



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

July 20, 2010

Dear Colleague,

While summer is usually a down time for all things educational -- not this year. Our state budget is not in place and the governor is promising there won't be one until there is serious pension reform. Hence, a two-tier system is certainly a possibility for teachers and other public employees.

Also, in the financial realm, we have the ongoing social security problem that many of you will be facing. I am attaching some information from CTEN subscriber George Reinheimer, who is one of those to be affected by Social Security offset unless the laws are changed. If you are in a position where you will lose Social Security income because you became a teacher at some point, please read the attached and visit <http://www.ssfairness.com/> to fully understand the problem and take action. If you would like to contact George, he can be reached at greinheimer@has.edu If you are going to act, please do so soon because the House Ways and Means Committee is accepting input regarding Social Security offset until July 29th.

We posted an article about school based merit pay in last month's letter and now two more articles on the subject have come to my attention. Harrison School District in Colorado has a very complex system which shows much promise. To read the original go to http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/05/12/31pay_ep.h29.html?tkn=MUXC6x78KTsznkV7XtOmyhUM%2B31LIBX1XMWT&cmp=clp-sb-ascd Since you may not be able to access it without a subscription, here is a pasted-in version - <http://salary.itechcollege.com/2010/05/10/Colo-District-Boots-Traditional-Salary-Schedule-Education-Week-News/?r=1>

The second article, from Michelle Kerr, a teacher in Northern CA, makes some excellent points on the same issue in an op-ed in the *Washington Post* last month - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/17/AR2010061704565.html>

Also, in the reform arena, we have an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* by former teacher and principal, Timothy Knowles who explains that to make teaching a true profession, we must eliminate tenure - <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703303904575292753427609686.html>

In *Big Government*, Andrew Coulson, Director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute, takes on those who bemoan the fact that we might lose some teachers due to

the economic downturn. In fact, he says we need fewer teachers, not more. He points out that since 1970, public school enrollment has increased 10%, but school employment (teachers, teachers' aides and other support staff) has increased by 100%, with no improvement in student outcomes. (Of that doubling of education workers – 41 % have been teachers.) To read this very provocative piece, go to <http://biggovernment.com/acoulson/2010/06/05/the-u-s-economy-needs-fewer-public-school-jobs-not-more/> (Many of you may not agree with his arguments, but the data and the charts he uses make a pretty compelling case.)

For those of you interested in Teach For America and its founder, Wendy Kopp, there is an excellent piece about her in the Wall Street Journal. “What began as a senior thesis paper has since grown into a \$180 million organization that this fall will send 4,500 of the best college graduates in the country to 100 of the lowest-performing urban and rural school districts.” To read the article, go to <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704198004575311052522926796.html>

In a July 8th blog post <http://www.nrtw.org/en/blog/california-teachers-unwittingly-fund-union-po-782010> which includes a link to my recent op-ed in the San Jose Mercury News, The National Right to Work Foundation tells us that, “As Sand notes, even if teachers opt-out of dues for union political activism, they're still forced to pay over \$700 annually in so-called "agency fees" to teacher union bosses. And even that's no guarantee that their money won't be used to fund union political activism - as many Foundation-assisted employees can attest, union officials often funnel forced dues collected for "workplace bargaining" to union-backed political causes.

And on a similar note, teacher union watchdog Mike Antonucci has a must-read article in the Fall 2010 issue of *Education Next*. “The Long Reach of the Teachers Unions” tells us of the amazing political reach of the teachers’ unions and their massive war chests. Please go to <http://educationnext.org/the-long-reach-of-teachers-unions/> to read the article. If you are unaware of how politically powerful the NEA really is, or if you know someone else in this category, this is the article to read and disseminate.

Back in April, we told you about several movies which espouse education reform, including *Waiting for Superman* and *The Lottery*. At that time, we did not give you links to the websites for these two – so here they are - <http://www.waitingforsuperman.com/> and <http://thelotteryfilm.com/> Also, we learned of a new film with a similar reform theme called *Teached*. However, there is very little information about it online at this time.

Interestingly, these movies seem to have gotten to the NEA a bit. According to Mike Antonucci, New Business Item 91 was introduced at the recent NEA convention in New Orleans. If passed, the NEA would have launched “a \$3.5 million media campaign against “anti-teacher union documentaries ‘Teached,’ ‘The Cartel,’ ‘The Lottery’ and ‘Waiting for Superman,’” However, the NBI did not pass muster with the delegates. But, when *Waiting for Superman* opens in major theatres in September, I suspect NEA will not sit idly by if this film is as popular as some think it might be.

Recently, we sent out several questions to you about educational issues and the responses have been very illuminating. (My San Jose Mercury News op-ed was inspired by your

responses to one of them.) As such, we will continue to do this kind of polling. Since many of you are traveling though, we will hold off till everyone is back on the job in September before sending out the next one. Also, please let us know if you have any particular questions that you would like us to pose to our subscribers.

As always, we at CTEN want to thank you for your ongoing support. Please continue to provide feedback so that we can continue to keep you informed, provoke discussion and meet your needs. Thank you very much.

Larry Sand
CTEN President