



September 10, 2021

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Office of the Illinois Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

Over the last several days, local school superintendents and officials have been expressing a series of serious concerns regarding one of your most recent Executive Orders—Executive Order 2021-20, which states that all schools must require teachers, staff, and administration to either get vaccinated or be tested at least once a week.

These valued community education administrators are especially concerned about the short timeframe given for schools to implement these new mandates.

While we appreciate your recognition that your original timeframe of ten days was not adequate for schools to get a testing process/system in place and running, the recent two week extension found in Executive Order 2021-22 still causes serious disruption and concern that many schools don't have the resources and information available to comply with the mandate by the September 19 deadline.

We respectfully request that you provide schools more time, guidance and resources to get a compliant testing system up and running. As you know, our school officials have had immeasurable challenges over the past year and a half. They are not only juggling returning to in-person learning, keeping children and staff safe, and staying up-to-date with the ever-changing rules and guidelines, but they are now being required to establish and implement a comprehensive testing program in less than a month—something no superintendent has previous experience doing.

Additionally, in an effort to better provide information to our schools regarding the recent Executive Order, we ask that you please provide responses to the following questions:

1. It's been over two weeks since Executive Order 2021-20 was issued, and ISBE has yet to provide schools with guidance. When can schools expect to receive guidance from ISBE?


2. Deputy Leader Sue Rezin, Minority Spokesperson for the Senate Education Committee, sent a letter to State Superintendent Dr. Carmen Ayala on September 1 (see attached), asking a series of questions on our schools' behalf. Can we expect a response to her inquiry?
3. Given the up to six week timeline SHIELD has said it takes to on-board new schools, what led to your decision to only give schools a total of 24 days to implement testing?
4. Will the \$225 million in federal funds be enough to pay for this mandate on all schools (public and non-public)? If that money runs out, what is the plan to pay for it? Will schools be on the hook to cover the costs?
5. Given that the Executive Order applies to all schools, public and private, what is the reason that private schools have to pay for their own collection, transportation and results reporting costs?
6. Why did IDPH's definition of an outbreak in schools suddenly change to two or more cases when the criteria for an outbreak at all other locations and gatherings is still five or more cases? When did this change occur? What led to that decision?

Thank you for your quick attention to this very pressing matter for our educators and families struggling to create a safe and positive learning environment for our students. We look forward to your response so we can assist in providing our local schools with this necessary information.

Sincerely,



Senator Dan McConchie
Senate Republican Leader



Senator Steve McClure
50th District



Senator Jil Tracy
47th District



Senator Sue Rezin
Deputy Republican Leader



Senator Brian Stewart
45th District



Senator Sally Turner
44th District



Senator Jason Barickman
53rd District



Senator Win Stoller
37th District



Senator Craig Wilcox
32nd District



Senator Terri Bryant
58th District



Senator Dave Syverson
35th District



Senator Dale Fowler
59th District



Senator Chapin Rose
51st District