

All-day kindergarten should be standard

To the Editor:

I would like to express my thoughts to the Worthington School Board concerning Attorney General Mark Dann's recent opinion that the district cannot charge extra tuition for the all-day kindergarten classes.

My daughter participated in the program last year, and my son is currently finishing up his first month. We have had nothing but wonderful experiences with the dedicated teachers and administrators that lead our children.

Obviously, my wife and I feel this program is important and is in the best interest of our kids' future. Last week we received a letter in the mail saying the Board will abide by the ruling and stop charging tuition until further notice.

We were not at all surprised to read the one solution offered prominently in the letter was to legislate a ruling which will allow collection to continue.

In addition, the legislation should be crafted to allow retroactive collection of tuition. I see this as a very disingenuous and selfish solution. Clearly, the message sent here is that this is purely a money issue, and the interest of our children is not their main concern.

I encourage the Board to accept Dann's opinion and create a standard, full-day kindergarten program for all students in our district. Over half the eligible kids in the district are enrolled, and many more wait to enter the district by enrolling in full-day kindergarten programs at schools like LCC and Goddard.

Other parents in our neighborhood have also expressed interest in the program, but the price makes them choose the alternative half-day program.

There is clearly a demand. We have heard anecdotal opinions from Worthington teachers that the full-day kids are very well-prepared for first grade. The school district even acknowledges the numerous benefits of the program, both academic and social.

It would be nice to know all kids have the opportunity to enter their first grade with the same preparation and benefits. In addition, our teachers would not be integrating kids from 4 or 5 different programs into the first grade. They would already be familiar with the school's environment and be ready to go on equal footing.

If we, as a community, are serious about keeping Worthington the premier school district in Central Ohio, we should encourage K-plus as the only kindergarten program. The outrage we all heard when the state rated us as Continuously Improving was deafening. Like most in our

district, I thought that was a ridiculous rating and meant absolutely nothing.

So how about getting behind a successful program that shows we are always leading the way as a great district? Let's do the right thing make K-plus standard.

Douglas Knuth