



**NEW ALBANY PLAIN LOCAL SCHOOLS**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

New Albany Plain Local Schools  
Superintendent Dr. April Domine  
Proponent Testimony Regarding Proposed House Bill 20

Good afternoon Chairman Representative Ron Maag, Vice Chairman Representative Stephanie Kunze and Ranking Member Representative Ronald Gerberry of the State Government committee:

The New Albany-Plain Local School District is pleased to submit proponent testimony for House Bill 20 presented by Representative Anne Gonzalez. This proposed legislation addresses a frightening situation that occurred in our district last year and will assist in preventing such reoccurrences in any school in our state.

The date was January 13, 2014. As some elementary students were walking back to their school building from the theatre, parents arrived to pick up their children and our school buses, already loaded with approximately 500 kindergarten and first grade students, began to park to transport 1,500 more students home. It was a typical hectic dismissal for thousands of elementary school children, just like the organized chaos of a dismissal in any other school district.

As 1,500 students were in motion to return to classrooms to retrieve their belongings or as other students were leaving their classrooms with their teachers to board school buses home or to find their parents in the parent-pick-up loops, 9-1-1 was called by a parent in the parking area. The typical dismissal day immediately became atypical as an emergency lockdown was implemented based upon the report of an active shooter by the 9-1-1 caller. The New Albany Police Department responded in mass to the reports of an adult male wearing a visible firearm in a holster heading towards the elementary school building during dismissal.

District personnel, the school resource and DARE officers, and students immediately acted swiftly as trained and practiced during an active shooter situation. Great judgment enabled 1,500 children moving inside and outside of the school building to be locked down or evacuated to safe destinations. Students and visitors were ushered to safe locations. Bus drivers had K-1 children on buses get under seats as students traversing sidewalks with teachers immediately boarded buses for safety and further direction as they worked to keep children calm and secure. Teachers in the building, hallways, classrooms and even sidewalks rushed back into the building back into classrooms and locked students down in classrooms. Some others on sidewalks further away ran to the middle school nearby while one group of teachers with students in the

gym near the parking area put children in their car and drove to the police department to evacuate to follow ALICE protocols.

The police officers immediately identified and secured the man with the visible fire arm upon arrival. Simultaneously a squad of armed police officers also arrived to sweep the elementary building to insure that no other no additional threat was present for our students. Throughout this event our communications team was providing emergency text messages and alerts to families about the police on campus, status of students secured and delays with transportation with students being held on buses, all for safety's sake.

As you can imagine, this was a frightening experience for students, staff and families. We sent communications to parents afterward sharing that counselors would be available for all students who were fearful and anxious regarding what they had experienced. We also shared that everyone was safe and the incident had been resolved. In fact, it was a parent with a concealed carry permit approaching the school building to pick up his child. There was no real threat to the safety and welfare of our students despite how real this entire incident was for our students, staff, and families.

Afterward, numerous parents contacted Representative Gonzalez and the school district regarding concerns that someone with a weapon was on campus and they wondered what the prosecution for such an offense would be in order to keep their children safe. Parents were shocked to learn that individuals are permitted to conceal carry on the school campus when picking up a child, but may not enter a school building by statute. In this day of great panic and terror over the thought of shootings on school campuses, it is shocking that someone can walk around the school campus while picking up or dropping off a child with a weapon, even with a concealed carry permit.

As such, the New Albany-Plain Local Schools is a proponent of improving the current legislation by enacting House Bill 20. We are grateful that Representative Gonzalez has used the incident in our school district to propose a significant improvement in the law regarding the presence of concealed carry weapons on the school campus. Her bill will make changes that will require someone with a concealed carry permit who is carrying a weapon when they come to pick up or drop off someone or something on a school campus to keep the weapon in their locked vehicle. This improvement to the current legislation is absolutely essential to save every other school in Ohio from the type of panic experienced in our school district. On behalf of our students, staff, parents, communities, and our Board of Education, I wholeheartedly support this proposed legislation for your consideration and action. It is our sincere hope that no other school encounter such panic simply because an individual openly displays a permitted weapon on school grounds as presently permitted by Ohio Revised Code.