



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on January 5, 2022

Chicago's Lightfoot Fights Teachers Union for Closing Classes Over COVID

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot found herself at odds with the city's teachers union on Tuesday, declaring that she will [take action against teachers](#) who refuse to show up to class after the union voted against in-person learning.

The Tuesday vote saw 73 percent of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) say they wanted to return to remote classes until the present spike in COVID-19 cases "substantially subsides." As a result of the vote, classes were canceled on Wednesday, prompting Lightfoot to warn that teachers who do not go to school on Wednesday will lose pay.

"I have to tell you, it feels like 'Groundhog Day,' that we are here again," Lightfoot [said](#), referencing past disagreements with the CTU.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot (AP Images)

Accusing union leaders of "politicizing the pandemic," she added: "There is no basis in the data, the science or common sense for us to shut an entire system down when we can surgically do this at a school level."

The union countered that Lightfoot has gone beyond merely withholding pay.

"Mayor Lightfoot has started locking Chicago public school teachers and staff out of their Google Classrooms," the union tweeted Wednesday morning, hours after it said "all members will log in remotely to work."

The union vote took place a day after students had returned from winter break. Per the resolution approved by CTU's 2,500 rank-and-file, members will teach remotely from Wednesday through January 18 unless an agreement about the union's COVID-19 protocols is reached or the rate of Chicago virus cases falls below a certain threshold.

Some of CTU's demands included a restoration of daily health questionnaires and temperature checks, which had been in place last year.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) sent out an apology to parents late Tuesday over widespread uncertainty about whether children should go to school on Wednesday. District officials said students should not report to campus if the union approved its work action, though CPS CEO Pedro Martinez clarified that students would not be turned away and would be looked after if dropped off.

In a Twitter thread, Lightfoot assured she is doing "everything in my power to keep our students in school, where they belong, learning."



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I want to speak directly to the parents who are worried not just about what's going to happen tomorrow, but the rest of this week.

I want to assure you that I am doing everything in my power to keep our students in school, where they belong, learning. □

— Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot (@chicagosmayor) [January 5, 2022](#)

The mayor said she is “committed” to continuing talks with CTU “and negotiating a fair agreement,” but that she is against “unilateral action to shut down the entire district, depriving hundreds of thousands of students of the safe, in-person schooling environment they need.”

“I’m urging teachers. Show up to your schools. Your kids need you,” Lightfoot added.

The Chicago Tribune noted of CPS’ negotiations with the union:

CPS said it is also offering financial incentives to substitute teachers and letting principals restore the health screeners and reinstitute the temperature checks to allow entry into buildings. The district ditched these policies when schools reopened for full-time, in-person learning in the fall.

“The CTU has asked for the daily health screeners to come back. We are reactivating those, and what I’ve said is that it’s up to schools, because in the past, when the health screener was in place, it created significant backlogs of children being able to get into the buildings,” Martinez said before noting it is winter.

... Martinez said there is no metric that would trigger the entire district to go virtual because COVID-19 is affecting areas of Chicago differently.

As *The New American* [reported](#) last month, financial disclosures reveal the power of America’s two biggest teachers unions and their overwhelming tendency to financially support the Left — with the unions having donated \$1.3 million to Democrats going into the 2022 election cycle compared to just \$2,500 for Republicans.

Between 2020 and 2021, the National Education Association gave over \$8 million to left-wing dark money groups such as the State Innovation Exchange, Strategic Victory Fund, and State Engagement Fund. The latter, which received \$6.5 million of the teachers union’s cash, exists under the umbrella of the Democracy Alliance

Democracy Alliance is the brainchild of socialist mega donor George Soros.

Perhaps Chicago leaders’ recent standoffs with CTU will make them realize that appeasing the teachers union is a dangerous play, as the woke mob never hesitates to bite the hand that has traditionally fed it.



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