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**Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Nov. 30, 2022**

Proponent Testimony on SB 356

Rachel Chilton, Executive Director, Ohio School Psychologists Association

Chairman Brenner and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 356, legislation to change the Ohio developmental delay age range provision to mirror Federal law. Accompanying me here today is Ann Brennan, the recently retired Executive Director of OSPA and Jennifer Glenn, a school psychologist for Columbus City Schools and member of OSPA's Executive Board.

The Ohio School Psychologists Association, which represents more than 700 school psychologists in Ohio, strongly supports this change as it will benefit students as well as school-based professionals who serve on special education evaluation teams.

The age range in the definition of developmental delay is currently set as ages three to five. By increasing the age range to cover ages three to nine, Ohio would mirror the definition in federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This would allow evaluation teams additional time to make a more thorough evaluation of a student, ensuring they are provided the necessary services and supports. Preschool experiences differ widely across Ohio and young children's development is also highly variable. Young children entering kindergarten and first grade need time in the instructional setting and social environment before evaluation teams conduct evaluations and reevaluations. This added time period is essential to make school-aged decisions, which determine whether a child is a child with a disability or simply a child who needs more exposure and instructional time in those early grades.

A developmental delay is a special education eligibility category assigned when children do not meet the expected milestones in several development areas. When children start kindergarten, they come in with different backgrounds, experiences, and starting places. Some will have been evaluated in preschool and have an individualized educational plan (IEP) in place. With others, it will be clear they have some type of delay, but the IEP that was previously set may need to be altered as the evaluation team gets to know the student. Some children may not have had the opportunity to be evaluated at all by the time they start school. A child with a developmental delay can often make progress towards improving and may eventually overcome the delay, but that means the right interventions and supports must be in place and continue.



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Ohio and federal law require that all reevaluations must be conducted by the three-year date of the initial special education determination; SB 356 does not impact this important requirement.

This simple change in Ohio law is both good for young children and the professionals who serve them. We thank Senator Brenner for introducing this bill and we urge the committee to pass it. Thank you for your consideration, we are happy to respond to any questions you may have.