



## DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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May 5, 2025

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 127. When I first learned about this bill, I contacted Representative Matthews to gain a deeper understanding of its purpose. As was previously shared by the bill's co-sponsors, I believe this bill would protect the privacy of Ohio's students by granting school boards the permissive authority to withhold student directory information from public release.

I currently serve as the superintendent of the Big Walnut Local School District in Sunbury, Ohio, located about 25 minutes northeast of here. You may have read about our district's situation in the news in March 2023 regarding this very topic. At that time, we received an anonymous public records request for our student directory information. Our directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of attendance, date of graduation, or awards received.

The fact that this is currently considered a public record, and that the requester has the ability to request it *anonymously* is concerning. It concerns me as a parent. It concerns me as an educator. It concerns me as someone who tends to have common sense most of the time. Frankly, it should be very concerning to you. Unlike me, *you* all have the power to take action.

Fortunately, in the case of Big Walnut, the person who made the request withdrew it, and we were not required to turn over that information. But it still caused a great deal of panic from members of our community. Why did it cause panic? Because we did not know who was requesting this sensitive information, or why they were requesting it. The only thing they were required to inform us of was that they would not use the information for profit-making purposes. Quite honestly, that was the least of my concerns about what this individual would do with the information.

I soon discovered that we were not alone. Other school districts in Ohio were facing similar scenarios. This had become a problem and remains a potential issue today.

This is a no-brainer to me. Two themes I've heard repeatedly regarding public education in Ohio are parent rights and student safety. This bill appears to be pretty aligned with both. I hope that it eventually becomes law and allows school districts to prevent sensitive student information from being released to anyone who simply asks for it.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have pertaining to our situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan McLane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ryan McLane  
Superintendent

*Our mission is to inspire and guide children to achieve their maximum potential*