

New York City child dies from COVID-19 amid cover-up of infections in schools

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New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) data revealed the death of a school-age child last week from COVID-19. The parents of the child have not come forward and their name has not been made public.

Last week's death was the first pediatric death in New York City since the reopening of K-12 schools this academic year and the 30th child death in the city since the beginning of the pandemic. The DOHMH report stated that children ages 5-12 have been the leading demographic in positive COVID-19 cases in New York City this week, the first time this has taken place during the pandemic. By official figures, nearly a quarter of all positive cases reported in the city in the past week have occurred in schools.

It is unclear whether the child who died contracted COVID-19 while in school because all details have been withheld by the administration of Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio. In an interview on WNYC, de Blasio responded to the tragedy by downplaying the death and whitewashing the spread of coronavirus among children, saying, "Thank god our youngest kids have been the least affected by COVID throughout [the pandemic]."

Educators and parents took to social media to voice sympathy to the family of the child as well as their disgust with and opposition to the response of the New York City political establishment. One educator wrote, "As a teacher I am appalled by the unrealistic belief that kids don't get COVID. Last year we shut schools just as [the pandemic] was revving up. ... [B]ut media blindly push rhetoric that kids weren't impacted. I call B.S. on all of them who said it—[doctors,] media and politicians."

Another user wrote, "There is no excuse for any of this to be happening. Shame on the Mayor & School Chancellor."

"[W]hy are the lies about schools being safe still circulating? [W]hy is nobody doing anything? [W]e're

crying behind the curtain but on stage is no act," wrote another person.

Another commented, "If that child got COVID in school, then the Mayor and DOE Chancellor are the [murderers]."

The reopening of K-12 schools in New York City, the largest school district in the US, with roughly 1.1 million students, takes place amid a bipartisan back-to-school push by the American ruling class, which has been accompanied by a surge in childhood infections, hospitalizations and deaths throughout the country.

The latest data from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), released Monday, shows that since mid-August there have been 180 child deaths across the US, with the total number of child deaths due to COVID since the start of the pandemic now standing at 558. This means that roughly one-third of all such fatalities have occurred in the past two months of the pandemic alone, which has lasted approximately 18 months. Compared with total COVID-19 deaths of all ages nationally, pediatric deaths are now the highest proportion that they have been since May of 2020, at approximately .09 percent.

In the week ending October 14, 130,575 new pediatric infections occurred, representing a decline from a recent high of 251,781 new pediatric cases in early-September. While the corporate media as well as state and local governments across the country, including the de Blasio administration, have seized upon declines in numbers to justify the lie that schools are safe, the stark reality is that the full reopening of schools throughout the country has led to a significant increase in children dying due to COVID-19.

The Democratic Party in New York City, like its counterparts in cities and states across the US, has deployed a two-pronged strategy to stifle opposition to its reckless school reopening policies. First, it has promoted the lie that vaccinations alone can end the pandemic.

Secondly, it touts the falsehood that schools can be opened safely with limited mitigation measures such as social distancing, masking and testing.

Even the second “strategy” of mitigations for hundreds of thousands of unvaccinated children is a fairy tale. In fact, DOE officials have revealed that the recently updated policy of COVID-19 testing in K-12 schools renders its regimen all but ineffective due to the requirement of testing consent forms for every unvaccinated student.

When outbreaks among students or staff in schools is detected, the DOE withholds the information from educators, parents and the public. Currently, no one besides the DOE bureaucrats has any notion of how many students who were exposed to the virus by infected classmates are quarantined, if any. Social distancing is nearly impossible in New York’s decrepit school buildings, which have suffered from overcrowding because of decades of budget cuts by Democratic and Republican politicians.

Last week, officials from the city’s COVID-19 Test & Trace Corps admitted that they are not tracking information on breakthrough COVID-19 infections among vaccinated individuals, following the practice of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Any reports of positive cases coming from the city must now be taken as a severe under-count.

Regarding whether or not he would implement mandates for children ages 5-11 once vaccinations are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), de Blasio admitted that he would not enforce this life-saving practice, stating, “I feel very strongly, and our healthcare team feels strongly... that our kids need to be in school. It is absolutely crucial. ... And school has been incredibly safe.”

In a bizarre twisting of reality, De Blasio said on October 13, “We can’t, in my opinion, hold against our kids the decisions of adults, because the kids can’t get vaccinated without the adult consent. ... There are still, unfortunately in my mind, too many adults who are not ready to give that consent. I want those kids in school no matter what.”

New York City teachers and parents have joined the wave of global opposition to austerity and the sacrifice of workers’ health and lives to COVID-19 by governments worldwide. This has included two global school strikes initiated by British parent Lisa Diaz, as well as strike action by over 10,000 John Deere workers in the US, nearly 170,000 steel workers in South Africa, and more.

New York state, hospital workers in Buffalo have entered a bitter struggle against horrific working conditions as well as cuts to their wages and benefits. Students, faculty and academic workers have spoken out against COVID-19 outbreaks in New York City’s colleges and universities. In these struggles, workers have not only come into direct conflict with their employers, but also the corporatist trade unions.

Across the US and globally, workers have created rank-and-file committees which exist independently of the union apparatus, and are affiliated to the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). On October 16, the New York City Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee held a meeting to discuss the demands and strategy necessary for the saving of lives and the eradication of the pandemic.

One Brooklyn teacher told the meeting, “My school administration has been actively withholding information from the faculty, students and parents. Kids are reporting that they aren’t even given their own test results. It’s like a dystopian nightmare. ... We have responded by forming a chat group and distributing news about what’s going on, since the school and the union won’t tell us anything.”

She continued, “There’s power in numbers. If we get together, even just for sharing information, we can get things done. We need to educate people about the science.”

The WSWS urges parents, educators, school workers and students who oppose the unsafe reopening of schools in New York City, as well as the homicidal cover-up surrounding its effects, to register for the upcoming October 24 webinar hosted by the WSWS, “How to end the pandemic: The case for eradication,” and sign up to become involved with the New York City Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee today.



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