

# Brazilian teachers and students support Chicago teachers' struggle against school reopenings

Our reporter  
9 February 2021

With state and municipal governments trying to force through the reopening of schools throughout Brazil in the face of a raging COVID-19 pandemic, Brazilian teachers and students have hailed the struggle of teachers in Chicago against the deadly reopening of schools in America's third-largest city.

The WSWS Perspective, "Chicago teachers take a stand to save lives over profits" was liked and shared on teacher Facebook groups, from the southernmost state of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul, to one of the northernmost, Amazonas. This is a measure of the widespread opposition among teachers in Brazil to the reopening of schools, and their recognition of the international character of this struggle.

Elza, a teacher from São Paulo, wrote in response to the report on the Chicago teachers' struggle: "Be strong! Go on, because life is more important!" Miriam, a teacher from Rio Grande do Sul, said, "This is a struggle of all educators!" For Luceli, a teacher from Paraná, "even though distant, the struggle is the same. The human concern with lives ... needs our support. Always fight, never give up."

"They are examples of struggle and unity," wrote Eliane, from the industrial city of Osasco, in Greater São Paulo. Showing the international character of the long history of betrayal by the teachers unions, which in Chicago is supporting the efforts of the Democratic mayor and the Biden administration to reopen schools, she denounced the local union, saying that the teachers' struggles take place "without the support of the union, which does not do what the teachers really need."

For João, a sociology student at the Federal University of São Paulo, "The struggle of Chicago

teachers is for the preservation of the lives of students and their families in the midst of a global pandemic, especially in the country with the highest number of deaths and cases in the world."

Contrary to the allegations by state officials and the corporate media in the US and Brazil, João believes that "The return of students to schools is not primarily aimed at recovering the [educational] damage caused by the pandemic, but the interest behind it is much more economic."

He continued: "The struggle of Chicago teachers is against the interests of the bourgeoisie. It is clear that the state wants economic activity to be completely re-established after a long pandemic, and the reopening of schools is essential to make the wheel of capitalism turn completely again."

Rafael, a teacher from Manaus, the capital of Amazonas and the epicenter of a deadly new variant of the coronavirus, said that the struggle "of Chicago teachers is important. I hope they have the strength to maintain this position and that it can serve as a positive influence and help teachers in major capitals to maintain the same position. In overpopulated cities like Manaus and São Paulo, teachers need to position themselves in the same way as their colleagues in Chicago. Life must always be ahead of profit, always."

Comparing the betrayals of the Chicago Teachers Union with those carried out by the unions in Amazonas, which are controlled by the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) and the Workers Party (PT), he said, "The union there is doing what often happens here to us, of not feeling represented or adequately protected."

Rafael believes there was a relationship between the

reopening of schools in Manaus at the end of last year and the explosion of cases and deaths that the city witnessed in December and January. According to him, “As soon as the school year ended, the numbers in Manaus grew again ... [and] went into an unending whirlwind. ... Many teachers were affected, just open any social media and you see calls for donations, and most people are dying at home.” In January alone, 64 public school teachers in Amazonas died of COVID-19.

For Ana, who just finished high school in a state public school in São Paulo, the struggle of Chicago teachers is “important, because it is their lives and the lives of the entire community that are being put at risk.” She believes that with the reopening of schools, “COVID-19 cases and deaths will increase considerably.”

Ana has also just taken the national exam for university admission (ENEM). According to her, the reopening of schools and the holding of ENEM exams in Brazil are putting “Brazilian youth and the people in contact with them at great risk. ... Besides worsening the pandemic, this helps in the evolution of the virus and the emergence of new strains that are more contagious and lethal forms of the coronavirus.”

For Marli, a retired teacher from São Paulo, “What we see at the moment is an out-of-control pandemic, insufficient vaccine, with even more contagious variants. It is under this scenario that a return to school is imposed in Chicago and in several other countries around the world.”

She also urged: “The return to school requires workers in education and the working class as a whole to fight for life in an unprecedented way. The capitalist interests of genocidal elites cannot take precedence over life. It is a global struggle against governments that meet the interests of these elites. It is only the workers of the whole world who are responsible for coordinating this great mobilization for life. All support to the struggle of teachers in Chicago, Brazil and the world!”



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