

Ask A Glendale Teacher

→ **Why Unions Are Important for Safety** ←

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How have labor unions contributed to workplace safety?

Labor unions have advocated for safer and healthier working conditions for centuries. Establishing the 8-hour work day, creating work-free weekends, eliminating child labor, and allowing workers to voice safety concerns without retaliation are the result of unions. Labor unions organized to help pass the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. The law established a federal agency (the Occupational Safety and Health Administration—OSHA) to enforce worker safety standards. Between 1970 and 2014, workplace fatalities dropped by two-thirds because of the oversight of OSHA.

Why do teachers insist on having a contract that addresses safety?

Local health departments give safety mandates and recommendations. It is up to GUSD to decide how many of the recommendations they follow. Glendale educators want written assurance that GUSD will use the safest health protocols so that students and staff are consistently protected from COVID-19.

What are some safety measures that GTA has proposed?

- **Surveillance Testing:** baseline and ongoing COVID-19 testing for all employees and students at the District's expense. Identifying asymptomatic carriers is crucial to preventing the spread.
- **Consistent Daily Screening Procedures:** a HIPAA-compliant mobile screening app that will allow students, employees, and visitors to submit answers to consistent screening questions remotely, prior to arriving on campus for temperature checks.
- **Purchase of PPE:** evidence that the District has purchased a sufficient supply of face masks, face shields, clear face masks, plexiglass barriers, disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, etc. to satisfy site needs.
- **Fresh Air:** evidence that classrooms will have working windows and sufficient airflow, full functioning HVAC systems with MERV 13 filters and posted replacement schedules, and a plan to conduct instruction in outdoor spaces for at least 50% of the time.

Unless there is a written agreement between GTA and GUSD regarding safety measures, teachers cannot ensure that their classrooms will be safe environments that protect teachers, students, and their families from COVID-19.

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