

# West Coast educators and parents support Global Workers' Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic

West Coast Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committees  
12 December 2021

Educators and parents along the West Coast region of the US met last weekend to discuss concerning developments in the global COVID-19 pandemic with the spread of the Omicron variant and the urgency to fight for necessary public health measures to stop the spread of the virus. During discussion, attendees voted unanimously to support the Global Workers' Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic, which has been initiated by the *World Socialist Web Site*.

As the death toll from the present surge of the Delta variant continues to rise at staggering levels, more data is emerging that substantiates warnings from public health experts that the Omicron variant threatens to immensely intensify the Delta surge and will lead to further unnecessary mass infection and death under the present course. By opposing any change in COVID-19 policies and prematurely declaring that the Omicron variant is "mild," the Biden administration and the corporate media, similar to other capitalist governments internationally, have expressed criminal indifference to the present dangers.

Evidence out of South Africa, Denmark and the UK of a rapid, exponential rise in cases and hospitalizations dominated by Omicron infection shows that the variant appears to be highly transmissible, with evidence that it has a high capability of evading prior infection. Cases have skyrocketed in South Africa, rising from around 420 daily new cases to 22,388 daily new cases in a matter of weeks. The Omicron variant has been sequenced in over 68 countries with known community transmission in many major countries including the US. In a few months' time it is predicted that Omicron will become the dominant variant globally.

Additionally, children under 5 years old are in the age group with the second highest number of infections in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, second to those over 60 years old. Tied to this increase in cases among children under 5 has been a significant uptick in pediatric hospitalizations as compared to prior waves of infection.

This poses immense dangers to a vulnerable population who have yet to have access to vaccines and have been forced back into classrooms with entirely inadequate mitigation measures.

Lastly, a recent press release by Pfizer and BioNTech reports that preliminary studies show a high likelihood of breakthrough infections among individuals vaccinated with two doses of Pfizer vaccine. In other words, not only does Omicron threaten reinfection to millions of unvaccinated individuals who have had prior infection, the variant also threatens millions of fully vaccinated individuals with breakthrough infection.

Though not much is known on the virulence of the variant, the evidence shows its contagiousness and capability to evade immunity through prior infection or vaccination present very real dangers for the global population and should not be taken lightly. The spread of Omicron not only means continued mass infection, death and long-term illness, but also the ability for the virus to further mutate.

These are the catastrophic conditions under which Biden and other world leaders claim there will be no more lockdowns and no significant changes in public health and mitigation measures. Last week, Chief Medical Advisor to the President Anthony Fauci publicly declared his opposition to such measures including mask mandates or vaccine mandates.

Biden also recently presented a new "Test to Stay" program, which allows close contacts of a COVID-19 infected student to no longer have to quarantine at home. Instead, they will continue learning in-person if they test negative. "Close contacts" are students who have been identified as being three feet or closer to an infected individual for more than 15 minutes. This policy, which only serves to keep schools open and parents at work, does not take into consideration the airborne character of the virus, let alone the real safety of students and staff.

Educators, school employees and students are facing a

situation in which official government policy is to deliberately allow all of them and their families to become infected with the virus. The Biden administration is committed to keeping schools open, regardless of the level of infection or the dangers that new variants pose.

The task of containing the fury of educators and other staff, as they, their students and family members become infected, falls to the unions, which have continuously suppressed the opposition of teachers to unsafe working conditions throughout the pandemic, most significantly in the winter/spring of 2021 with the reopening of schools and now with the more recent isolation and suppression of the Scranton teachers strike in Pennsylvania.

Further mass infection of children is the inevitable outcome of Biden's policies. The latest data from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) shows 133,000 official COVID-19 cases among children were reported in the week ending December 2. Coinciding with the fall reopening of schools, there have been well over 100,000 weekly *new* cases among children officially reported for 17 consecutive weeks.

Undocumented are the hundreds of thousands of children experiencing Long COVID symptoms as a result of these infections. And of course, these are significant undercounts, given the totally inadequate infrastructure that would be necessary for accurate mass testing in the US. It should be kept in mind that the CDC flatly denied that schools would be sources of infection, and deliberately concocted pseudo-scientific studies to make this claim before the start of the 2021 school year.

It is under these conditions that the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second-largest district in the country with over 650,000 students, is planning to drop its mask mandate for outdoor settings and eliminate weekly COVID-19 testing for vaccinated children. This is despite the fact that the CDC fully admits that vaccines are, statistically speaking, not a reliable means of stopping viral transmission. If the district decides to drop these safety measures, which still are inadequate, then the mass infection of children will proceed more rapidly, beginning in January 2022.

Placing the profit interests of the corporations over human lives throughout the entire course of the pandemic, both the Biden and Trump administrations have deliberately ignored scientists who warned of the catastrophe unfolding internationally. Moreover, both administrations have blatantly lied through the falsification of science. For example, Biden stated as early as July 4 that masks were no longer necessary. From January to March 2020, the Trump administration, alongside the entire political establishment, knowingly downplayed the severity of the virus and kept

their knowledge of its airborne nature from the public.

In opposition to the lies of various capitalist governments, we say the pandemic can and must be stopped! Based on the research and expertise of scientists and public health experts, an end to the pandemic requires a globally-coordinated strategy for the elimination of the virus, which includes the distribution of vaccines as well as aggressive public health measures on a global scale to curb spread. This is to be carried out through the closure of schools and workplaces with full social supports for all affected workers, combined with mass testing, contact tracing, the isolation of infected individuals and more.

Our committee fights for the immediate closure of schools and for resources to be provided for the highest quality remote instruction until the pandemic is contained. Until conditions exist for such a struggle to be carried out, we demand the highest possible mitigation measures to protect all staff and students, including high-quality masks for all staff and students—of an N95 rating or higher—proper ventilation and air filtration in all classrooms and buildings, and daily universal testing and reporting of COVID-19 cases.

Associated with this fight is a necessary campaign of mass education on the science behind COVID-19 as well as the nature of the criminal handling of the pandemic by capitalist governments across the world. This is why we, the West Coast Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committees, join in the international support of the Global Workers' Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic, an important initiative led by the WSWs.

The Inquest will serve as a means to gather and make available to the public evidence of the disastrous response of governments, corporations and the media to the spread of COVID-19. The Inquest will also interview and collect information from scientists and public health experts as well as reach out to workers and youth for testimony to document the impact of the pandemic on their lives. We pledge to contribute to and share the work of the Inquest widely among educators, parents, families and the broader working class.

The importance of this Inquest cannot be stressed enough, as it expresses the interests of workers and youth around the world in opposition to the devastating impacts of the pandemic. Contact us today to join or build a committee in your area and get involved.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**