



# California Teachers Empowerment Network

*Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues*

*Please note that in addition to the traditional emailing of the CTEN monthly newsletter, we will once again post it on the CTEN blog - <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/> As usual, there are several controversial issues covered in this letter and we urge you to share your opinions with other teachers.*

January 18, 2017

Dear Colleague,

The big national education story continues to be Donald Trump's selection for Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. Her Senate hearing was moved from January 11<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> and it will be a few more days before a confirmation vote is taken. The extra six days gave teacher union leaders additional time to vent about DeVos, who scares them to death. Speaking to the Washington Press Club, AFT president Randi Weingarten said, "Betsy DeVos lacks the qualifications and experience to serve as secretary of education. Her drive to privatize education is demonstrably destructive to public schools and to the educational success of all of our children." Weingarten adds, "She's devoted millions to elect her friends and punish her enemies, and, at every critical moment, she has tried to take the public out of public education."

To read more, go to [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/randi-weingarten-betsy-devos\\_us\\_5873b76ae4b043ad97e4ab03](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/randi-weingarten-betsy-devos_us_5873b76ae4b043ad97e4ab03)

For a very balanced look at DeVos, which examines her nomination from both a right and left perspective, please check out Michael McShane's detailed piece in *Education Next*, which can be found at <http://educationnext.org/betsy-devos-relatively-mainstream-reformer-education-secretary/>

To watch the confirmation hearing, go here - <http://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/nomination-of-betsy-devos-to-serve-as-secretary-of-education?platform=hootsuite>

Despite the union animus toward private school education, many teachers don't agree. In fact, teachers send their own kids to private schools in greater numbers than the general populace. According to a survey released in January, 2016, *Education Next* found "No less than 20 percent of teachers with school age children, but only 13 percent of non-teachers, have sent one or more of their children to private school." And not surprisingly, 42 percent of teachers who don't send their kids to a traditional public school back vouchers, as compared to only 23 percent of the teachers who send their children to traditional public schools.

It is important to note that these results are not new. In 2004, a Fordham Institute study looked at 50 American cities and found that 21.5 percent of urban school teachers send their kids to private schools, while 17.5 percent of non-teachers do. Digging a little deeper, we learn that the disparity is greater for larger urban areas. In Philadelphia, 44 percent of public school teachers' kids attend a private school, in Chicago it's 39 percent, San Francisco-Oakland 34 percent and New York 33 percent.

To learn more about the *Education Next* survey, go to <http://educationnext.org/teachers-more-likely-to-use-private-schools-for-their-own-kids/> To access the Fordham report, go here - <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED485524.pdf>

On the subject of choice, it is important to note that many naysayers insist that voucher programs cost the taxpayer money, but studies refute this. Most recently, a study from the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, decided to look at the cost/benefits of choice schools. They found that:

*...students participating in Milwaukee's voucher program will provide the city, state and students nearly \$500 million in economic benefits through 2035 thanks to higher graduation and lower crime rates.*

*Using data from a crime and graduation study by Corey DeAngelis and Patrick Wolf at the University of Arkansas, the Milwaukee study finds that through 2035 Wisconsin will receive a \$473 million benefit from higher graduation rates by choice students. More education translates into higher incomes, more tax revenue and a lower likelihood of reliance on government welfare or other payments. Meanwhile, greater economic opportunity also prevents young adults from turning to crime, which the study estimates will save Wisconsin \$1.7 million from fewer misdemeanors and \$24 million from fewer felonies over the same 20 years.*

To read more, go to <http://www.wsj.com/articles/school-choice-saves-money-1483140789> and <http://www.will-law.org/education-reform/reports/>

Speaking of choice, January 22-28 is National School Choice Week, the aim of which is to "raise public awareness of all types of education options for children. These options include traditional public schools, public charter schools, magnet schools, online learning, private schools, and homeschooling." There are 21,392 events planned this year,

*including pep rallies, science fairs, school tours, policy forums, and rallies in more than 25 state capitals. These celebrations will be attended by tens of millions of Americans in all 50 states over just seven days.*

*Of the 21,392 events, 16,758 are planned by schools, 2,168 by homeschooling groups, 1,358 by chambers of commerce, and many more by individuals, along with coalitions of policy, advocacy, and education organizations. Each event reflects the community and mission of the individual event planners, focusing on themes like parent information nights, registration fairs, and workforce readiness.*

To read more about this year's events, go here <http://www.wbiw.com/local/archive/2017/01/national-school-choice-week-will-feature-planned-events-nationwide.php> To learn more about NSCW, go to <https://schoolchoiceweek.com>

When Californians voted to bring back bilingual education in November, few acknowledged that there are not nearly enough teachers equipped to teach it. And now that it is the law, there is a search to fill many needed teaching slots.

To learn more about this problem, go to <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/12/31/help-wanted-bilingual-teachers-for-california-schools.html>

EdChoice scholar Greg Forster has written a detailed five-part series on accountability: the best way to measure it, who should be in charge of it, etc. In Part 5 he writes,

*The hiring, firing and paying of teachers must attract and retain wise professionals with a commitment to nurturing children's ability to achieve and appreciate the true, good and beautiful. It should not place a high priority on more utilitarian metrics like small fluctuations in test scores.*

*Holding teachers accountable requires us to hold schools accountable. Schools need to have strong institutional culture. School leadership must instill shared moral commitments pointing to the higher purpose of education, and defining the rules of acceptable behavior for educators and students implied by that higher purpose.*

*The big challenge for school accountability is that these moral commitments cannot be simply imposed by force. The school must be a free community in which students genuinely internalize the transcendent goals of education rather than merely conforming reluctantly to the grown-ups' demands. This means accountability systems must have strong moral and social connections to schools. That way educators and students will accept their decisions not as a hostile outside force but as part of, and supporting, the free moral community of the school itself.*

To continue reading this very provocative piece and access Parts 1-4, go here - <https://www.edchoice.org/blog/next-accountability-part-5-get-want/>

Also on the subject of accountability, the *Washington Post's* Esther Cepeda writes "Teacher evaluation system is failing." She concludes that, "Until teacher evaluations can be reliable, apolitical and rigorous — and provide accountability while being objective and fair — fixing systems where ineffective teachers are almost impossible to fire will continue to be a pipe dream."

To read the rest of this thoughtful piece, go to [http://www.columbiatribune.com/opinion/columnists/teacher-evaluation-system-is-failing/article\\_5295c720-1149-5be9-9d42-d7ca6ef1c0af.html](http://www.columbiatribune.com/opinion/columnists/teacher-evaluation-system-is-failing/article_5295c720-1149-5be9-9d42-d7ca6ef1c0af.html)

Page 20 of the 2016-2017 "Guide to: The California Teachers Association, Human Rights Department, Programs and Services" it informs us under the heading, "CLUB ED: Teachers for Tomorrow"

*Teaching is both a challenging and rewarding profession. CTA wants to encourage students to seriously consider pursuing a career in an education-related field.*

*CLUB ED: Teachers for Tomorrow is a kit designed to assist CTA members in establishing future teacher clubs at middle and high school campuses.*

*The program has the following objectives:*

- *Identify and encourage ALL interested students to enter the teaching profession.*
- *Concentrate on recruiting ethnic minority students as future teachers.*
- *Encourage students to accept leadership positions and take responsibility for their future career in education.*
- *Cultivate in students a greater understanding of the value of education and of their role in assisting others.*
- *Provide programs and activities that will stimulate students' interest in the wide variety of employment options available in the field of education.*
- *Assist students in transitioning from high school to college.*
- *Introduce students to the important role of CTA and NEA in the support and improvement of teaching and learning conditions in public schools.*

To access a pdf of this booklet, which also instructs teachers how they can find out if they have “unconscious bias” and how stereotypes develop, go here -

<https://www.cta.org/~media/Documents/Issues%20%20Action/Ongoing%20Issues/Human%20Rights/2016-2017%20HRT%20Guide%20September%20Final%209-15-16.ashx>

If you are a middle or high school teacher and have any experience with “Club Ed,” please let me know so that I can share it with other teachers. Thanks.

CTEN has three Facebook pages. If you have a Facebook account, we urge you to visit ours and let us know your thoughts. Having a dialogue among teachers is an effective way to spread information and share our experiences and ideas. Our original Facebook page can be found here <https://www.facebook.com/groups/125866159932/>. Our second page, which deals with teacher evaluation and transparency, can be accessed here -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/126900987357825/>. Our newest page is Teachers for School Choice and can be accessed here - <https://www.facebook.com/teachersforchoice?fref=ts>

In any event, if you enjoy these letters and find them informative, please pass them along to your colleagues. We know that there are many independent-minded teachers in California who are looking for alternative sources of information. Many thanks, as always, for your interest and support.

Sincerely,  
Larry Sand  
CTEN President