

# Canadian educators discuss significance of October 1 school strike against COVID-19

**Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee  
5 October 2021**

Educators from across Canada and their supporters met Sunday to discuss the significance of the October 1 school strike and how to take forward the fight for an eradication strategy to bring the COVID-19 pandemic to an end. The meeting was organized by the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee (CERSC), which fights to mobilize educators and other workers to close all in-person schooling and nonessential businesses, with full compensation for all impacted workers, until the deadly virus is suppressed.

Educators from Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia participated in the meeting, which concluded with the passage of a resolution declaring the CERSC's support for the school strike. The text of the resolution read:

“The Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee enthusiastically welcomes the October 1 school strike, which developed into an international demonstration of working-class opposition to the ruling elite's murderous pandemic policy. The strike was initiated by British parent Lisa Diaz to protest the mass infection of children in schools for which governments in every country are responsible. It won support from educators, parents and students in Canada, the United States, Germany, France, Australia and other countries around the world.

“The school strike powerfully demonstrated that if workers are to fight for a strategy to eradicate COVID-19 and save lives, they must take up a struggle independently of the nationalist trade unions. A central feature of the October 1 strike was that it was organized independently of the unions and capitalist parties. In every country in which educators participated, not a single trade union endorsed or even mentioned the event. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) showed on the eve of the strike where the unions in

every country really stand by holding a joint meeting with the right-wing extremist parents group Open Schools USA. The purpose of their meeting was to give a pseudo-scientific justification for keeping schools open and allowing children to get infected en masse.

“The CERSC pledges to fight for the building of similar strikes and protest actions in Canada and internationally. October 1 underscored that widespread opposition exists to the ruling class policy of mass infection and death. What that opposition requires is organization and leadership. The CERSC is fighting to build rank-and-file safety committees in every school, arm educators and their supporters with a scientific understanding of the pandemic and an eradication strategy, and unify educators' struggles around the world through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.”

The meeting heard from Laurent, an educator from Quebec who posted a video last Friday declaring his solidarity with the school strike, as part of a global online picket against COVID-19. Laurent explained that the strike marked an important step forward in the development of a global movement of working people against the ruling elite's policy of prioritizing corporate profits over the safeguarding of human lives. This is all the more necessary under conditions where governments the world over are abandoning even limited measures to restrict the spread of COVID-19, he added. Laurent noted the comments of Quebec's national director of public health, Horacio Arruda, who recently stated that the Quebec government was no longer trying to contain COVID-19 school outbreaks.

An Ontario parent informed the participants that he observed the school strike by keeping his children home and formally removing them from in-person schooling. Well over 2,000 COVID-19 cases have been

detected in schools in the province since they opened one month ago. Kieran Moore, the province's chief medical officer of health, notoriously remarked in August that it is necessary to "normalize" COVID-19 in our schools.

WSWS writers Alexandra Greene and Dylan Lubao also addressed the meeting. Lubao summarized the state of the pandemic across the country, laying particular stress on the horrendous conditions in Alberta's hospitals. New infections in Alberta have risen above 1,600 per day as a result of the United Conservative Party government's decision last summer to abandon all public health measures, including testing and contact-tracing. The crush of sick people requiring health care has forced some hospitals to deny care to those least likely to survive.

Lubao continued, "There is a concerted attempt by the press, and by prominent political figures, to contrast one province's response to the pandemic favourably with another. As if we should be okay with five to ten daily deaths from COVID-19 in Ontario, compared to 20 or more per day in Alberta. The truth is, the entire country is embroiled in a raging pandemic, and no province can claim to be totally free of it until the world has eradicated it."

In her contribution, Greene focused on the importance of fighting for an eradication strategy. She noted that the official global COVID-19 death toll surpassed 5 million last Friday, which amounts to one death every five seconds since the pandemic began. "It took just over a year for the official death toll to hit 2.5 million," she added. "The next 2.5 million deaths were recorded in just under eight months, since February. So essentially, during the very same time frame that we've been told that 'life can return to normal, the pandemic has ended, we did all we could, the population is X percent vaccinated,' things have not only not gotten better, they have gotten significantly worse."

An educator from British Columbia attending his first meeting said he has followed the work of the CERSC and is holding discussions with colleagues about the need to establish a rank-and-file committee. He remarked that only a "left-wing broad-based popular movement" could bring the pandemic under control, and denounced the trade unions for their role in suppressing opposition among educators. Noting the universal support within the political establishment for

the prioritization of corporate profits over the protection of human life, he described the pandemic policies pursued by Jason Kenney's hard-right Conservative government in neighbouring Alberta and the New Democratic Party (NDP) government of John Horgan in BC as "virtually identical."

Another parent participating in the meeting from BC recounted how the NDP's policy of systematically covering up outbreaks in schools and kindergartens had impacted his family. His daughter participated in an outing with her kindergarten class, which resulted two days later in an outbreak being declared. His daughter's class was closed for two weeks as a result. Pointing to the fact that he is vulnerable to a COVID-19 infection, he expressed concern about what to do going forward. Should he keep his daughter at home or live apart from his family to protect himself, he asked.

A teacher from Ontario described how her union's suppression of opposition among educators had led her to the CERSC. She detailed how she was part of an initiative by rank-and-file educators last year to launch a sickout at their school after a COVID-19 outbreak occurred. Management got wind of the plan, which she strongly suspects was due to the union informing them. She was subsequently formally reprimanded by her local union president for trying to organize opposition to mass infections in schools.

Over the coming weeks, the CERSC will work to build the October 24 online webinar organized by the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees: "How to end the pandemic: The case for eradication." We urge all educators, parents, students, and workers who are unwilling to tolerate the criminal pandemic policy of the ruling elite to support the committee's work. Follow our Twitter and Facebook accounts, share our statements and articles, and make contact to join us at: [ceresc.csppb@gmail.com](mailto:ceresc.csppb@gmail.com).



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