

“I don’t want to see kids and their families getting sick”

US educators angered over CDC’s repudiation of safety measures amid spread of Delta variant

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In the aftermath of last Friday’s move by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to encourage vaccinated teachers and students not to wear masks and to fully reopen schools, anger is building among educators, parents and students.

In response to a request for comments by teachers on the Reddit page [r/Teachers](#) on whether they were concerned about the spread of the Delta variant in schools and the repudiation of safety measures, teachers from the US and internationally posted dozens of comments.

Many spoke to the lack of vaccination among children under 12 and the risk it poses to them and others:

- “Yes. I spent the pandemic doing full virtual for myself and the rest of my family. Now our district has already said they won’t enforce masks and no virtual opportunities. My kids won’t be eligible for vaccination until they open the next age group. And the teen vaccination rate for my high school is not stellar. Worried for all our health and my mental state for the anxiety of every cold symptom.”

- “This sh** is going to cut through our unvaccinated students like a hot knife through butter. Any district that doesn’t require vaccinations for appropriate age groups, and masks + distancing for those who can’t be vaccinated yet, is guilty of putting politics above health and safety.”

- “As an elementary school teacher, yes, I’m very concerned. I mean, I’m vaccinated and so is my family, but I don’t want to see kids and their families getting sick.”

Teachers also spoke to the role that schools could play in both the proliferation and creation of new variants:

- “Variants are what they are for a reason. They have had to change to make sure they can stay alive. If not the Delta variant, then another one will come along that will be worse for unvaccinated populations, which in most cases are the children and the poor. Based on all the research I’ve done, schools could very well be the place variants get stronger and more deadly, causing the vaccines we do have to lose their ability to fight this thing.”

- “I’m extremely concerned. My school is talking about doing away with masks for the teachers (the kids don’t wear masks). Yeah, that’s a big no from me. My mask is staying quite firmly on my face.”

Concerns over the dilapidated status of ventilation in schools, which plays an important role in the spread of the virus, were raised as well:

- “Yes, I am very concerned. I teach in Florida, USA, and it’s the Wild West here. Our governor doesn’t believe in COVID and has limited releasing case numbers. Plus, he took the mask mandate away months ago. This could be worse than last year. And everyone needs to stop talking about school ventilation. It wasn’t fixed last year so why would it be now?? Our school was built in 1988, and has had very little updates. Half the time we don’t even have AC.”

- “My school was built 1912. Ain’t no AC in there. I am lucky if my windows open. We are all doomed. Been a pleasure playing with y’all. Queue Requiem...”

- “Our school doesn’t even have windows.”

One teacher from the UK, where all COVID-19 safety measures are being lifted in schools as the Delta variant explodes, commented:

- “I’m in England. There are 900 students in my school. 6 of them were diagnosed with COVID *TODAY*. Three weeks ago, we had one positive case that week. Two weeks ago we had four positive cases that week. Last week we had 2-3 positive cases every day. Today we had 6 positive cases. These aren’t cumulative numbers. These are NEW positive cases every day. 13.5% of 11-18 year olds were off school this month for COVID reasons (they either had it or are close contacts with someone who did). The Delta variant is accelerating exponentially in schools here. Please learn from us. Just because we’ve given up and decided that we surrender to COVID doesn’t mean the rest of the world should. And no, being vaccinated doesn’t make you safe. We’ve had double vaccinated people in hospital with COVID in recent weeks. Being vaccinated makes you safer but it doesn’t make you safe.’

Another teacher from Australia spoke to the spread of the coronavirus there, where the repudiation of safety measures has also led to a surge in cases. They said, “I teach at a school in Sydney, Australia and the government has put us back to teaching online because of the cases of the Delta variant.”

Additionally, a teacher from Texas commented, “Elementary students are not vaccinated (under age 12). The Delta variant is rampant in San Antonio, testing has sharply decreased, and in 1 week the city rose 5 percent to 11.2 cases per 100k. These are not great stats to go by, but it’s what we have. My district has yet to comment on a virtual option, but will most likely not give one even though some parents are worried about full reopening. The CDC and the ruling class want to put the pandemic out of sight, out of mind, while we go back to “normal.” Testing should continue and expand in schools, masking should be treated in airplanes, hospitals and clinics—mandatory by staff and people using the service. We are not disposable and our communities aren’t either!”

The teachers’ unions, which facilitated the school reopening policies over the past year under both Trump and Biden, have fully endorsed the CDC’s reckless new guidelines. Educators, parents and students opposed to these measures must organize themselves

independently of the unions, by joining and building the network of Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committees that have been formed during the pandemic. Only through an independent movement of educators with the broader working class, united across districts and industries, will the health and lives of educators, students and parents be prioritized above the needs of the corporations.



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