



School Employees are Designated as “Essential Workers.” What Does that Mean?

On August 18 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) clarified previous guidance and designated teachers, as well as aides, paraprofessionals, IT specialists and most other school district support staff as “essential workers.” But what does that mean for school districts?

CISA does not have the legal authority to make law or govern states, counties and cities in Missouri, but its recommendations hold weight. In the spring, many municipalities relied on the CISA list of essential workers to carve out exemptions in the local “stay put” orders. Employees on the list were allowed to continue working. But now that the “stay put” orders have been removed, the CISA list is intended to help municipalities focus efforts to keep “essential” businesses running during the pandemic. The designation essentially declares that schools are important to the community and that measures should be taken to keep schools operational.

For more information, see the CISA [Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers](#) or contact the MSBA Legal Department.