

Disease and death from COVID-19 accelerate throughout US as schools continue to reopen

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The spread of disease and death from the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated as schools continue to reopen. Daily new cases in the United States are above 150,000, and daily new deaths remain above 1,100, both despite the drop-off in reporting over the Labor Day weekend. More than 41 million cases have been confirmed in the country, alongside more than 670,000 deaths since the pandemic began, including more than 240,000 dead since Biden took office in January.

New cases are particularly surging among children. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that, as of the week ending September 2, an estimated one-quarter of new cases, a record of nearly 36,000 a day, are among those aged 0-17. The Coronavirus in Kids (COVKID) Project notes that this is up 28 percent from the previous week.

Data compiled by the *Washington Post* shows that over that same week, 2,400 children were hospitalized with COVID-19, with numerous states reporting high or record child hospitalizations. The Department of Health and Human Services reports that California is now at about 125 pediatric hospitalizations per day, approaching last winter's peak of 200 per day. In South Carolina, Texas and Florida, states with governors openly pursuing the homicidal policy of herd immunity, pediatric hospitalizations have risen well above their winter peaks, at an estimated 35 per day, 350 per day and 250 per day, respectively.

Children also continue to die. Among the most recent of these tragedies are a 9-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl, who both died on September 1 and were students in the Aiken County School District in South Carolina. In Mississippi, health officials have reported seven deaths among children since August 1, as well as the deaths of eight pregnant women. State Epidemiologist Paul Byers recently stated to the

Mississippi State Medical Association that the current COVID-19 wave is “worse than anytime we’ve experienced in this pandemic.”

According to the cynical pundits in the corporate media, the rise in infections and deaths is the fault of those who failed to get their shots. It is, as the Democrats and President Biden endlessly claim, a “pandemic of the unvaccinated.” But there is no vaccine at all for children under 12, and only 37 percent of those aged 12-15 are fully vaccinated, rising to 46 percent for those aged 16-17. Are these children and teenagers to blame for contracting a deadly disease? No, it is a result of the ongoing drive by Biden and Democratic and Republican governors to reopen schools at any cost so they can force parents back into the workplace.

There are, moreover, no guarantees that the coronavirus cannot further mutate to fully evade the vaccine. In a press conference Tuesday by University of Florida (UF) health officials with local politicians in Jacksonville, Florida stated that the percentage of patients vaccinated against COVID-19 in the hospital has risen from 10 to 17 percent, a possible sign of growing vaccine resistance of the virus.

During the press conference, Dr. Mobeen Rathore, a pediatrician at UF Health and Wolfson Children's Hospital, further warned, “Kids do get sick. Kids do get hospitalized. Kids do get sick and go to the ICU to get intubated, be on a ventilator and even be on (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) ECMO, which is a heart-lung machine, sort of a last-ditch effort to support these children. Unfortunately children do die.” Rathore continued, confirming that a recent reported death of a 17-year-old was caused by COVID-19.

The spread throughout schools has been sharply

reflected in the number of students, teachers and staff that have had to be quarantined after possible exposure to the coronavirus. In Mississippi, more than 2,800 K-12 students tested positive last week, forcing nearly 16,000 students, teachers and staff into isolation. COVID-19 outbreaks last week also forced the closure of nearly four dozen school districts in Texas, which 42,000 students attend, according to the Texas Education Agency.

Despite the vast amount of community spread, school and state officials continue to push for schools to remain open. In Texas, the majority of schools that closed last week have reopened. In Mississippi and Florida, schools have remained open through their recent coronavirus outbreaks.

Deaths among teachers and staff continue to remain high. The Twitter account School Personnel Lost To Covid (@LostToCovid) has found that 1,661 educators have died since the pandemic began, including 200 since July 1, some as young as 24 years old. Those dying are not only teachers; they include numerous administrative staff, bus drivers, sports coaches, crossing guards and cafeteria workers. All of them leave devastated co-workers, friends and families in their wake.

Chief responsibility for the ongoing waves of death among teachers, staff and students lies with the Democratic Party. Since taking office, the Biden administration has promoted the lie that children do not get sick from the coronavirus and that schools are safe. Biden himself infamously lied in February to a second grader, who was concerned that she might catch the deadly virus and spread it to her parents, stating, “You’re not likely to be able to be exposed to something and spread it to mommy or daddy.”

Teachers unions have played an equally wretched role. At a town hall meeting hosted last week by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, union bureaucrats asserted that vaccinations were enough to keep children safe, despite the fact that those under 12 are unable to get the vaccine. At the national level, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten has spent the past month on a 20-state “Back to School for All” tour, promoting the false idea that schools can be made “safe, healthy and welcoming for all” amid a surge of the deadly pandemic.

Given how many teachers and students have died

during her tour as a result of the pandemic, one might be forgiven for wondering if Weingarten is in fact the president of the American Federation of Gravediggers.

The Democrats and unions are continuing the school reopening policy first pushed by former President Donald Trump. This makes clear that there is no constituency among the American ruling elite for a genuine plan to halt the pandemic. Under both parties, workers have died in their thousands day by day as a result of a preventable disease.

The only real solution is an eradication strategy to fight against COVID-19. This requires the immediate closure of schools, as well as nonessential businesses, to stop the spread of the disease, combined with travel restrictions, testing, contact tracing, isolation and the full extent of public health measures, combined with mass vaccination.

The only social force that can carry out this program is the working class. In opposition to the homicidal policy of herd immunity which has seen the deaths of millions internationally, workers must form rank-and-file safety committees of teachers, students and parents independent of the unions and both corporate parties to fight against the capitalist drive for profits at the expense of human life.



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