



The Chicago Teachers Union's Priorities

December 30, 2021

Chicago's public schools will reopen Monday after the Christmas and New Year's break. That's the welcome word from Pedro Martinez, the Chicago Public Schools CEO. Alas, the Chicago Teachers Union may decide otherwise.

This month the CTU asked its members if they'd support a district-wide return to remote learning. The survey also asked what actions they'd participate in to force the Chicago schools to improve health safety measures. Corey DeAngelis, a Cato Institute adjunct scholar who is also national director of research for the American Federation for Children, reported on [Twitter](#) that 91% of the union members who responded said they'd participate in a "remote work action"—that is, a strike—if the schools don't pause in-classroom learning.

This is the same union that last December, in a now deleted tweet, declared that "the push to reopen schools is rooted in sexism, racism and misogyny." Not that the Chicago public school system has covered itself in glory. This week it was forced to extend a deadline for returning Covid home tests after the local press ran photos of returned tests piled up at overflowing [FedEx](#) dropboxes.

Mr. Martinez says there will be no city-wide move to remote learning, and any switch will be done on a school and classroom basis. In nearly two years of living with Covid, surely we have learned that the cost in lost learning of keeping children at home is exorbitantly high while the risk that they will get seriously ill from Covid is low.

The other pandemic lesson is that mayors and school chancellors often don't really control the schools. The teachers unions do. If politicians and school officials want to boost the academic

performance of students, they have to break union control. The way to start is by forming alliances with parents by giving them more choices for where to send their children.