

Oppose the betrayal of the Chicago teachers strike!

CTU moves to shut down strike without giving teachers right to vote on sellout contract

The WSWS Teacher Newsletter

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The Chicago Teachers Union has announced it is shutting down the 11-day strike and sending teachers back to work tomorrow without giving them the right to vote on a new contract.

In coordination with the administration of Democratic Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the CTU orchestrated a cynical ploy Thursday morning over make-up days for those lost due to the strike. Lightfoot announced at a press conference that there will be five additional school days added to the end of the year.

The CTU is hailing this as a “victory” to justify the shutdown of the strike. In fact, not only will teachers have to work the additional days, but this will only compensate for less than half of the lost pay during the strike.

Since teachers were strung out on the picket lines without any strike pay, this will mean that most will lose more than \$2,000 in pay this year, entirely swallowing up the meager pay raise included in the contract for next year.

The agreement adopted by the CTU House of Delegates Wednesday night, in a 364-242 vote, conforms entirely to the demands of Lightfoot, who has insisted from the beginning that there is “no money” to meet teachers’ demands for better pay, increased staffing, lower class sizes and more prep time.

The contract includes wholly inadequate increases in the number of social workers and nurses over a five-year period. Most teachers will not see any increase in prep time. It includes “aspirations” to reduce class sizes, which teachers know to be worthless as the existing caps are routinely violated.

The way that the strike is being shut down says everything about the character of the agreement. Teachers have been given no opportunity to study and discuss a contract that will govern the next five years of their lives and the lives of their students.

The CTU and the city hope that the shutting down of the strike will remove any initiative that teachers have and create the conditions for pushing the agreement through. Teachers know, moreover, that if they reject the contract in votes being held over the next 10 days and resume the strike, the CTU will not fight for anything better.

The outcome of the strike is in line with the way that the CTU has operated from the beginning. CTU President Jesse Sharkey declared at the onset that the strike would be “short term,” a means of letting off steam as the CTU collaborated with the administration to reach an agreement along the lines demanded by Lightfoot.

The strike lasted as long as it did because the CTU felt it could not push through the agreement approved on Wednesday. With pressure building within the ruling class in Chicago to end the walkout, however, the CTU organized a maneuver to quickly shut it down.

Teachers should oppose the sellout of their strike. A real fight to defend and expand public education, however, cannot be subordinated to the CTU and its alliance with the Democratic Party, which no less than the Republicans has overseen a decades-long assault on public education.

Opposition to social inequality is growing among workers and young people across the United States and

around the world. The pro-capitalist unions are the biggest obstacle to unifying workers, whether it is the CTU or the United Auto Workers, which recently shut down the 40-day GM strike accepting the closure of plants and a vast proliferation of temporary labor.

A real fight by the working class is necessary to radically redistribute wealth to meet the needs of society instead of the corporate and financial elite. To fight for this, teachers and all workers must advance their own demands, which begin with what working people need not what the corporations, big business politicians and union officials say is affordable.

The WSWS *Teacher Newsletter* calls on teachers to form rank-and-file committees in every school. Organize meetings to carefully review the contract and plan opposition. Contact the Teacher Newsletter for assistance in organizing such committees and reaching out to other sections of the working class to prepare a joint struggle.



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