

Families First Coronavirus Response Act

Background:

In the spring of 2020, Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) which provided emergency paid sick leave and expanded FMLA leave for employees under qualifying circumstances. The Act provided that employers must provide to all employees the following:

- *Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of **paid sick leave** at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined, and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.*

This leave was reflected in emergency board policies, Exhibits 409.2E1 and 409.2E2.

However, the FFCRA only applied through December 31, 2020. It was not renewed by Congress, and now the Act and the leave have expired.

Considerations:

During this pandemic, people have been forced to quarantine at home due to exposure which may have included circumstances beyond their control. Likewise, people have tested positive and been quarantined for protracted periods.

We have a concern that the expiration of this leave could result in people refusing to get tested or even coming to work without disclosing their symptoms.

We are considering extending this benefit to encourage people to stay home and miss work, rather than come in and expose others to the virus and potentially endanger others.

I suggest extending this for one month only, until all faculty and staff have a chance to receive the new vaccine.

Extending this benefit would also extend temporary school board policies Exhibits 409.2E1 and 409.2E2 that would have been rescinded after December 31, 2020.

Recommended Action:

I recommend the board extend the FFCRA benefit of two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined, and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis. This extension to continue until the close of business on Friday, February 26, or following the second round of on-site COVID-19 vaccinations, whichever comes first.