

January 24, 2022

To the Honorable Members of

The Illinois House of Representatives,

102nd General Assembly:

As Governor, it is my priority to keep students and teachers safely in the classroom. Today I announce a collaborative initiative that will keep schools open and ensure that vaccinated teachers are not penalized for caring for their children or themselves in the event of a Covid-19-required absence.

Vaccines are a vital tool in preventing the deadly effects of Covid-19, and those who take the steps to be fully vaccinated against this virus are doing their part to keep everyone safe. They deserve to be able to take the time they need to respond to the ongoing devastating impacts the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have on them and their families.

Numerous organizations are impacted by this legislation, and my administration has listened closely to all of them, including lawmakers and our partners at the Illinois Education Association and the Illinois Federation of Teachers, parents, school districts, community colleges and universities. Through a collaborative, cooperative process, we have negotiated an initiative that will provide paid administrative leave for teachers who, despite doing all they can to keep themselves and their communities safe, continue to have their lives and livelihoods disrupted by Covid-19.

This joint initiative provides for many of the same protections found in HB2778, with the enhancement of 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
  - fully vaccinated or has received the required doses to become fully vaccinated within five weeks of the effective date of the Act and who
  - is required, or whose child is required, to be excluded from school because of a positive COVID-19 test result, a close contact with a person who had a confirmed case of COVID-19, or a school or school district policy requiring absence 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
  - 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, a close contact with a person who had a confirmed case of COVID-19, or a school or school district policy requiring absence due to COVID-19 symptoms.
- Maintains wage protections in HB2778 for all hourly school employees, including but not limited to, custodial, transportation, food service providers, classroom assistants, or administrative staff required to miss work during a school closure or e-learning day due to COVID-19.

I look forward to partnering with members of the General Assembly and stakeholders to advance and sign legislation ensuring these benefits for our state's educators. This joint initiative renders the

contents of HB2778 moot, and today I veto House Bill 2778 from the 102<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in its entirety.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(b) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return House Bill 2778, entitled "SCH CD-DAILY PUPIL ATTENDANCE," with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

JB Pritzker