



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 3, 2021

## Follow the Science? Not the CDC: It Instead Followed the TEACHERS' UNIONS on School Reopening

Perhaps politicized “science,” which isn’t science at all, is inevitable when you don’t have a separation of science and state. But it increasingly is what we have, and the latest example is striking:

Instead of acting in children’s best interests, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) control followed teachers’ unions’ will on reopening schools.

Now we know why the agency, ignoring the data, recommended in February that school reopenings be slowed or even halted. As the *New York Post* [reports](#):



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The American Federation of Teachers lobbied the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on, and even suggested language for, the federal agency’s [school-reopening guidance released in February](#).

The powerful teachers union’s full-court press preceded the federal agency putting the brakes on a full re-opening of in-person classrooms, emails between top CDC, AFT and White House officials show.

The emails were obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by the conservative watchdog group Americans for Public Trust and provided to The Post.

The documents show a flurry of activity between CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky, her top advisors and union officials — with Biden brass being looped in at the White House — in the days before the highly-anticipated Feb. 12 announcement on school-reopening guidelines.

The *Post* presents some of the e-mail exchanges, and they reflect a CDC compromised via a dangerously cozy relationship with the AFT. This is unsurprising: Teachers’ unions’ donations to Democrats are massive.

So money talks — and Walensky is a good listener. Commentator Monica Showalter [reminds us](#) that Walensky got in trouble with the teachers’ unions when she first assumed office and said that schools could safely reopen, and she wasn’t going to make that “mistake” again.

As the Associated Press [reported](#) February 5, “Following weeks of standoff in some cities and states where teachers unions are demanding vaccines as a condition of reopening, the issue came to a head Wednesday when Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said vaccination of teachers ‘is not a prerequisite for safe reopening of schools.’”

“But in a juggling of positions, the White House declined to back Walensky, saying she was speaking ‘in



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her personal capacity.’ Asked Friday about her earlier comments, Walensky punted,” the AP continued. “Nope, she was speaking science at the time and certainly in an official capacity, and now the emails indicate that the union set her to rights,” writes Showalter. “Then Joe himself, recall, in an unusual move, tweeted this weird public service message featuring her below.”

Showalter points out that far from appearing as a serious scientist, Walensky seems bizarre and intellectually vacuous. And she comes off as so insincere when recommending continued mask use and lockdowns that it appears others are pulling her strings.

As to this, consider a February 1 e-mail Walensky received from the AFT. “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,” AFT senior director for health issues Kelly Trautner wrote, the *Post* relates. “We believe our experiences on the ground can inform and enrich thinking around what is practicable and prudent in future guidance documents.”

So is the CDC following the science or political interests?

And what are those — the teachers’ unions’ — political interests? “What they’ve [the unions have] shown us now is that they are big on the bunny-slipper commute for their members, as AT’s Andrea Widburg [aptly put it](#), doing very little work, taking a full salary with bennies, and making themselves even less accountable for their failures to effectively teach their students at any respectable level,” Showalter also writes. “Anything that can achieve that political aim for their members — big salaries, gargantuan pensions, long vacays, and very little work, is the unions’ political agenda for itself.”

Nonetheless, this is the bunch to whom the CDC listened. Moreover, as a [report](#) from a left-leaning outfit named Stat noted last year, the CDC’s endeavors are often politically influenced.

Yet this “isn’t the way you operate a science- and evidence-based government public-health agency. No lobbyist should ever be allowed near an agency of this kind, [sic] it should be a federal violation bustable with examples,” Showalter remarks, making a good point. “Yet under Biden, the unions not only are lobbying for what eventually becomes ‘science,’ they are actually calling the shots. And CDC lets them, showing no pride whatever. This agency doesn’t work for the public.”

This is par for the government-science-official course, however. As I pointed out last year in “[The Many Masks of Anthony Fauci](#),” for example, if you changed clothes like Dr. Fauci changes positions, you’d be doing washes twice a day.

It all reminds me of why famed economist and Nobel laureate Milton Friedman once pointed out, warning against big government, that political self-interest is certainly no more noble than economic self-interest. The bottom line is, to paraphrase a remark health expert Dr. Knut Wittkowski [made last year](#) while trying to explain the world’s Faucis, when you’re “paid by the government,” you’re not “entitled to actually do science.”



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