

“It is high time workers end the pandemic”

Canadian educators and workers explain why they are attending the October 24 webinar on eliminating COVID-19

Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee

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Members of the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee (CERSC) have been campaigning for the October 24 webinar, “How to end the pandemic,” which is being co-hosted by the *World Socialist Web Site* and International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). The event, which will consist of a panel of expert scientists and workers, will explain the scientific issues involved in combatting COVID-19 and why a global elimination strategy is the only viable policy to end the pandemic and prevent further mass infection and death.

The CERSC was set up to fight for the closure of all schools and nonessential production until the pandemic is brought under control, with full pay for all workers affected to be paid using the multi-billion-dollar fortunes accumulated by Canada’s pandemic profiteers. Several CERSC members provided statements to the WSWS on why they are attending Sunday’s event, which begins at 1 p.m. eastern time.

“I am attending Sunday’s webinar to learn about the science of elimination,” wrote a school caretaker from Toronto. “This knowledge will help me explain to my friends and colleagues why eradicating COVID is the only way to truly end the pandemic. With this knowledge we can mobilize all education workers to immediately close schools until there are zero reported COVID cases for several weeks in a row.

“We also demand that the entire working class be paid a living wage to meet their basic needs while staying home to protect themselves and their families from a disease that is evolving into more lethal variants. This will put the needs of workers ahead of the profits of Bay Street.”

A teacher from Ontario stated, “I’m attending because I

have witnessed first-hand the impact of reactionary practices in schools which are all a result of ignoring the clear science that this virus is airborne. I’m unwilling to watch COVID-19 rip through my school community impacting my students and their families, and my colleagues and their families. It is clear schools have been a driving force in the rise in infections, students can and do catch and spread COVID-19, while policy makers continue to ignore these realities making the same mistakes and implementing the same weak ‘safety measures’ expecting different results. This pandemic cannot end with compromises that aim to benefit the economy at the great cost of human lives. Our only hope of ending this pandemic is a global approach where the people reclaim their power by working together to help eradicate this virus.”

Malcolm, an educator from Vancouver Island, stated, “I believe the struggle against the virus has reached a critical juncture. While COVID has continued to mutate, becoming more transmissible, more virulent and more immune-resistant, the last capitalist countries, like New Zealand, are formally abandoning eradication attempts. The struggle now falls to the international working class, the only social force with both the means and the motivation to eliminate this disease from humanity’s midst. The webinar will hopefully provide clear and concise scientific methods that will guide our advocacy.”

Parents and workers attracted by the WSWS’ international campaign also sent messages in support of the webinar. Paul, a retired educator from British Columbia (BC), commented, “From the start, I’ve always considered the half-measures implemented by the governments of BC and Canada to be fully inadequate. By

failing to shut down international air travel, Canada guaranteed the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 and all of the troubles we've seen over the past two years."

"Aside from global warming and the threat of nuclear destruction, eliminating the pandemic is priority one!" wrote John from Toronto.

Chris from Saskatchewan remarked, "WSWS is one of the few media sources investigating the COVID pandemic with the general population's best interests in mind."

David said, "I want to hear ideas how we can end the pandemic and fight the climate emergency at the same time."

In her message, Tammy denounced the policies of BC's New Democratic Party (NDP) government. "I'm in BC, I'm a mom and very worried," she said. "BC hides hospital information, case, ICU numbers and says kids get seriously ill from the flu, 'unlike COVID' So I am scared for our kids of Canada. More information the better."

Jennifer agreed, adding, "I live in BC, Canada and I am tired of our Premier and PHO (public health officer) Bonnie Henry choosing the 'we are going to live with it' approach so they can keep the economy open. They are willfully choosing economy over lives, and I am terrified."

Jen wrote, "I want this pandemic to end. Our health care is collapsing. I haven't been off my property except for emergencies in nearly 600 days. It has impacted my family due to no access to health care. All my friends and community has deserted us just because we cannot see them in person. I am tired, I am angry, I am frustrated with everyone working in silos without moving the needle, and I want to join a movement who is actually doing something impactful to make change."

Joanne pointed to the important role scientific experts, like panellists Dr. Eric Feigl-Ding, Dr. Małgorzata Gasperowicz, and Dr. Deepti Gurdasani, have to play in combatting the pandemic. "I am attending to continue to get the best information surrounding this pandemic. Going forward, it is essential to use guarded caution and ample knowledge. The knowledge this panel will be able to offer is invaluable," she said.

Asked why she was attending, Susan replied, "Because the public health authorities in my jurisdiction believe that vaccination alone will be enough to 'control' COVID. They have never had the objective to eliminate it."

Louise from Vancouver answered simply, "global health is important!"

Lisa from Hamilton wrote, "I have been trying hard to follow what is going on both in Canada and globally

about the COVID pandemic, new strains, and how people and especially medical staff and educational staff are negatively affected. This is why I want to be part of this meeting... To learn."

Angel, a parent from BC, commented, "I am excited for this weekend's webinar hosted by the WSWS. I am hoping to learn more on how and what we can do to help end this pandemic. The pandemic continues to harm families like mine and is impacting more than case numbers and deaths. We need to start treating the systemic issues that allow politicians to normalize deaths of marginalized and underprivileged people."

Matthew, a music instructor from Ontario, said in his message, "Thanks to the misinformation that is promoted in the corporate media, and the reactionary regionalism that is the stock in trade of the ruling class, many Ontarians have the idea that they are in a bubble and that the pandemic is something that happens to other countries or even other provinces. But a pandemic, by its very nature, is a global event. Unless there is a coordinated response on a world scale, SARS-CoV-2 will continue to spread and mutate, potentially resulting in a vaccine-resistant strain in addition to thousands of needless deaths."

"An elimination strategy is possible. This was the strategy that led to the elimination of the virus in China and, until relatively recently, New Zealand. I think that the October 24 webinar is an important step forward in the fight to bring a scientifically informed programme into the working class to counter the lies of the ruling class. We must use this knowledge in the fight to save human lives, not corporate profits."

Ken, an educator from Ontario and CERSC member, summed up the central issues raised by the webinar, declaring, "I am attending because it is high time workers end the pandemic. For far too long we have sat by waiting for our governments to solve this crisis. They have failed us badly. It has become as clear as day that corporate interests determine public policy—to society's peril. Workers need to be armed with science so we will no longer be fooled when we are told that we just have to learn to live with the virus. No! I do not want to live with the virus anymore! I want to end the pandemic!"



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