



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

October 20, 2009

Dear Colleague,

We know that even though the new school year is well under way, school districts are still scrambling to find money. As California is now officially in the running for *Race to the Top* funds, some relief could be on the way, but those funds will not be disbursed until next year. Until then, schools and districts are struggling to do what they can.

The CTEN-Koret-DonorsChoose giving card program is still going on and we urge all who haven't taken advantage of it yet to do so. Details will be laid out at the end of this letter.

Important -- if you have resigned from the union - choosing agency fee status, **you must have your letter postmarked by November 15 to get your rebate. If you don't file by that date you will miss out.** Please go to <http://tiny.cc/aXz4T> for a copy of the letter you must send to get your rebate.

In the something-has-to-change department: a story in the October 15 San Francisco Chronicle lays out the bad news. On the most recent NAEP test, California's math test scores are horrible – for all ethnicities, income levels, etc. Whatever we are doing is not working and something needs to change in a hurry. To read Jill Tucker's distressing article, please go to <http://tiny.cc/ygTdn>

We have received several emails this past month from teachers who have been frustrated by their lack of 403b options. School districts usually use a third party to oversee these options. If you don't like the options that are being provided, go to the district and see if there are other choices. Also, consulting an *independent* financial advisor might be fruitful. I italicize independent, because we all know about the “advisors” who drop into school cafeterias at lunchtime. They are in fact salesmen – nothing wrong with that, as long as you are aware that they salesman who are trying to sell you a product. To do independent work we suggest a site that we have linked – <http://www.403bwise.com/> They provide information and won't try to sell you anything.

There is an interesting union vs. union story going on in Los Angeles, in which the union governing body is at odds with UTLA President A.J. Duffy. Duffy signed a deal in which laid off new hires were retained as subs at the expense of day-to-day subs who had

seniority. To read more, please go <http://tiny.cc/HclYe> The problem is a dicey one because if new hires are laid off, they very well may find work out of the profession, which could cause a teacher shortage when the economy recovers. The LA Times addresses this issue - <http://tiny.cc/DbrHc>

In a very important op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, Andrew Rotherham and Richard Whitmire explore *How Teachers Unions Lost the Media*. Whether or not you agree with their reasoning, I think it is indisputable that the media have become increasingly disenchanted with the teachers' unions. To read the article, please go to <http://tiny.cc/NmEMC>

CTEN has something of a counterpart in Michigan – the Educational Action Group - <http://www.educationactiongroup.org/index.html> . EAG regularly takes on the Michigan Education Association and in general acts as a watchdog for taxpayers. Led by Kyle Olson, they are now expanding and have initiated two new websites worth visiting <http://www.neaexposed.com/index.htm> and <http://www.aftexposed.com/index.html>

The following is from the current *California Educator*, the monthly magazine put out by CTA which raised its dues \$60 a year in 2006-2008 to fight various ballot propositions. That period is over now, but they are still trying to get an extra \$20 a year from you. Whatever you decide, please make sure you understand that you have several options. Should you have any questions, just send us an email and we will be happy to help you.

Options for changing your donation

Learn more about CTA advocacy efforts and the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning by going to www.cta.org/mycta/services/Voluntary+Contribution+article.htm.

- **CTA members can choose to contribute the suggested amounts to support CTA advocacy efforts (\$10) and the work of the CTA Foundation (\$10). This is the default choice for new members. If this is your choice, you do not need to use the form.**
 - CTA members can choose to opt out of a portion of the \$20 contribution by requesting a partial refund or by simply choosing to contribute to only one of the two categories.
 - CTA members can choose to allocate the entire \$20 contribution to support either CTA advocacy efforts or the work of the CTA Foundation
 - CTA members can choose to opt out of the entire \$20 contribution by requesting a full refund.

There is no need to make a selection if you want to retain the same selection that you had last year.

And finally, CTEN ran a radio ad in the greater Los Angeles area during the week of October 5. The spot concerned itself with how “successful” the NEA has been. To hear the ad, please go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/PDFdocs/RADIOimpediment%20to%20ed%20reform.mp3>

Hopefully by now, all of you have gotten past the hectic opening of the new school year and have settled into a good teaching rhythm. If you are on Facebook, you can find our page at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=125866159932&ref=ts> To make a donation of any size to CTEN, please go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.htm> (Please note that we now accept donations via PayPal.)

As always, we appreciate your support and urge you to visit our website www.ctenhome.org frequently. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand

The following is a reprint of the introductory DonorsChoose email. If you are already enrolled in the program, there is no need to do anything. If you haven't enrolled yet, we encourage you to do so. It's a great no-strings way to get resources for your classroom at no expense to you.

Dear Colleague,

We have been alluding to a gift for you from CTEN for a couple of months now - and here it is! The Koret Foundation has donated \$50,000 to CTEN supporters to bring learning resources to your classroom. Every teacher who has signed up with CTEN by September 16, 2009 and one lucky like-minded colleague recommended by you, will each receive a \$50 giving card from DonorsChoose.org which can go toward school supplies, projects, etc.

Please be assured that this is a NO STRINGS ATTACHED GIFT!! You owe us nothing and we will not be giving your email address to anyone. It is simply our way of saying thank you for being part of the CTEN family!

Here's how it works-

1. Teachers register at www.DonorsChoose.org/teacher and submit project requests for the resources they need to bring classroom projects to life.
2. Projects are posted to DonorsChoose.org, and individuals donate to the projects they find most compelling. When a project is fully funded, DonorsChoose.org ships the resources directly to the teacher's classroom.

3. Teachers and students use their materials and, as thanks, provide letters, student notes, and pictures to DonorsChoose.org. DonorsChoose.org forwards these “thank you packages” to the projects’ donors so that they can see the impact of their gifts.

To get the process rolling, please email me at cteninfo@ctenhome.org and let me know that you and a fellow teacher that you have recommended to receive this gift are interested. Once I have both of your e-mail addresses, I will send you and your colleague a “giving card code.” Then,

1. Register at DonorsChoose.org/teacher and submit your project for classroom materials.
2. Once your project is posted and live on our website, you can support your project with the GivingCard that has been provided to you by CTEN.
3. Just log in to your account. On your “my account” page, scroll down and click on the “my donor account” link at the bottom of the page.
4. Then you can search for your project by title and enter the dollar amount to be applied to your project.
5. Next, go to your “giving cart” and click the green check out button. Under the payment information, go to the box labeled “Lucky Me. I was given a GivingCard” and enter the Code on your GivingCard. Click redeem and then click the green proceed button.
6. It’s that simple! You are on your way to seeing your classroom project come to life for your students!

If you have further questions, please go to

<http://www.sveducationfoundation.org/home/svef/Six%20Simple%20Steps%20to%20Posting%20a%20Project.pdf>

We hope you enjoy this gift and our thanks for being an important part of CTEN’s continued success!

Sincerely,

Larry Sand