Office of the Governor

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Illinois Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals

Illinois State Board of Education

March 17, 2020

Joint Statement of the Office of Governor JB Pritzker, Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Association of School Administrators, Illinois Principals Association, and Illinois State Board of Education

These are unprecedented times, but we are all together with the goal of caring for students. Our organizations are truly inspired by the phenomenal cooperation shown across the state and encourage all of our members to be reasonable, creative, and generous while determining what's best for our students in Illinois. ISBE has announced that these will be Act of God Days. To assist our members during this time, the leadership of the IEA, IFT, IASA, and IPA have prepared this joint guidance with the Office of Governor JB Pritzker and ISBE to be effective through March 30, 2020. As this is a rapidly evolving situation, subsequent guidance may be released.

From March 17 through March 30, all school district employees on the district's payroll will get paid as if the schools were functioning normally, regardless of the district plans developed during this time. These school days will not be made up. All employees will get paid as if they did all the normal work they would have done if schools were functioning normally. Normal pay includes salary, hourly and stipend pay, benefits, and employees will receive full and normal service credit in their pension systems.

From March 17 through March 30, the employer can expect school district employees to participate in work activities in some form. The concrete details of the work, including stipend work, that will occur during this timeframe must be worked out through mutual agreement, but negotiations should focus on ensuring (1) continuity of education, (2) provision of meals, and (3) other student support measures as appropriate for each district. Public health and safety of students and staff are paramount, and to the extent work can be done remotely, it should be. Illinois Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations on social distancing and group gatherings should be adhered to. Employers should not require any more employees than absolutely necessary to come to school.

No school district can unilaterally change the use of benefit days. We encourage local collaboration on the use of benefit days and encourage ways to support anyone who is sick or is caring for a sick family member.

We acknowledge that the current law on teacher evaluation and Reduction in Force (honorable dismissal and layoff) remains in full force including all timelines and existing statutory language. If necessary, meetings and evaluation conferences associated with these statutes will occur remotely.