

FAQ

When does this Act take effect?

Immediately after passage by the both houses of the General Assembly and signature by the Governor.

Who gets paid administrative leave?

Every employee of a public school district established under Article 10 or Article 34 of the School Code, 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.

When can I take paid administrative leave?

You can use your 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. Paid administrative leave is also available when an employee is directed to be excluded from their workplace and misses work pursuant to the school or school district policy due to COVID-19 symptoms.

Who gets sick leave restored?

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 and who has previously used their sick time because they or their child were 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. Sick leave is also restored for those previous instances in the 2021-2022 school year where an employee used their sick time because they were excluded from their workplace and missed work pursuant to the school or school district policy due to COVID-19 symptoms.

What does “fully vaccinated” mean?

Individuals are fully vaccinated if they meet the CDC and 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 or Moderna vaccines and will be considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they have received those doses. 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 [CDC guidance](#).

Additional information: If IDPH, following the lead of the CDC, changes the definition of “fully vaccinated” to include a booster dose of a vaccine, then individuals will have five weeks after the adoption of that change to meet the guidelines of the updated definition.

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

No. If a teacher 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 to fully vaccinated.

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 paid administrative leave. You have five weeks from the issuance of updated IDPH guidance to receive any booster shots required to be “fully vaccinated.”

I had to use sick time earlier during the 2021-2022 school year because I got Covid-19 or because my child had Covid-19. Will I get those days back?

Yes. As long as you have received the doses necessary to be fully vaccinated within five weeks of the effective date of this Act, then your previously used sick days will be reinstated.

What are the testing requirements?

This bill requires you to comply with any 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 teachers, you are in compliance with your district’s requirements so long as you have received the required doses to be fully vaccinated.

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. Those employees who were granted a medical or religious exemption from vaccination by their employer pursuant to federal law are eligible for this benefit.

What does this mean for teachers who aren’t vaccinated and do not have a recognized medical or religious exemption from their employer, but who are tested every week?

They will not receive any additional leave beyond what they receive in their contract.

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 which is in furtherance of public health and means that schools will be able to operate more consistently over time, with fewer staff in need of sick time. Vaccinations are widely available through many publicly available sources.

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.

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.