



Bridgett Heinrich <bheinrich@panaschools.com>

Fwd: Capitol Watch: Pritzker Vetoes COVID Administrative Leave Bill; Introduces Framework for Revised Legislation

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Bridgett Heinrich <bheinrich@panaschools.com>

Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 5:24 PM

February Board Meeting

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **IASA** <iasa@iasaedu.org>

Date: Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 4:35 PM

Subject: Capitol Watch: Pritzker Vetoes COVID Administrative Leave Bill; Introduces Framework for Revised Legislation

To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>



Pritzker Vetoes COVID Administrative Leave Bill; Introduces Framework for Revised Legislation

It was no surprise Gov. JB Pritzker vetoed **HB 2778**, the COVID School Employee Benefit and Wage Protection Bill.

What surprised us in today's veto message was the framework Gov. Pritzker and his administrative team proposed after weeks of negotiations with the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) and Illinois Education Association (IEA).

The negotiated framework offers incentives for teachers and staff members to get vaccinated, as well as language that restores used sick leave for school employees. Unfortunately, the proposal does not address concerns IASA and other stakeholders have (see below).

What happens next?

There are two possibilities that might occur following the Governor's formal veto of the initial legislation. First, and least likely, the General Assembly may decide to take up a vote to override the Governor's veto and pass the introduced language of HB 2778 into law. Given the strong advocacy from IASA members, along with many other organizations since the fall veto session, we do not believe that the General Assembly will take this route.

The most likely option is for a new bill to be filed with language that the Governor has articulated in his veto message.

Since the initial legislation passed by wide margins in both chambers, it's likely the governor's proposal, or a modified version, will have enough support to pass. Therefore, it will be important for school administrators to make our voices heard on this issue and try to negotiate a final bill that is more manageable for schools. Be on the lookout for a future *Capitol Watch* about how members can advocate.

What's Proposed in the Veto Message?

In his veto message, Gov. Pritzker outlined provisions that were negotiated with labor unions. The joint framework proposes the following protections for educators, school employees and their families:

- Paid administrative leave for 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, and
 - is required, or whose child is 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
 - has been required by the school or school district policy to be excluded from school district property due to COVID-19 symptoms.

- Restoration of sick leave for 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, or
 - has been required by the school or school district policy to be excluded from school district property due to COVID-19 symptoms.

- Maintains wage protections in HB 2778 for all hourly school employees, including but not limited to, custodial, transportation, food service providers, classroom assistants, or administrative staff. 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.

Concerns with the New Proposal

Based on the points articulated in the Governor's veto message today, IASA remains concerned with the compromised proposal. Those concerns include:

- The proposal could hamper in-person learning by creating staffing issues for K-12 schools as well as exacerbate the substitute shortage.

- The proposal could invalidate school districts' memorandums of understanding (MOU's) that codify administrative leave and related issues.
- The proposal undermines the ability of local school districts to use the proven test-to-stay process to prioritize uninterrupted in-person learning by giving teachers the option to stay home instead of testing.
- The proposal requires school districts to shift federal COVID relief dollars away from the student-focused learning recovery initiatives outlined in previous grant applications to ISBE toward an unspecified amount of unanticipated employee pay.
- The underlying language of HB 2778 did not include a sunset provision, and it is unclear if the sunset provision applies to the entirety of the legislation or specific parts of the newly negotiated compromise.

While we understand and respect the intentions of HB 2778 and agree that employees should receive the support necessary to keep themselves and their families safe and healthy, we continue to be worried about unintended consequences on schools.

To close, thank you to everyone who reached out to your local legislators in December on this proposal. Those advocacy efforts will help as the new bill takes shape and works its way through the Illinois General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Emily Warnecke
Director of Public Relations/Deputy Director of Governmental Relations
Illinois Association of School Administrators/Illinois Association of School Business Officials

Madeline McCune
Director of Governmental Relations
Illinois Association of School Administrators/Illinois Association of School Business Officials

IASA | [2648 Beechler Court, Springfield, IL 62703-7305](#)

[Unsubscribe jbauer@panaschools.com](mailto:jbauer@panaschools.com)

Constant Contact Data Notice

Sent by iasa@iasaedu.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!

--
Mr. Jason Bauer
Superintendent - Pana CUSD #8
14 E. Main Street
Pana, IL 62557
Phone: (217) 562-1500
Fax: (217) 562-1501