

Information for IFT members about paid administrative leave days legislation

A proposed new Act will allow employees of K-12 school districts, community colleges, and public universities to receive paid administrative leave if they or their child are required to quarantine because of a positive COVID-19 test result, or close contact with a person who had a confirmed case of COVID-19, or exclusion for COVID-19 symptoms in accordance with school district policy. The law will apply for the 2021-2022 school year and is retroactive to the beginning of the year for employees who are vaccinated or become vaccinated within 5 weeks of the effective date of the Act. The Act also includes a provision guaranteeing pay for any school closure or e-learning day if the closure precludes a school district paraprofessional employee from performing their regularly scheduled duties. Below is a list of frequently asked questions about the proposed law.

1. When will this Act take effect?

Immediately upon passage of the Illinois legislature and the signature of Governor.

2. Who gets paid administrative leave under this Act?

Every employee of a public school district, public university, and public community college who is fully vaccinated or has received the required doses to become fully vaccinated within five weeks of the effective date of the Act.

3. When can I use paid administrative leave for COVID-19?

You can use paid administrative leave under this Act if you or your child are required to be excluded from school because of a positive COVID-19 test result or close contact with a person who had a confirmed case of COVID-19 or exclusion for COVID-19 symptoms in accordance with school district policy. In order to qualify for this leave, you must be fully vaccinated or have received the required doses to become fully vaccinated within five weeks of the effective date of the Act.

4. I had previously used my own sick leave for COVID-19, will it be returned to me?

YES, if you have previously used your sick leave days because you or your child were required to be excluded from school because of a positive COVID-19 test result, close contact with a person who had a confirmed case of COVID-19, or exclusion for COVID-19 symptoms in accordance with school district policy, your leave days will be returned to you if you are fully vaccinated or have received the required doses to become fully vaccinated within five weeks of the effective date of the Act.

5. What does “fully vaccinated” mean?

Individuals are fully vaccinated if they meet the IDPH definition of fully vaccinated. Currently, this means that they must receive one dose of the J&J vaccine or two doses of the Pfizer and/ or Moderna vaccines. To comply with this Act, individuals must receive all required doses within five weeks of the law’s effective date. For more information about what it means to be fully vaccinated, please see this [IDPH guidance](#).

6. If the CDC or IDPH changes the definition of “fully vaccinated” is there any chance teachers will lose their previously earned benefits?

NO. If an individual is eligible to have sick days reinstated as of the day the Act is signed or becomes eligible to have sick days reinstated, those days cannot be taken away based on future changes to the CDC or IDPH definitions of “fully vaccinated.” Similarly, any paid administrative leave days previously awarded to an employee cannot be taken away because of a future change in the definition of fully vaccinated.

7. If the CDC and IDPH change the definition of “fully vaccinated” to include booster shots, will I have to get a booster shot to remain eligible for future benefits under this Act?

YES, you will need to remain fully vaccinated in order to receive **future** administrative leave benefits. If the definition of “fully vaccinated” is changed to include booster shots, you have five weeks from the issuance of updated IDPH guidance to receive any booster shots required to be “fully vaccinated.”



Illinois Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals

ift-aft.org [facebook.com/iftaft](https://www.facebook.com/iftaft) @iftaft

For more information, visit ift-aft.org or contact your field service director.

8. What are the COVID-19 testing requirements?

This bill requires you to comply with any COVID-19 testing requirements imposed by your school district, university, or community college. For example, if your school district requires vaccinated employees to participate in a testing program, you must participate to be eligible. If your school district only requires testing for unvaccinated employees, you are in compliance with your district's requirements so long as you have received the required doses to be fully vaccinated.

9. What if I have a religious or medical exemption from my district?

The bill does not impact any federal protections regarding religious or medical exemptions from vaccination requirements.

10. What does this mean for teachers and staff who are unvaccinated, but who are tested for COVID-19 every week?

They are not eligible for the administrative leave provided by this Act and will not receive any additional leave beyond what they receive in their contract.

11. Why are only vaccinated teachers eligible for these benefits?

Vaccines prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death, and decrease the chances of an employee spreading the virus. Vaccinations are necessary to ensure that schools will be able to operate more consistently over time, with fewer students and staff in quarantine as a result of COVID-19 infections spreading in schools.

12. Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccination?

- A. Pharmacies across the state have vaccination appointments readily available. Go to www.vaccines.gov to find a location near you.
- B. Vaccine clinics are being held across the state and you can find a location and clinic schedules here: [*Illinois Community Partners Vaccination Clinic Schedule*](#)

13. How can I learn more about vaccination?

The State of Illinois has a vaccination resource page found here, which contains information from doctors and real people from across the state:

[*https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/all-in-illinois.html*](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/all-in-illinois.html)

14. I used sick time during the 2021-2022 school year for a reason that was unrelated to COVID-19, will this Act restore that leave?

NO, this leave can only be used if you or your child are required to be excluded from school because of a positive COVID-19 test result or close contact with a person who had a confirmed case of COVID-19 or exclusion for COVID-19 symptoms in accordance with school district policy.

15. What about sick time I used for COVID in the 2020-2021 school year?

This bill only applies to absences related to COVID in the 2021-2022 school year.

16. What wage protection is provided under this Act?

If a school district temporarily closes because of COVID-19 or switches to e-learning, paraprofessionals and school related personnel must continue to be paid even if they cannot perform their regular scheduled duties. For instance, if you are a 180-day paraprofessional and your district goes remote for 10 days, this Act requires you to be paid for those days even if you were not required to work those days. This protection applies for the entire 2021-22 school year, including any days that a school has already closed or switched to e-learning which caused the paraprofessional to go without pay or take their own earned paid time off.

17. Will you apply this sick leave policy to preschool teachers and day care staff?

The COVID-19 paid sick leave policy in this bill only applies to employees of public-school districts, public universities, and public community colleges.



Illinois Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals

ift-aft.org facebook.com/iftaft @iftaft

For more information, visit ift-aft.org or contact your field service director.