

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

UNIFORM SCHOOL START DATE

THE ISSUE

Currently Indiana law sets a 180 instructional-day minimum for K-12 school calendars but lets districts choose when to begin their school year. Some schools have started as early as July, shrinking opportunities for students to gain valuable work skills through summer employment. Early start dates also harm the Hoosier tourism economy, reducing business and labor income and state and local tax revenues.

KEY FINDINGS

Researchers at Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs estimate that **students who work during high school are estimated to earn 6% more annually** than those who do not. Students who work during high school **increase "soft skills,"** the probability of future fringe benefits, **and the probability of future employment.**

Moreover, moving to a uniform, second-to-last-Monday in August school start date would boost tourism-related economic activity and yield:

- An **\$11.3M** increase in GDP
- A **\$6.9M** increase in labor income
- **249** new jobs
- A **\$1.73M** increase in state and local tax revenues

CONCLUSION

Moving to a uniform school start date in the latter half of August will give Hoosier students more opportunities to work during high school and gain the skills, including vital "soft skills," that strengthen their chances for future employment and increase their earnings. A later start date will also boost the state's tourism economy, GDP, and state and local tax revenue.

COOK INC.

Over the past year, Cook Inc. has consistently listed 100+ available positions with the company. Many of the open positions only require a high school diploma or GED, yet Cook has been unable to fill them because many workers lack the "soft skills" (showing up on time and regularly, professionalism, etc.) that early work experience – including summer work experience – provides. Adjusting school start dates will help students gain these vital skills through summer work and improve their competitiveness and earnings potential after graduation.

In 2015, the State of Indiana and the Lilly Endowment co-funded 84 high school internships in advanced manufacturing and logistics created by Conexus Indiana. The AML companies reported their interns developed an interest in advanced manufacturing and gained soft skills valuable to future employment.