

Detroit students, parents angered as schools open amid COVID surge

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The Michigan Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee is holding its next public meeting at 7pm Eastern this Wednesday, February 2. Register today and invite your coworkers, family and friends to participate.

In-person classes in Detroit public schools resumed on Monday for 50,000 despite dangerously high infection rates across the city. The state's largest school district has held virtual-only classes for the past month, resulting in a 16 percent fall in test positivity rates since January 6, but rates are still over 20 percent in the city and 32 percent in surrounding Wayne County.

The school reopening in Detroit, where only 38 percent of city residents are fully vaccinated, will have deadly consequences. ICU occupancy at Henry Ford, Detroit Receiving and Harper hospitals in Detroit already ranges between 86 and 96 percent. Schools are a major vector for the transmission of the deadly disease, with 126 K-12 public schools in Michigan reporting COVID outbreaks, according to the state's Department of Health and Human Services.

On Monday, a WSWs reporting team spoke with students and parents outside of Cass Technical High School in Detroit after the first day back in class. They spoke about the dangers of face-to-face classes and what is behind this policy.

"Lots of teachers were out sick today and about of third of the students were absent," a Detroit middle school teacher told the WSWs. "A lot of parents are not sending their kids because it's too dangerous. They won't even tell us if a student tests positive anymore. Under the district's ridiculous guidelines, classrooms are considered 'low-risk' setting; those exposed won't have to quarantine anymore," she said.

Despite the claims by Governor Whitmer that schools

are being opened to address students' academic and emotional needs, the reckless policy is being driven entirely by profit interests. The auto industry, which is barely able to keep production going due to thousands of sick workers, needs children back in school so that their parents can be sent back into equally dangerous factories.

For more information about the Michigan Educators Rank-and-File Committee and the fight in the US and internationally to keep schools and nonessential businesses closed as part of a strategy to eliminate COVID-19, contact the WSWs.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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