

Frequently Asked Questions about Payroll during COVID-19 closure.

Q. Will the days that are canceled due to the COVID-19 health emergency be required to be made up?

A. No, these days will not be made up since county boards of education will be providing a variety of distance learning options to students during the time off. Since these days will count as instructional days towards the required 180 days of instruction, the days also count as employment days towards the 200 day employment contract.

Q. Will regular full-time employees be paid for the days that schools are closed due to COVID-19 even if they don't report to their normal work location for the day?

A. Yes, all regular, full-time employees will be paid for the days that schools are closed even if they are not required to report to their normal work location for the day. Whether physically present at a school facility or working remotely, all employees are expected to contribute to supporting students while school are closed.

Q. How do we handle assessing leave to employees out on planned medical leave?

A. Employees on planned medical leave with medical reason(s) that prevent them from working from home should use leave since they aren't working from home like the other employees or contributing to support students. If you utilize a long-term substitute to complete the regular job duties of the individual on medical leave, the leave continues.

Q. Are county boards of education required to pay professional long-term substitutes while schools are closed due to the COVID-19 health emergency?

A. Professional employees are expected to provide distance learning options to students while schools are closed. Professional long-term substitutes who provide such distance learning options for their students should be paid during the school closures.

Q. Are county boards of education required to pay service long-term substitutes while schools are closed due to the COVID-19 health emergency?

A. Per W. Va. Code § 18A-4-15, a substitute service person who fills a position for twenty or more working days “acquires regular employment status” and “is accorded all other rights, privileges and benefits pertaining to the position until the regular employee returns to the position or ceases to be employed by the county board.” Substitute service personnel who fall into this category are treated like any of your other regular full-time employees who are being paid during this health emergency.

Q. Our county has spring break scheduled in the coming weeks. If schools are still closed due to the health emergency, does that impact our school calendar and corresponding employment calendar?

A. County boards of education have been advised to leave school calendars intact. Employees are expected to work only to the extent they would normally be required to work during spring break.

Q How should county boards handle paying their spring sport coaches given shortened/canceled seasons?

A. Spring sports and practices were underway prior to the health emergency closure of schools. Even if the seasons are shortened/canceled, county boards should honor the spring sports coaching contracts since services were rendered. The contract amounts do not need to be prorated due to the shorter season.

Q. If a county pays teachers for teaching during their planning period, should the county continue to pay those teachers for that additional responsibility during the COVID-19 health emergency?

A. If a teacher agreed to give up their planning period for the remainder of the year to provide instruction to a specific group of students, then yes, the county should continue to pay the teacher the additional compensation for those instructional services.

Q. Are temporary, part-time employees (such as after school program workers, daycare workers, parent involvement coordinators, etc.) who are normally paid on an hourly basis entitled to compensation during the COVID-19 health emergency?

A. The WVDE continues to research the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act to determine whether any federal rules pertain to these workers. Absent any federal rules, these employees are not entitled to compensation if they are not working during the health crisis, unless they are doing work that is directly related to their job, such as parent involvement coordinators calling parents, etc.

Q. How should county boards of education handle extra-curricular contracts during the school closures? Should employees continue to be paid as though those extra-curricular duties were fulfilled (e.g.: bus driver with a contract to make certain mid-day runs)?

A. At this time, county boards should continue paying these employees under their extracurricular contract obligations since the inability to actually perform the extracurricular duties is outside of the control of the employee.

Extra duty bus runs such as for ball games generally will not occur during the school closures. Drivers are not due additional compensation if extra duty runs do not occur.

Q. Can county boards of education require employees who are considered essential to the school system's operations, such as finance staff, to report to work?

A. County boards of education are encouraged to permit even essential employees to work from home to the extent possible. If there are certain tasks (e.g. printing checks) that cannot be completed from home, county boards can ask those essential employees to report periodically to complete those tasks while practicing social distancing. If an essential employee is in a COVID-19 risk group, the county should collaboratively find ways to safely complete those tasks without compromising the employee's health. County superintendents will make the determination as to what tasks are essential and who will complete them.