

Educators and workers across the US give support to October 15 global school strike

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Following the mass international support received for the October 1 school strike against the spread of COVID-19 among children, British parent Lisa Diaz, a member of the SafeEdforAll group who called the initial strike, has called another for this Friday, October 15. The strike has already received support from the UK and throughout the world from educators, parents, doctors, and workers.

As Lisa stated in an interview with the *World Socialist Web Site*, “We’re in a situation now where one in every 14 Secondary school children have COVID. Yet the vaccination programme for 12–17-year-olds is being stalled. Those that have been vaccinated in this age group are the exception, and it’s being continuously delayed. COVID is ripping through the schools, and I think they have a deliberate plan now to get children infected. So that’s why I proposed another strike, this coming Friday, October 15.”

In the UK, at least 94 children have died from COVID-19, while in the United States at least 164 children were killed by the virus in the past two months, the direct product of the unsafe reopening of schools for fully in-person learning.

A major theme in the school strikes is the need for a truly international and scientific strategy to end the pandemic. This will be addressed in great detail in the upcoming October 24 webinar, “How to end the pandemic: The case for eradication.” Hosted by the WSWS and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committee (IWA-RFC), it will feature a distinguished panel of scientists and epidemiologists. Readers should sign up here .

The WSWS has received statements of support from educators, parents and workers across the US in support of the October 15 school strike. **Michael**, a parent of two children in San Luis Obispo, California, participated in the October 1 strike and said, “I’m ready for another! Our boys are doing school at home. It’s a huge sacrifice but my wife and I agree the alternative is gruesome: increasing spread, and with it, more cases, hospitalizations and deaths (vaccines or no vaccines). Worse yet, accelerating the emergence of a potentially worse or even cataclysmic mutation. Not a bet I want to make at all, and certainly not

with my children’s lives!”

He added, “Endemicity is a policy of capitulation, one that shortens human life expectancy globally, but is highly profitable for a corrupt few in power. We’ve tolerated corruption far too long, watching it infiltrate, take over and destroy all our democratic institutions. So-called political authorities won’t ever bite the hand that feeds them, preferring to label our mourning as ‘acceptable casualties.’”

Ric, who just retired from teaching in Los Angeles Unified School District after 25 years, stated, “I support the October 15th school strike. Schools are known vectors for the transmission of COVID. It is nearly impossible for young children to socially distance. Many school districts do not require masks because of Republican laws. Students should not be sacrificed for the profits of the ruling class.”

Elizabeth, a registered nurse in California, made a powerful video on Twitter in which she stated, in part: “I’ve been a registered nurse for 12 years, I’ve worked in a hospital for 12 of those years in a med-surge unit in the city of Long Beach, California. ... The reason I have gone live is because I support Lisa Diaz who is calling for another school strike on October 15 and I’m in very very big support of this. We should be doing this all over the world—in the US, UK and other countries.”

She added, “We can no longer accept ‘herd immunity,’ the ‘learn to live with it’ strategy that was started under Trump and continued under Biden, the Johnson administration, and other ruling class administrations across the world. This is just to get people back to work, children back in school, for profits, for money, for the capitalist ruling class. The working class should no longer accept this murderous policy.

“Many children have become infected with COVID in the past few months, more than the previous surge, hundreds of thousands of children have been infected because of the reopenings of schools, many have died, and many will suffer Long COVID symptoms.

“This is unacceptable. We should be uniting here in the US and all over the world. We outnumber the ruling

class...and we do have power. And we just need to take back our power from the ruling class and the union bureaucrats, who are working with the ruling class to put down any opposition from the working class and keep us under control. And we should no longer accept this, we should be forming rank-and-file committees in our workplaces and we should be in charge of what we need and what we do in our work places, because obviously the ruling class and the union bureaucrats have no concern for the working class.”

Elizabeth referred to the unions’ role in the reopening of schools in the US, stating “AFT [American Federation of Teachers] president Randi Weingarten has traveled the US to support the reopening of schools under the auspices of the Biden administration, and has also worked with right-wing organization [Open Schools USA], doctors who are anti-vaxxers, anti-maskers, to force children and teachers back into unsafe schools such as Texas and Florida, which aren’t following any guidelines whatsoever, and have forced children back into unsafe learning conditions. And here in California also there has been a lot of children who have been infected, a lot of school outbreaks, and we cannot accept this anymore.”

“We need to unite and put an end to this, end the suffering the working class and poor are going through right now. I hope that working class people will be supporting Lisa’s call for a school strike on October 15. ... Let’s give all the support we can to the working class and put an end to this horrible, horrible pandemic.”

DJK Freeman, a teacher in Tennessee, told the WSWS, “I stand with the parents, educators, and health care workers in the UK as they strike against the murderous policy to open schools amidst the ongoing global pandemic. The October 15th school strike is leading the way for workers all over the world to stand up and demand health and safety before profits.

“We must not accept the words of the ruling class that we must ‘learn to live with COVID.’ Workers know all too well there is no ‘living’ with this virus—we will be lucky to survive it! Right now, over 730,000 are already dead from the virus in the US; globally the number of deaths is approaching 5 million.

“The ruling class promotes the homicidal strategy of ‘herd immunity’ because it will not forsake its profits for the lives of our children. The working class must take our health and safety into our own hands and demand the closure of schools and non-essential businesses until COVID-19 is eradicated. I am grateful for the courage of UK parents, educators, and health care workers for leading the way on October 15th!”

Texas teacher **Michael Hull** told the WSWS, “Why is it that when six people out of millions developed blood clots from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, everyone stopped

using them, yet no matter how many teachers, students, staff, and parents die or suffer disabilities from being exposed to coronavirus in the classroom, we continue to force everyone into face-to-face instruction? Well, because a faulty vaccine hinders profit, whereas dead teachers are expendable to the ruling class. As long as the subsidized daycare that schools provide continues to allow workers to keep churning out profits, no amount of death and suffering will be considered intolerable to them.

“We can’t put our faith in politicians and union bureaucrats to save us from the system that they built and they sustain for their own benefit. If we do, it will go on as it has for years, extracting wealth, transferring it to the top, and utterly demolishing our world. It’s completely unsustainable.

“Throughout history, change that benefited the average person typically never came from the top down, but rather the ground up. The world desperately needs a tough, bold, and genuine labor movement that serves workers’ interests; one that doesn’t make excuses and grovel at the feet of the establishment, begging for scraps; one that’s willing to do what it takes to dismantle the capitalist death machine.”

“On behalf of the Texas Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee, I extend my solidarity to the workers making the necessary steps toward that end.”

We urge the widest support for the school strike. Follow Lisa Diaz on Twitter: @Sandyboots2020. Send messages of support for Friday’s strike to the WSWS here. Messages of solidarity on Twitter should be sent using the hashtag #SchoolStrike2021 and should tag the World Socialist Web Site (@WSWS_Updates).

All those participating in the school strike should attend the October 24 webinar “How to end the Pandemic: The case for Eradication” called by the World Socialist Web Site and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.



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