

Educators in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Ohio fully support the October 1 school strike!

**Pennsylvania Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee
30 September 2021**

The Pennsylvania Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee supports and stands in solidarity with parents striking this Friday, October 1, against unsafe conditions in schools in the United Kingdom amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Parents and educators are organizing the walkout using the hashtags #SchoolStrike2021#SittingDucks and #October1st.

Every day, the ongoing pandemic fueled by the decision of the ruling authorities to reopen schools and nonessential businesses is infecting an average of over 600,000 people and taking the lives of 8,000 throughout the world.

The right-wing Boris Johnson administration in Britain, supported by the Labour Party and the unions, has adopted the homicidal policy of “herd immunity,” pushing for the infection of millions, including children. Johnson has gone so far as to ban basic mitigation measures such as masks.

Unconcerned with the suffering brought onto parents, children and their families, Johnson has taken the position that the population needs to learn to live with the pandemic.

In Pennsylvania, Democratic Governor Tom Wolf, in line with the policies of the Biden administration, has also pushed for the full reopening of schools and non-essential businesses. They claim that with limited mitigation measures, primarily vaccines and masking, children can be safe in school.

Since the reopening of schools, infections and deaths are skyrocketing. In Pennsylvania, daily new cases climbed to 5,429 on September 28. This is more than 25 times their July low, when the seven-day average was below 200 new cases per day, and well below the same time last year when new cases stood near 1,000

per day.

The conditions in public schools are intolerable for educators, staff and students, and increases the spread of the deadly pandemic. Students are being crammed into classrooms with 20, 25 and often 30 other students, lacking even the most basic sanitary supplies. Many of our buildings lack windows that can be opened, let alone proper air conditioning. To claim that mitigations can stop the spread of COVID-19 under these conditions is absurd.

The teacher, bus driver and staff shortage is becoming epidemic, as many have either gotten sick, or been forced out of the profession for fear of becoming sick or infecting their loved ones.

Last week, students at an elementary school in Philadelphia went hungry for breakfast and lunch that did not arrive at the school, which had no staff to serve it. The principal and teachers depleted the supply of snacks and ordered pizza and soda to feed their students.

Testing has all but been abandoned. The School District of Philadelphia, with its 200,000 students, announced that because of the increased number of COVID-19 cases, they will no longer test students who had come into contact with them.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten, who is among the richest Americans, with an annual salary of roughly \$500,000, has committed the resources of the union to work for the reopening of all schools.

On Thursday, Weingarten held a town hall meeting with parents from Open Schools USA, an organization that opposes public education, attacks educators and opposes mask mandates and vaccines. They call upon

parents to withdraw their children from public schools in order to siphon away funding.

Made up of educators, staff and parents from Pennsylvania, as well as neighboring Maryland and Ohio, the Pennsylvania Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee is fighting for a policy for eradicating COVID-19 globally. Nothing short of ending this pandemic is acceptable. We cannot live with our kids and community members dying needlessly.

The courage that Lisa Diaz has shown to protect her children and all children is applauded and supported by us all. The ruling classes and union officials are lined up against us. Only the independent organization of the working class can fight this pandemic.

The action that you are taking is an important step for the working class throughout the world. The support you are receiving is a statement that people are looking for a way forward.

Our committee wishes you the best of success this Friday and are confident that you will continue in this struggle. We will stand with you and continue our fight for a complete shutdown of in-person learning and all nonessential production as part of a massive public health campaign to bring this pandemic to an end.

The action that you are taking is an important step for the working class throughout the world. The support you are receiving shows the urgency with which parents, educators and communities desire the leadership you are demonstrating.



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