

Good afternoon. I am writing regarding House Bill 114. It is my understanding that the intent behind this bill is to make things less confusing for families regarding the age cutoffs for Kindergarten entrance. The state currently requires districts to select one of two dates, August 1 or September 30, as the date by which a child must be 5 to start school. I agree that it can be confusing or frustrating to parents when their district has one date but the district next door has another. So, I agree with the intent of the proposed law.

However, the change to make the cutoff date for a child to be 5 set as the first day of the school year actually makes it MORE confusing and chaotic for families. Every school district chooses their start date based on their school calendar needs, which are developed, at most, two years in advance. Things like holiday breaks, community events and priorities, and negotiated contracts can impact when a school year starts and ends. In fact, this fall, Columbus' 10TV [ran an article](#) notifying families of the start dates. The districts listed had 11 different calendar dates listed as the start of school. So, instead of families needing to keep track of two possibilities, they would need to sort through 11. And, it gets even more confusing, because many schools start Kindergartners after the rest of the student come, and they bring in Kindergartners in smaller groups the first week to get students acclimated to school and do state-required screening. So is the age cutoff the first day of school for any student, the first day for any Kindergartner, or the first day for their Kindergarten group?

This language makes it very hard for a family to plan since calendars are set 1 to 2 years in advance. If a child is born August 15, currently, their family knows for certain what year their child will begin Kindergarten based on their district's choice of the August 1 or September 30 cutoff. But, with the proposed changes in HB 114, that parent wouldn't know until 1 to 2 years in advanced of school when the district approves and publishes their calendar and they can see if the start date is August 14 (and their child can't go to school) or 16<sup>th</sup> (and their child DOES go to school). That makes it hard to plan the timing of preschool enrollment prior to Kindergarten or child care. And, families who are sending their first child to Kindergarten may not even know where or how to find their district calendar two years in advance.

If legislators truly want to simplify things for families, set one statewide age cutoff date for Kindergarten that every district follows. It could be August 1, It could be September 30, it could be September 1 if you want to split the difference, or it could be August 15 if you want to get close to the start of the school year. But do not set something vague like the first day of school. That will only make the confusion worse, rather than better.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Colleen Boyle  
Columbus, Ohio