools and students.

These staples are:

GRF 200 511 Auxiliary Services, established in 1967;
GRF 200 532 Nonpublic Administrative Cost Reimbursement, established in 1981;
School Transportation for chartered nonpublic school students, established in 1966 with the Fair Bus Bill Act.

These longstanding programs are a testament to the Child Benefit Theory. That is, what crosses the line between Church and State is the student.

Our Request Support the proposals from the Executive Budget and the House version of the Budget' for a proposed 2.7 percent increase in FY 24 and 2.4 percent increase in FY 25 for Auxiliary Services and Administrative Cost Reimbursement.

School Transportation – Ohio is one of the few states in the Midwest that provides school transportation to Catholic and other chartered nonpublic school students. But in recent years as a result of COVID related issues and bus driver shortages, school districts are declaring impracticality to transport our students in which parents can receive a modest payment in lieu of transportation.

We ask for your support of a provision in HB 33 for district-owned vans to transport chartered nonpublic school student. This may reduce declarations of impracticality.

Secondly, school transportation is afforded to public school students whose disability per their Individual Education Plan requires transportation as a related service.

Our request is to provide transportation for chartered nonpublic school students on the basis that their Individual Education Plan, or Individual Service Plan, or Academic Support Plan requires that they be afforded school transportation as a related service.

And thirdly, the Department of Education is authorized to oversee a Compliance Monitoring System for school transportation. However, the scope of the compliance monitoring system does not include matters of impracticality.

We are seeking the code section for declarations of impracticality to be added within the Compliance Monitoring System.

At this time, I would be pleased to answer any questions.