

Tennessee educators give full support to October 15 global school strike

Tennessee Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee
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The Tennessee Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee stands in solidarity with parents, educators, and all workers striking on October 15 against unsafe conditions in schools in the United Kingdom and globally due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Parents and teachers all over the world must join together to fight the herd immunity strategy of the ruling elite which is killing thousands of people every day.

As reported by the *World Socialist Web Site*, 164 children have died in the two months since schools in the US fully reopened for in-person learning. This amounts to an average of three school-aged children dying every day. Cases of COVID-19 are at or exceeding the numbers infected during the winter surge in the US, with upwards of 2,000 people dying from the virus every day.

Despite the numbers of sick and dying, some state governors and legislatures in the South are doing away with state-mandated mitigation protocols in schools. Individual school districts are left to make their own decisions about what protections, if any, will be made available in schools to protect children, teachers, support personnel, and bus drivers. This has led to the politicization of the health and safety of our children. Individual families are taking school districts to court in order to protect children with special needs. Federal judges have ruled in favor of mask mandates in schools, but only the largest school districts have brought these cases to court.

While schools are reopening and record cases of COVID-19 are flooding hospitals across the country, the teachers unions have remained silent about the mass death caused by the virus. Union leaders join the chorus of the Democratic Party to reopen schools “safely” even though material proof that this is not possible is

amply provided on a daily basis.

To add insult to injury, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten held a public town hall with members of Open Schools USA, an organization that vehemently opposes masking in schools and the vaccination of children against COVID-19, and which seeks to defund public schools by siphoning off public money into private and charter schools. Not only is the president of the nation’s second largest teachers’ union unwilling to advocate for safe working conditions for her members, but she is legitimizing a right-wing, anti-scientific organization which would happily put public school teachers out of work and further endanger millions of children.

Recent experiences, including the October 1 global school strike initiated by British parent Lisa Diaz, have shown that the only way forward in the fight to end the pandemic is through the independent mobilization of the working class internationally. Diaz launched this strike without the support of any unions, another indication that the international working class must organize itself independently of these corrupt bureaucracies.

In New Zealand, Singapore and throughout the Asia-Pacific, governments have capitulated to the demands of the capitalists for an end to lock-downs and a complete reopening of their countries. Despite the success these nations have had at eliminating COVID-19 by employing lock-downs, mass testing, contact tracing and other measures, they have now embraced the “herd immunity” strategy that is endangering our children and families in the US, the UK and worldwide.

Though the battle for safety is being fought over masks and vaccines in many regions, these mitigation measures alone will not end the cycle of illness and

death from COVID-19. In fact, mitigation protocols divorced from a broader strategy which aims to eradicate COVID-19 globally will only prolong the pandemic, allowing the virus to mutate into potentially more transmissible and vaccine-resistant variants. We must demand an end to this catastrophe through global eradication measures.

The October 1 and October 15 school strikes are setting the standard for rank-and-file action against the murderous policies of the elites globally. The Tennessee Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee fully supports the October 15 global school strike. We applaud the courage of parents, educators, and health care workers who risk censure and fines in order to demand an end to the cruel “herd immunity” experiment being perpetrated on children in schools and the society at large.

We must all take action and continue to build the movement for the eradication of COVID-19. Register for the October 24 event, “How to end the pandemic: The case for eradication,” an international webinar organized by the WSWs and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. Sign up today to start or join a rank-and-file committee in your area!



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