



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

March 17, 2009

Dear Colleague,

Yet again, our lead story concerns itself with the economic situation in California. While we now have a tentative budget, we won't know where we really stand until the May 19 special election.

For some teachers, this is a very unpleasant time as Reduction In Force (RIF) notices went out last week to those in our profession facing potential layoffs in the fall. It is important to emphasize that in many cases this notice is a warning, not a fait accompli. With the state budget still up in the air and the amount of stimulus money coming to districts unknown, it's hard to say what will actually happen come September. The waters are even murkier in districts offering early retirement incentives, enabling veteran teachers to leave the system and keeping younger teachers employed.

It would behoove anyone receiving a RIF notice to learn as much as they can about the law concerning these matters. Taking your district's or union's word for it is not suggested. Instead, please read that part of the California Ed code that deals with this matter -- <http://www.aroundthecapitol.com/code/getcode.html?file=../edc/44001-45000/44930-44988> Most of what you need to know starts with Section 44949.

We believe it is also important to keep up with demographic shifts in our state. For example, in Los Angeles during the past five years, the student population has decreased 7%. Yet, during that same period, the teaching population has decreased only 1%. It is therefore unrealistic to maintain a teaching force that is out of sync with the student population. The good news is that other parts of the state are gaining in population such as Riverside County, whose student population has increased over 15% in the last five years. To learn more about these demographic trends, visit the California Department of Education website, specifically their data and statistics page <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/> Once there, click on the Ed-Data link.

If you do lose your job, please don't despair. In the *Employment* area on the *links* page of the CTEN website -- <http://www.ctenhome.org/links.htm> we list several organizations that can help you find work in education – both in California and other states. We believe that good teachers will always be able to find work. Also, if you know of any

other reliable websites offering employment for teachers, please send the information to us and we will post it on our website.

We heard from several people after reading in the last newsletter that the CTA was still involved in fighting the passage of Prop. 8. It seems that the general population is catching on to something that many of us have known for a long time – that the teachers' unions concern themselves with and support - *with your dues* - many issues having nothing to do with teachers or education. Much of this is documented in the NEA Handbook - <http://www.nea.org/handbook> , which we have linked on our *Union Membership - Participation Options* page. When you go to this site, go to *Resolutions* and then to *I* and there you will find resolutions concerning International Consumer Protection, Global Climate Change, Housing and Health Care For All, Nuclear Freeze and many other issues unrelated to education.

Much has been written about the effects of vouchers on public schools. In February, the Friedman Foundation came out with a meticulously documented study. The results might surprise you. To read the 36 page report, please go to - <http://www.friedmanfoundation.org/friedman/downloadFile.do?id=357>

On a lighter note, Nancy Flanagan, a former Michigan Teacher of the Year has a blog in which she goes on about all things educational. The following will give you some insight into her philosophy - http://teacherleaders.typepad.com/teacher_in_a_strange_land/2009/02/twenty-questions-about-education-me.html

And finally, if you have any colleagues who might benefit from our newsletters or from being introduced to CTEN in general, please forward this to them and ask them to visit our website – www.ctenhome.org Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand, President