

## ***Chicago Teachers Union: 'The Push To Reopen Schools Is Rooted in Sexism, Racism, and Misogyny'***

***No one has fought harder to keep kids out of the classroom than teachers unions.***

*Robby Soave*



*MAX HERMAN/REUTERS/Newscom*

*The Chicago Teachers Union, which represents more than 28,000 educators in the nation's third largest city, tweeted on Sunday: "The push to reopen schools is rooted in sexism, racism and misogyny."*

*That was the entire tweet; the union provided no additional comment or clarifying statement. There was no acknowledgment that many people who argue schools should reopen are doing so in good faith. A spokesperson for the union did not immediately respond to a request for comment.*

*To say that sexism, racism, or any other -ism is at the "root" of the (thus far unsuccessful) reopening push is absurd and insulting. Stressed-out parents who want to send their kids back to the classroom are not motivated by animus toward teachers, and they are certainly not motivated by animus toward women or minorities. Indeed, many people who want schools to reopen are women and minorities.*

*Pandemic-related closures have disproportionately affected inner-city families that rely on public education. Young kids of color are some of the hardest hit. More than 800,000 women have dropped out of the work force during the pandemic, in large part because they now have to take care of their kids.*

*Given this reality, it would be more accurate to say that the push to keep schools closed is racist and sexist—though the root cause of the continuing closures is not racism or sexism, but rather the tremendous political power of teachers unions, who have lobbied district officials to stick with virtual education even as other essential employees return to work.*

*Public school teachers, after all, continue to receive a paycheck regardless, which means their union has very little incentive to take any risk whatsoever, no matter how substandard the quality of remote education might be.*

*It's worth recalling that the effort to keep schools closed is not grounded in science: Everyone from Anthony Fauci to Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) agrees that many districts should move toward reopening on a case-by-case basis. The evidence shows that classrooms are not a significant source of spread for COVID-19.*

*If public educators are unwilling to provide the sort of education that families want and children need, then it would be preferable to return the money so that parents could make informed choices about schooling—and be able to pay for it. There's nothing racist or sexist about that. Quite the contrary.*

*Update: The tweet has been deleted.*

### ***D.C. Schools Suddenly Abandon Plans To Reopen After Teachers Union Objects. "This timeline will need to be adjusted."***

*Robby Soave*



*LakshmiPrasad lucky | Dreamstime.com*

*D.C. public schools were scheduled to reopen next week, but Lucy has yanked the football away again: The district announced today that distance learning will continue for most students.*

*"While we planned to offer in-person learning at the start of Term 2 for select elementary school students, this timeline will need to be adjusted," wrote Lewis Ferebee, chancellor of D.C. Public Schools, in an email to parents.*

*This reversal came after the Washington Teachers Union voted to oppose the reopening plan. The union also instructed teachers to take a "mental health day" on Monday and refuse to teach virtually, as a show of force.*

*Much like the union's earlier efforts to thwart the city's reopening plans—which involved dumping fake body bags in front of district headquarters and staging drive-by protests—the tactics have succeeded: Officials caved to union demands without any fight whatsoever. As a result, parents who had made arrangements to send their kids back to school just a few days from now will be thrown for yet another loop.*

*This same dynamic—district announces a reopening date, teachers protest, district relents, working parents suffer—is playing out in large districts across the country: Chicago, New York City, San Francisco, and others. The Fairfax Education Association, which represents public school teachers in northern Virginia, doesn't want its members returning for in-person instruction until at least the fall of 2021.*

*Teachers unions claim that their goal in thwarting re-openings is to keep students and teachers safe. But we know from schools that have reopened that doing so is relatively safe; meanwhile, virtual education is a completely disaster for many kids. Unfortunately, the teachers unions' incentives are totally at odds with what families need. Students need in-person instruction, whereas public school teachers will be paid regardless of whether they actually have to show up to work.*

*Imagine if public education dollars followed individual students instead of automatically lining the pockets of institutions that aren't serving students particularly well.*

***Anthony Fauci: 'Close the Bars and Keep the Schools Open'***

***"If you look at the data, the spread among children and from children is not very big at all."***

*Robby Soave*



*Chris Kleponis/CNP / Polaris/Newscom*

*Anthony Fauci, an infectious diseases expert and top advisor to the White House on the COVID-19 pandemic, said that he was for closing bars and restaurants but reopening schools in an interview on Sunday.*

*"The default position should be to try as best as possible, within reason, to keep the children in school, to get them back to school," Fauci told ABC News reporter Martha Raddatz, who noted that New York City public schools had recently closed down again due to rising coronavirus rates in the community.*

*While some on Twitter reacted as if Fauci had finally admitted some truth that he had previously denied, this is not really a new opinion: In May, when Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) questioned the doctor about pandemic mitigation efforts, the two appeared to largely agree that a one-size-fits-all policy was the wrong approach, and that some school schools should open on a district-by-district basis.*

*Still, with public schools not even attempting to reopen in many large city districts—including Washington D.C. and Los Angeles—it's useful to hear Fauci state so clearly and unequivocally that this is misguided.*

*"If you look at the data, the spread among children and from children is not very big at all, not like one would have suspected," said Fauci. "So let's try to get the kids back and try to mitigate the things that maintain and push the kind of community spread we are trying to avoid."*

*Public officials giving in to the increasingly unreasonable demands of teachers union leaders—many of whom expect schools to remain closed for at least another year—are not following the science. They are ignoring what's best for the kids. And they certainly aren't listening to Fauci.*



***Fairfax Teachers Union Wants Schools Closed Until August 2021***

***"No one should return to in person instruction until there is a widely available scientifically proven vaccine or highly effective treatment."***

*Robby Soave*



*Marian Vejcek | Dreamstime.com*

*If the Fairfax Education Association had its way, public schools would remain closed until at least August 2021—and possibly much longer.*

*The union representing teachers in the northern Virginia school district is asking parents to sign a petition demanding all-virtual education until a "scientifically proven vaccine or highly effective treatment" is available.*

*"The metric for Safe Reopening should be 14 days of zero community spread," wrote the teachers.*

*The petition comes as Fairfax officials are moving toward a limited reopening of schools for some students, involving two days per week of in-person instruction. Elsewhere across the country, many private schools have reopened, as have some public school districts. Large districts in major cities like Chicago, Washington, D.C.,*

*Baltimore, and New York City have proceeded with extreme caution, even though some of those districts have extremely low COVID-19 case numbers.*

*The preliminary data from schools that have reopened suggests the risks of outbreaks are low. While many colleges and universities have seen significant spikes—mostly due to social gatherings outside the classroom—there's little evidence of surging cases in K-12 education.*

*Moreover, kids and teenagers seem to have very, very little to fear from COVID-19 in terms of their own health outcomes. They represent a category of people for whom the consequences of heavy-handed mitigation efforts—having to endure distance learning, for instance—are much worse than the disease itself.*

*But teachers unions don't represent the interests of students, parents, or families in general. They represent the interests of public employees who get paid regardless of whether they have to show up for work or not. For the union, a cost-benefit analysis might never favor reopening: As long as there's any danger whatsoever, why not keep teachers at home?*

*"Since none of the requirements for safe return are likely to be met in the foreseeable future of the 2020-21 school year, we reiterate: Keep Fairfax County Public Schools Virtual for the 2020-21 school year," wrote the union.*

*But one can easily imagine this demand extending well beyond next fall. Such is the result of making the needs of children the lowest possible priority.*

*Robby Soave is a senior editor at Reason.*