

Springfield Local Schools

Chairman Baldrige - my name is Kristina White and I have served as Community Liaison for the Springfield Local School District in Holland, Ohio since 1999. I am here today to provide this statement to the members of the Ohio House Transportation Committee of behalf of our school district in support of House Bill 465.

Let me first begin with our thanks to Mr. Sheehy and Mr. Bird for sponsoring this proposed legislation to establish requirements regarding Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) projects, specifically as they relate to schools and school zones.

We offer testimony not based on generalities but actual, real concerns. For those unfamiliar, historically our 120+ years old district is located in what would have been called a rural area. The past decades of *progress* have changed that. Today, few would consider this an appropriate site for a traditional school campus! Heavily-used motor and rail traffic corridors and rapid industrial growth frame our preK-12 campus. Within the past year, while all were struggling to educate students in the midst of a pandemic, meetings took place and plans set forth that will have a significant and potentially dangerous effect on our school district. We were informed very late in the process that a project was well underway by our Township Administrator, NOT ODOT or our County Engineer. Their meetings took place without our notification and without input from school officials - at least until the project was well underway.

Director Marchbanks was made aware of concerns that both the members of the Springfield Board of Education and administration had, first expressed in a letter mailed to him in August, 2021, for proposed changes in the traffic pattern on McCord Road in Holland. The area is adjacent to the district's high school campus, administrative building and transportation offices. That letter is included with this text. The originally proposed *improvements*, and we use this word *cautiously*, and several "alternates" would have increased the traffic into our School Zone. After the district was informed, we were able to contribute to the overall outcome of the proposed project. The construction phase, however, is just one challenge; future student safety, once the work is done, is another.

A "turn-about" has many perceived safety components on paper. Yet, when actually placed on a busy road in a school zone experiencing heavy morning and afternoon traffic - well, this presents countless safety challenges for school administration in a community with limited law enforcement for support. This burden further limits the time spent by district leaders to actually accomplish what we most wish to do - educate children.

That is why we're here today. **School district officials can be valued partners and positively contribute when informed of road construction that affect students, parents, and traffic patterns in and around educational facilities.**

While passage and implementation of this legislation may be too late to protect the children attending preK-12 classes within the Springfield Local School District, we appear here today to speak for all school district officials who deserve the opportunity to participate, as colleagues, with ODOT to create safer traffic conditions within communities throughout the state of Ohio.

Springfield Local Schools

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August 9, 2021

Jack Marchbanks
Director
Ohio Department of Transportation
1980 West Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43223

Director Marchbanks,

At the opening of the new Dorr Street interchange on August 2, 2021, there were many poignant thoughts and comments shared. Clearly, it was stated over and over again that it was the creativity and cooperation of the public and private sector that enabled this project to overcome barriers and reach its completion.

The audience heard many speak eloquently about the importance of listening to the constituents and respecting the partnerships that exist between those who live and work in the Holland/Springfield community. Few will disagree that this project could not have happened without the agreements that were transacted between township and school board leaders. Many, including you, applauded it!

After the speeches, we had the pleasure of meeting you in person and were struck by a comment that you made. You mentioned that the decisions made by ODOT and our board of education impact future generations – you even said that you are often placed in a position of, “planning for 50-years in the future!” While we heartily agree that preparing for tomorrow is important, we suggest that our decisions also have a profound impact on the “todays” for the thousands of students attending our schools.

We write today to request that you meet with our Board of Education and listen to our valid concerns about the McCord Road/Spring Valley Drive project that your agency has announced. We learned of the project without notification from your office or without the benefit of participating in public meetings (as they were not held). We have made our concerns known in writing, and are encouraging our staff, families, and neighbors to also do so. We are seeking a better alternative than for motorists to be forced into our School Safety Zone and traverse the same traffic circle used as a crosswalk for students and parents dropping-off and picking-up their children

We commend your actions to plan for our futures. We plead that you also plan for the safety of the young people whose safety will be challenged should your current plans for the McCord Road project become reality. Please allow us to voice our concerns and perhaps, with the same creativity and spirit of cooperation that enable a solution for the Dorr Street interchange, a more suitable solution can be found. We ask that you contact Springfield Schools' Superintendent Matt Geha (mattgeha@springfield-schools.org) to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,



Richard Helminski

Sherri Koback

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: March 22, 2022

Name: Kristina White

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Springfield Local Schools

Position/Title: Community Liaison

Address: 6740 Brick Yard Court (home) 6900 Hall Street (office)

City: Maumee/Holland State: Ohio Zip: 43537/43528

Best Contact Telephone: 4192905027 Email: kristina.white123@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): House Bill 465

Specific Issue: School District Perspective

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? less than five minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position: School district officials can be valued partners and positively contribute when informed of road construction that affect students, parents, and traffic patterns in and around educational facilities. While passage and implementation of this legislation may be too late to protect the children attending preK-12 classes within the Springfield Local School District, we appear here today to speak for all school district officials who deserve the opportunity to participate, as colleagues, with ODOT to create safer traffic conditions within communities throughout the state of Ohio.