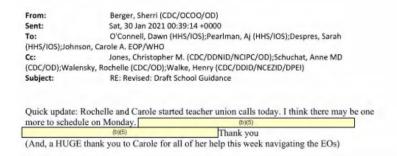
TIMELINE: How APT Exposed the CDC's Collusion with Teachers' Unions That Kept Kids Out of School

DECEMBER (2020)

- 8th Joe Biden <u>pledges</u> to reopen most schools during his first 100 days in office.
- **20**th CDC panel <u>votes</u> to give frontline essential workers including teachers access to vaccines after healthcare workers.

JANUARY

- 17th Three days <u>before</u> being sworn in, Rochelle Walensky <u>tells</u> CBS that she and Joe Biden share the goal of ensuring K-8 schools reopen in the first 100 days.
 - WALENSKY: "You know, I think that this is a-- and-- a goal that the President-elect has. I share the goal. We are going to look carefully. One of the things we want to do is make sure that we can vaccinate our educate-- our educators and people in our school systems. We certainly don't want to open schools if they are not safe."
- **21**st Joe Biden <u>releases</u> national COVID-19 response strategy that includes strategy to prioritize reopening K-8 schools.
- **26**th CDC researchers <u>state</u> there is "little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission."
- 30th Four days after the CDC found schools were not meaningfully contributing to the spread of COVID, Walensky <u>begins</u> calls with teachers' unions on the school reopening guidance.



FEBRUARY

• 1st - A day after a call on school reopening guidance, AFT <u>thanks</u> CDC for "rich discussion" and for "openness" to suggestions from Randi Weingarten, including being "able to review a copy of the draft guidance document over the weekend" and were "able to provide some initial feedback" to "strengthen the document."

From: Kelly Trautner, Health Issues < ktrautne@aft.org> Sent: Monday, February 1, 2021 7:27 PM To: Johnson, Carole A. EOP/WHO Martin, Carmel EOP/WHO Gershman, Lynn E. (CDC/OD/OCS) < veu4@cdc.gov >; Tracey-Mooney, Maureen EOP/WHO (b)(6) McIntee, William T. EOP/WHO Okolo, Osaremen F. EOP/WHO Gonzalez, Noe EOP/WHO Cc: Michelle Ringuette, Office of the President <mringuette@aft.org>; Jane Meroney, Legislation <<u>JMeroney@aft.org</u>>; Beth Antunez, Legislation <<u>bantunez@aft.org</u>>; Marla Ucelli-Kashyap, Educational Subject: [EXTERNAL] AFT Follow-up Good evening, Colleagues: Thank you again for Friday's rich discussion about forthcoming CDC guidance and for your openness to the suggestions made by our president, Randi Weingarten, and the AFT. We are hopeful that lines of communications will remain open, and that we can serve as a true thought partner as you continue the important work toward safe reopening of schools. You will recall that Randi committed to provide Dr. Walensky and the group with suggested language on the issue of accommodations for staff who are either themselves in the high-risk category, or for those who reside with a high-risk individual. We crafted the language below using a NIOSH document, as well as language in some of our agreements with school employers. Thank you for considering it. · Employers should provide reassignment, remote work, or other options for staff who have documented high-risk conditions or who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to limit the risk of workplace exposure. Options for reassignment include telework, virtual teaching opportunities, modified job responsibilities, environmental modifications, scheduling flexibility, or temporary reassignment to different job responsibilities. These options should likewise be extended to staff who have a household member with documentation of a high-risk condition or who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Policies and procedures addressing issues related to teachers and other staff at higher risk of serious illness should be made in consultation with occupational medicine and human resource professionals, keeping in mind Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) concerns. Finally, we were able to review a copy of the draft guidance document over the weekend and were able to provide some initial feedback to several staff this morning about possible ways to strengthen the document. We are grateful for the agency's effort to bring some measure of organization and framework to guidance. We are likewise grateful for the inclusion of some of the mitigation efforts we have been calling for since last year. It is our hope that we can be engaged early in the process moving forward, as we believe our experiences on the ground can inform and enrich thinking around what is practicable and prudent in future guidance documents Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have questions or desire additional dialogue. Warm regards, Kelly Kelly D. Trautner Director | Health Issues T: 202-393-7991 | F: 202-783-2014 | E: ktrautne@aft.org American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. | Washington, DC 20001 | 202-879-4597

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3rd - Walensky emails AFT and others to assure them that their suggestions were "being worked into (with just a few small tweaks) the school opening guidance," thanking them for their "partnership."

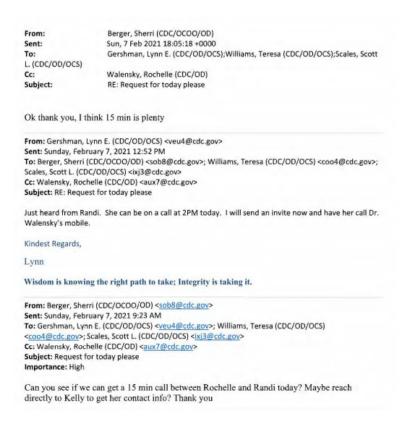


"Michelle Ringuette, Office of the President" mringuette@aft.org , "Jane Meroney, Legislation" JMeroney@aft.org , "Marla Ucelli-Kashyap, Educational Issues" mucelli@aft.org
Subject: RE: AFT Follow-up
Dear All,
I just wanted to circle back and extend my gratitude for the language you have provided us below.
Regrets for my delay in reply but I wanted to be certain you knew it is being worked into (with just a few small tweaks) the school opening guidance. We have also included the executive summary you suggested.
Please know we are listening and working hard to ensure your confidence and partnership in this endeavor.
My very best,
Rochelle

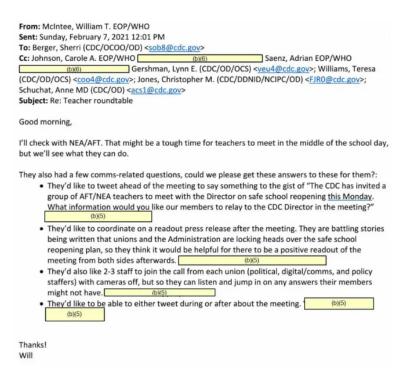
• 3rd - AFT <u>thanks</u> Walensky for her team's "responsiveness" and "commitment to partnership" with them.

To: aux7@cdc.gov; Johnson, (Carole A. EOP/WHO	(b)(6)	sob8@cdc.gov;
dawn.oconnell@hhs.gov; Ma	rtin, Carmel EOP/WHO	(b)(6)	Tracey-Mooney
Maureen EOP/WHO	(b)(6)	McIntee, Will	iam T. EOP/WHO
(b)(6)	'Okolo, Osaremen F. E	OP/WHO'	
(b)(6)	Gonzalez, Noe EOP/V	/HO (b)(6)
Cc: Michelle Ringuette, Office	of the President <mringuette< td=""><td>@aft.org>; Jane Me</td><td>roney, Legislation</td></mringuette<>	@aft.org>; Jane Me	roney, Legislation
<jmeroney@aft.org>; Marla I</jmeroney@aft.org>	Ucelli-Kashyap (b)(6	Beth Ar	ntunez, Legislation
<pre><bantunez@aft.org></bantunez@aft.org></pre>			
Subject: RE: AFT Follow-up			
Dr. Walensky,			
Thank you so much for your r	esponsiveness to the suggesti	ons made by Randi	and our team. We are
Committee of the committee of the contract of			
immensely grateful for your g			
partnership. We will pass this	message along to Randi. She	will certainly be mo	st grateful.
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partnership. We will pass this We look forward to continued reopening of schools and soci Kind regards, Kelly Kelly D. Trautner Director Health Issue (she/her/hers) T: 202-393-7991 F:	message along to Randi. She d dialogue and partnership as ety.	will certainly be mo	st grateful.
partnership. We will pass this We look forward to continued reopening of schools and soci Kind regards, Kelly Kelly D. Trautner Director Health Issue (she/her/hers) T: 202-393-7991 F: American Federation	message along to Randi. She d dialogue and partnership as iety. es 202-783-2014 E: ktrautne@	will certainly be mo we continue our re	st grateful.

• 7th - Walensky and Randi Weingarten <u>have</u> a 15 minute call.



7th - AFT and NEA <u>ask</u> the White House and CDC for help shaping their press strategy ahead
of school guidance release.



• 8th – Emails <u>show</u> the Biden administration is considering "labor issues" and "teacher contract negotiations" as a part of their reopening guidance.

From: Baker, Michael (OS/IEA) < Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 To: Pearlman, AI/HHS/IOS) (HHS/IOS/ASL) Cc: Stevens, Lee (OS/IEA) Subject: School Guidance Rollout Importance: High
Hey team -
Just got off a call with the White House and Department of Education regarding the school reopening guidance that is projected to roll out on Friday. We have some homework assignments:
 Try to think through and aggregate any people that have sent us incoming on school reopening (whether that is mayors, govs, Members stakeholders, etc). We want to have them lined up for consideration by EOD tomorrow for touches. Eduardo is going to connect with AJ on some of the mayor/labor union issues that are ongoing across the country. We need to think about this in the broader context of teacher contract negotiations. Marvin, we should also be thinking about supplementing the Governor and mayor outreach that Eduardo wants to plan. Anne – by 4pm WH Leg Affairs, Ed Leg Affairs, and HHS Leg Affairs needs a general ranking/prioritization of who on the Hill needs touches. a. The 4pm cutoff is so that Elizabeth Jurinka (WH Senate), Alicia Molt-West (WH House), Molty Peterson (Ed), and us (HHS) have seen each other's lists before the next meeting tomorrow evening. We will need to begin a tick tock that outlines all of the notifications being made, Hill/stakeholder calls being held, etc. The relative "go time" seems to be the 11am WH briefing. Dr. Walensky should be mentioning it there. One area that I raised on the call that I want to check with CDC and Ben Wakana on is lining up pediatrician validators. I don't know if CDC has already done this, but I think it would be a good opportunity to get buy-in.
Happy to cover this in the 9am, or to pull together a separate call in the morning to discuss the HHS asks. Let me knowl
Thankst Michael
Michael Baker Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs Office of the Secretary U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

• 11th - AFT <u>emails</u> Rochelle Walensky suggesting new language for the CDC's forthcoming guidance on reopening schools.

From: Kelly Trautner, Health Issues < ktrautne@aft.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 11:25 AM
To: Walensky, Rochelle (CDC/OD) aux7@cdc.gov ; Johnson, Carole A. EOP/WHO
(b)(6) Berger, Sherri (CDC/OCOO/OD) <sob8@cdc.gov>;</sob8@cdc.gov>
dawn.oconnell@hhs.gov; Martin, Carmel EOP/WHO (b)(6) Tracey-Mooney,
Maureen EOP/WHO (b)(6) McIntee, William T. EOP/WHO
(b)(6) 'Okolo, Osaremen F. EOP/WHO'
(b)(6) Gonzalez, Noe EOP/WHO (b)(6)
Cc: Randi Weingarten, Office of the President < rweingar@aft.org >; Jane Meroney, Legislation
<jmeroney@aft.org>; Marla Ucelli-Kashyap (b)(6) Beth Antunez, Legislation</jmeroney@aft.org>
<bantunez@aft.org></bantunez@aft.org>
Subject: RE: AFT Follow-up
Dr. Walensky:
Thank you for your continued openness to our suggestions and input. We would like to share some
thoughts regarding the paragraph below which was apparently leaked from the imminent guidance on reopening schools:
"At any level of community transmission, all schools can provide in-person instruction (either full or
hybrid), through strict adherence to mitigation strategies. Recommended learning modes vary to minimize risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in school by emphasizing layered mitigation, including school
policies requiring universal and correct mask use. The recommended learning modes (in-person, hybrid) depend on the level of community transmission and strict adherence to mitigation."

It would be great to see the insertion some variation of the following: "In the event high-community transmission results from a new variant of SARS-CoV-2, a new update of these guidelines may be

We are deeply concerned about likely implications this language will have in schools where strict adherence to mitigation strategies is lacking or is impossible to implement, particularly those schools in high-density, crumbling infrastructure areas, and particularly when community transmission is high. We don't believe that any current research has demonstrated that all schools in those areas can safely

In light of the new variants of the virus, we are concerned the absence of a closure threshold might put safety of adults and kids in school settings. There is not yet conclusive research to support that keep schools open in those countries would have been a safe decision, though the Imperial London model seems to show infections among secondary school students in the UK spiked when the new variant began to spread. And we also know that, while infection rates are beginning to drop, the BII7 variant is expected to cause a sharp uptick in infections- even becoming the predominant variant by March. The UK was forced to close schools in the wake of the variant spread; Germany had to make a similar decision to close schools. When teachers and school staff see that travel restrictions are being considered in the U.S., we expect even more hesitation about in-person learning. Even a "variant closing metric" would go a long way in allaying hesitation and fears related to reopening.

We really want to lend our efforts to helping restore faith in the CDC, and we believe you are off to a great start. We must, however, urge the inclusion of clear closure triggers in the imminent guidance. Provisions providing for when schools should close, like what is in place in New York City, instill some degree of confidence for those who are hesitant about returning to school. Embedding such a threshold bolsters transparency and is a must for ensuring parents and administrators can plan for a surge like we have seen in Great Britain and in Germany.

We look forward to continued collaboration with you and your team.

Kelly D. Trautner Senior Director | Health Issues (she/her/hers)

T: 202-393-7991 | F: 202-783-2014 | E: ktrautne@aft.org

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-ClO

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11th - CDC officials work to set up "technical discussion" with NEA/AFT to talk through "CDC operational strategy."

> From: Walensky, Rochelle (CDC/OD) Thu. 11 Feb 2021 22:00:19 +0000 Sent:

Jones, Christopher M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) To:

Berger, Sherri (CDC/OCOO/OD) Subject: Re: AFT/NEA Closing the Loop

Perfect. Will do. Will try to reach them before I board. Thank you! Get Outlook for iOS

From: Jones, Christopher M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <FJR0@cdc.gov>

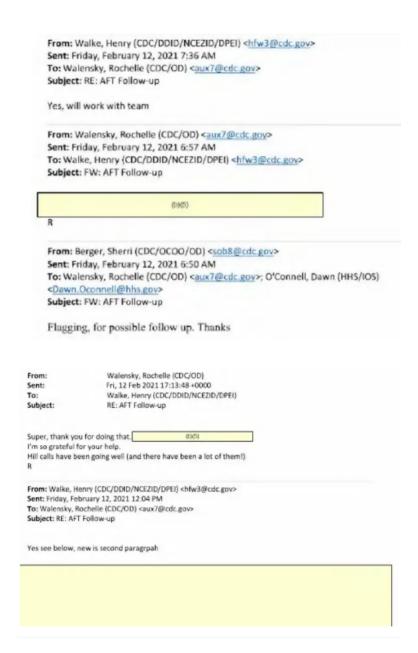
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 4:52:56 PM To: Walensky, Rochelle (CDC/OD) <aux7@cdc.gov> Cc: Berger, Sherri (CDC/OCOO/OD) <sob8@cdc.gov> Subject: AFT/NEA Closing the Loop

Greta and team will reach out to NEA/AFT this evening to set up a technical discussion tomorrow with both groups to talk through the CDC operational strategy. Targeting 1130am so they have time to digest prior to the 2pm release.

Feel free to make that offer when you talk to them this evening and say CDC will be reaching out later

Christopher M. Jones, PharmD, DrPH, MPH CAPT, US Public Health Service Acting Associate Director for Commu Centers for Disease Control and Prevention O: 404-498-0756 | C: 404-747-5988 E: fjr0@cdc.gov

12th - Flurry of emails show CDC officials actively <u>working</u> to insert language, as requested.



 12th - CDC <u>sends</u> teachers' unions an embargoed copy of the school reopening guidance prior to public release.

From: Jones, Christopher M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <FIRO@cdc.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 1:09 PM

To: Frey, Meghan T. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DIP) <wpks@cdc.gov>; Heldman, Amy B. (CDC/OD/OADC) <cwd.emol.gov
</cr>

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Jones, Christopher M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) From: Sent: Fri. 12 Feb 2021 18:46:48 +0000 To: NEA Becky; Randi Weingarten, Office of the President Subject: CDC operational strategy 322649-B K-12 Operational Strategy FS 4.5.pdf, 12.33pm WEB K-12 Attachments: Operational Strategy 2021-2-21.pdf Hi Becky and Randi, Thanks again for your continued partnership and input. Attaching a PDF version of the operational strategy that will post today (some formatting might change slightly when on the web). Also attaching a short fact sheet. Embargo lifts at 2pm, I know not much lead time, but wanted to send your way as soon as I was able Christopher M. Jones, PharmD, DrPH, MPH CAPT, US Public Health Service Acting Associate Director for Communication Centers for Disease Control and Prevention O: 404-498-0756 | C: 404-747-5988 E: fjr0@cdc.gov

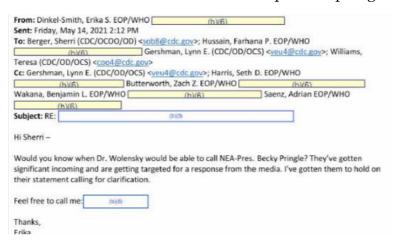
- 12th CDC <u>unveils</u> new guidance on reopening schools and Education Department <u>releases</u> volume 1 of guidance for in-person learning.
 - Walensky <u>claims</u> that the release is "free from political meddling"
- 12th AFT follows with a <u>press release</u> saying "CDC met fear of the pandemic with facts and evidence."

MARCH

 Walensky <u>blocks</u> off time in her schedule to meet with AFT and NEA to further discuss school guidance.

MAY

- 1st New York Post <u>reports</u> on emails obtained by APT showing NEA/AFT meddling in crafting CDC school reopening guidance.
- 13th CDC <u>announces</u> fully vaccinated American could stop wearing masks indoors and outside.
- **14**th NEA informs White House and CDC that their union plans to criticize the end of the mask mandate without direction for schools. Both components pledge to <u>work</u> with NEA.



Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 2:55 PM	
To: Berger, Sherri (CDC/OCOO/OD) <sob8@cdc.gov>; Hussain, Farhana</sob8@cdc.gov>	P. EOP/WHO
(b)(6) Gershman, Lynn E. (CDC/OD/OCS) <veu4@cdc.gov>; Williams,</veu4@cdc.gov>
Teresa (CDC/OD/OCS) <coo4@cdc.gov>; Molina, Jennifer EOP/WHO</coo4@cdc.gov>	(b)(6)
Cc: Gershman, Lynn E. (CDC/OD/OCS) <veu4@cdc.gov>; Harris, Seth D.</veu4@cdc.gov>	. EOP/WHO
(b)(6) Butterworth, Zach Z. EOP/WHO	(b)(6)
Wakana, Benjamin L. EOP/WHO (b)(6)	Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO
(b)(6)	
Subject: RE: (b)(5)	
+Jenn	
NEA just sent me the following draft statement:	
We appreciate the developing nature of the science and its implication new guidance without accompanying school-related updates creates of politicization of this basic health and safety issue. CDC has consistently mitigation measures, including to protect the most vulnerable, remain institutions of higher education—particularly because no elementary of high school students, have been vaccinated. This will also make it hard institutions of higher education to do the right thing by maintaining micharification right away.	onfusion and fuels the intentional said, and studies support, that necessary in schools and or middle school students, and few for school boards and leaders of

• **14**th – Rochelle Walensky's calendar shows <u>meetings</u> with national union bosses, including AFT's Randi Weingarten, about the updated masking policy.



• 14th - CDC tells White House that they had met with Randi Weingarten and Becky Pringle.

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Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 3	:19 PM		
To: Dinkel-Smith, Erika S. EO	P/WHO	(b)(6)	Wakana, Benjamin L.
EOP/WHO	0)(6)	Molina, Jennifer EOP	/WHO
(b)(6)	Hussain, Farh	ana P. EOP/WHO	(b)(6)
Gershman, Lynn E. (CDC/OD,	OCS) <veu4@cdc.g< td=""><td>ov>; Williams, Teresa (</td><td>CDC/OD/OCS) <coo4@cdc< td=""></coo4@cdc<></td></veu4@cdc.g<>	ov>; Williams, Teresa (CDC/OD/OCS) <coo4@cdc< td=""></coo4@cdc<>
Berner, Kate EOP/WHO	(b)(6)	Munoz, Ke	vin EOP/WHO
(b)(6)			
	00/000 0000	de govo: Harris Soth D	FOP/WHO
Cc: Gershman, Lynn E. (CDC/	OD/OCS) <veu4@co< td=""><td>re. gov-, riairis, setti D.</td><td>LOI / WITO</td></veu4@co<>	re. gov-, riairis, setti D.	LOI / WITO
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• 15th – CDC <u>tightens</u> masking guidance, saying people should wear a mask at school regardless of vaccination status.