

Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee demands adoption of eradication strategy to stop the pandemic and save lives

**Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee
2 September 2021**

The following statement was adopted at the latest meeting of the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee, which was held last Saturday. Since the meeting, Canada's fourth COVID-19 wave has continued to accelerate, with 3,853 new infections and 38 deaths recorded Wednesday. The pandemic is exploding in western Canada. Over the past seven days, Alberta has recorded 159 infections per 100,000 people, Saskatchewan 135 per 100,000 people and British Columbia 93. Alberta has begun transferring patients and suspending non-emergency surgeries as hospitals fill up, while a Saskatchewan-based infectious disease specialist has warned that the province's health care system is on the verge of getting "crushed."

The CERSC will hold its next meeting on Saturday, September 11 at 1:30 p.m. EST. To participate, email cersc.cspnb@gmail.com

As the deadly fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic gathers pace across Canada, all provincial governments are pursuing a criminally reckless policy of fully reopening schools. Even though scientific evidence and real-world experience with the Delta variant has shown that it poses an increased risk to children, millions of kids, teachers, and their families are being deliberately exposed to possible infection and death by the political establishment.

The Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee condemns this ghoulish experiment with the lives of children, teachers, and their relatives. We demand an immediate halt to all plans for in-person learning across the country. This must be part of a comprehensive strategy involving public health measures, vaccinations, financial support for families, and non-essential business shutdowns to eliminate and eradicate COVID-19. This is the only scientifically grounded policy capable of bringing the pandemic to an end and preventing the deaths of thousands

more Canadians, including children.

The only way this strategy will be adopted is through the mass mobilization of educators at all levels, support staff, parents, students, and other sections of workers in a political struggle to put the protection of human life ahead of private profit. This struggle is directed against all factions of the political establishment. Irrespective of the political party in power, all provinces are pursuing the same policy towards COVID-19. Whether it is the nominally "left" New Democrat government in BC, Jason Kenney's hard-right United Conservatives in Alberta, Doug Ford's Tories in Ontario, or Francois Legault's "Quebec first," anti-immigrant Coalition Avenir Quebec, their slogan for the new school year can be summed up as follows: let the virus rip! This is overseen by Trudeau's federal Liberal government, which has endorsed the reopening strategy at every step and cavalierly imposed a pandemic election on the population in the midst of the fourth wave.

Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health Kieran Moore spoke for the entire political and financial elite when he declared that it is time to "normalize" COVID-19 in our schools. In making this statement, Moore acknowledged that 10 to 15 percent of Ontario's close to 1 million school children could be infected at any one time during the coming months. This translates into over 100,000 students in Ontario alone, and many more if schools remain open for several months.

It has been scientifically proven that such levels of infection will result in debilitating long-term illnesses and deaths on an unprecedented scale. Figures from other countries, including Britain, suggest that about 1 percent of all child COVID-19 cases result in hospitalization. In the United States, child hospitalizations and deaths have shot up over the past month following the reopening of schools.

At an event on August 22 sponsored by the *World Socialist*

Web Site entitled “For a global strategy to stop the pandemic and save lives!”, Dr. Malgorzata Gasperowicz, a researcher at the University of Calgary and co-founder of Zero Covid Canada, cited international statistics to show that between 3 and 12 percent of infected children suffer from Long Covid. This includes severe symptoms such as mental and physical impairments, breathlessness, heart problems, and brain fog.

Applying these figures to the situation set to unfold in Canada, the ruling elite is prepared to accept hundreds of thousands of children plagued by the debilitating symptoms of Long Covid, thousands of hospitalizations, and dozens if not hundreds of child deaths. Across the country, some 10 million people remain unvaccinated—including 5 million children—and therefore at high risk of infection and serious illness. While those who are fully vaccinated are generally protected against serious illness, studies have shown that if they get infected, they spread COVID-19 just as effectively as unvaccinated people.

Speaking at the same event, Dr. Michael Baker, a public health physician who has advised the New Zealand government, remarked, “The precautionary principle states that you don’t expose the population to a hazard if you don’t know the consequences of that and where you think that the effects may be severe.”

The CERSC heartily agrees. And for that reason, we conduct our struggle in irreconcilable opposition to the teacher trade unions in every province. Throughout the pandemic, they have worked tirelessly to demobilize opposition among educators to in-person learning and are now endorsing the homicidal policy of reopening schools. The line of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation is repeated by every other education union across the country: government back-to-school plans may not be perfect, but if teachers have concerns over unsafe working conditions they can file a work-refusal individually.

This course will lead to disaster. The work refusal system is part of the pro-employer labour relations framework, which leaves the ultimate decision in the hands of the very same government authorities that are pushing educators and students back into life-threatening conditions. Moreover, the strategy of every educator for themselves and let the devil take the hindmost prevents the mass collective action, including protests, job actions, and the building of a nationwide strike movement that is urgently required to stop in-person learning and save lives.

The CERSC therefore urges all educators, support and administrative staff, students, parents, and workers to join a unified struggle for the following demands:

- A halt to all in-person learning until the pandemic is brought under control. Billions of dollars to fund a high-quality system of online learning, and social and

psychological support for students and families.

- The shutdown of all nonessential businesses with full compensation for all workers affected, paid for by the bumper profits made by the billionaires and other mega-rich capitalists since the beginning of the pandemic.

- The adoption of a comprehensive strategy of eliminating and eradicating COVID-19 across Canada. Scientists have convincingly demonstrated that by combining public health measures, school and business closures, travel bans, and vaccines, COVID-19 could be extinguished within two months. Since this strategy is only viable in the long-term on a global scale, the CERSC fights for its implementation in close collaboration with our sister educator rank-and-file committees in Britain, the US, Germany, and Australia.

Realizing these demands is the only way to prevent an unprecedented wave of mass illness and death among the most vulnerable section of the population. The CERSC therefore issues an urgent call to all sections of workers and young people to join its struggle. Now is not the time for passive contemplation or a wait-and-see attitude. If you agree with the science and wish to protect the health and lives of children, their families, and educators, now is the time to become active and fight.

Over the coming weeks, the CERSC will wage a determined campaign to explain the science on which the eradication strategy is based to educators and their supporters. It will fight to broaden the committee’s influence, set up rank-and-file committees in schools and other locations, and build support for a nationwide strike movement to enforce a strategy of eliminating COVID-19. The CERSC will also wage a resolute struggle to link the fight of educators and support staff to stop the pandemic and save lives with the strike wave that has swept sections of the working class across Canada in recent months to demand better working conditions and higher wages, including among industrial, food processing, and health care workers.

For information about setting up a rank-and-file safety committee at your school or educational institution, contact the CERSC at cercs.csppb@gmail.com.



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