



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on January 10, 2022

Chicago Schools in Chaos, Classes Canceled 4th Day in a Row

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has [canceled classes](#) for the fourth day in a row as the city and the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) have failed to reach an agreement on COVID-19 safety measures.

CPS announced the school closure decision Sunday night, stating in a tweet that “we remain committed to reaching an agreement with the Chicago Teachers Union as soon as possible.”

The school district noted that a “small number” of schools plan to offer in-person activities for students on Monday.



AP Images

The union voted on Jan. 4 to switch to remote learning because of rising coronavirus cases in the area, stating that union members would return to in-person learning either when cases “substantially subside” or the city signs an agreement on “conditions of return.”

CPS, in response, canceled classes Wednesday and rejected the call to allow remote learning for students. The district went on to cancel classes on Thursday and Friday.

On Saturday, representatives of the union released a new proposal that they consider a compromise. It includes a return to work for union members on Jan. 10, with students learning remotely from Jan. 12-17, with in-person learning resuming on Jan. 18.

Part of the proposal would involve Chicago Public Schools providing KN95 masks for all staff and students, which would be in addition to a previous agreement made in February 2021 that gives students and faculty medical-grade masks.

The proposal also provides a protocol for shutting down a school for in-person learning at individual schools within the district, something Mayor Lori Lightfoot opposed.

In a press conference on Wednesday, Lightfoot addressed a previous demand from CTU that all “staff, students, vendors, and volunteers” produce a negative COVID-19 PCR test before returning to in-person learning unless parents opt out.

“We are not going to rob parents of their right and their obligation to tell us if they want testing or not on their children. It’s not going to happen. It’s morally wrong,” Lightfoot said,

After the union released their new proposal over the weekend, Lightfoot wrote on Twitter, “We will not relent.”

[.@CTULocal1](#) leadership, you’re not listening.

The best, safest place for kids to be is in school. Students need to be back in person as soon as possible.



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That's what parents want. That's what the science supports. We will not relent.

— Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot (@chicagosmayor) [January 8, 2022](#)

Speaking to NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday, Lightfoot called the teachers walkout "illegal."

"Fundamentally what we cannot do is abandon the science. We know that the safest place for kids to be is in-person learning in schools," Lightfoot [told](#) host Chuck Todd. "And we've spent hundreds of millions of dollars to make our schools safe. They are safe. We've got the data to demonstrate that. We've gotta get the teacher's union to get real and get serious about getting back into in-person learning."

"To be clear, what the Chicago Teachers Union did was an illegal walk-out. They abandoned their posts and they abandoned kids and their families," the mayor added. "My team has been working every single day. They're back at it again here Sunday."

Lightfoot also claimed parents are overwhelmingly in favor of maintaining in-person learning and against the recent walkout by the union.

She said parents are "outraged" and are making their feelings known to CTU by "an enormous amount of parent activism. They are writing letters, emails, they are protesting, they are holding press conferences."

"This walkout by the teacher's union, which is illegal, has had cascading ripple effects not only on the students in their learning and their social and emotional welfare but also on the families themselves," the mayor continued, declaring that "I'm going to be on the side of the parents fighting every single day to get our kids back in school."

Fox News notes of the negotiations:

Lightfoot said her office sent the Chicago's Teacher Union a school-based metric on Tuesday - before the union workers walked out. They rejected it without detailed explanation, Lightfoot said.

The mayor's team turned around a point-by-point response Saturday night that deals with school metrics, testing and a number of other issues they don't have disagreement on, Lightfoot said. The biggest issue is remote testing and remote learning, which Lightfoot's office categorically rejects.

A deal secured by Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Saturday will make 350,000 rapid antigen tests available for purchase by Chicago Public Schools. Lightfoot said the city's public health director also found more tests and has made this known to CTU as negotiations continue. The mayor said school testing requires the participation of the union, which has not allowed school nurses to be activated.



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