



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

October 14, 2008

Dear Colleague,

As teachers, we know that there are many factors that contribute to the education of our students. One of these components is the quality of our textbooks. As we reported to you in our March 2008 newsletter <http://www.ctenhome.org/PDFdocs/CTENLTL3-08.pdf> there are many who feel our textbooks have become overly politicized and dumbed down. The situation certainly has not improved since then. WorldNetDaily recently reported that according to a Scott Foresman history textbook, "Jesus was a Palestinian." To read the story, please go to <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=76671> . There you will find a link to an important new book on the subject, *The Trouble with Textbooks: Distorting History and Religion*, as well as other critical information.

Another factor that contributes to overall student success is the quality of education that teachers receive in the schools of education. This ingredient, frequently overlooked, can take on major proportions if mismanaged. In this article from the current *National Council on Teacher Quality* Bulletin, "What Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning," the authors point out some serious problems. This might be a good time to have a national discussion about the effectiveness of our schools of education. Too often these entities are responsible to no one. To read the executive summary of the NCTQ article, please go to http://www.nctq.org/p/tqb/docs/nctq_reading_study_exec_summ_20071207084600.pdf

For those of you who think you are underpaid, it may be worth your while to follow the progress of a charter school in New York. They are planning in the fall to open a school where the base teacher salary will be \$125,000. While we don't expect people to pack their bags and move across the country, this arrangement could become a nationwide trend if successful there. They do have a website - <http://www.tepcharter.org/>

For all of us who are agency fee payers or thinking about becoming one, now is the time to act. November 15 is the date to get a full refund, if you are applying for the first time. **For those of you who have already resigned, you must apply for your rebate by November 15 every year.** If you miss filing by as little as one day, you will get NO refund at all. We received a tearful letter from a teacher last year who filed on November 16. She was told that it was too late to receive her refund. Sadly, she had no recourse. To learn more please go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/knowMembership.htm> (Regarding

the last paragraph - some of you may be getting an email from us in a few weeks with similar information. If so, we apologize in advance for the duplication.)

Also, for those of you who have left or are thinking about leaving the union, there are insurance concerns that need to be addressed. To learn more please go here - <http://www.aeteachers.org/insurance.shtml> Many of your questions will be answered and there is contact information if you need additional help.

And talking about teachers' unions, we found a very favorable review of Saul Alinsky – his works and life - on the NEA website. What can you say about an organization that openly praises the strategies of a self-professed Marxist? (We have a union tactics tape on our website. For those of you who are interested in hearing Mr. Alinsky's ideas brought to life, please go to <http://www.mackinac.org/article.aspx?ID=9405>)

The review mentions that Mr. Alinsky “was a labor and civil-rights activist from the 1910's until he died in 1972.” The problem here is that Mr. Alinsky wasn't born until 1909. Also, one might wonder just what the last letter of the subject's name is. There is much more to discuss here, but without any further editorializing, here is the article straight from the NEA website - <http://www.nea.org/neanow/book-salinsky.html>

We are running some radio ads in Sacramento at this time. For more information about them and the actions of the CTA that prompted them, please check out our home page. You will be able to hear the ads as well learn about all the legislation that the CTA has been involved with and how you can contact them if you would like your voice to be heard.

A while back we sent out the following brief questionnaire. If you are new to this list, please fill it out and return via email. If you have seen this before and did not respond to it for whatever reason, but would like to do so now, please do.

Please indicate how you would like CTEN to address your interests/ concerns by replying to this email, answering “yes” or “no” to the following statements.

1. I am interested in the general information currently provided on the CTEN email list and website. [Yes/No] If this is the only question to which you answer, “Yes,” you will simply remain on the CTEN email list. In any case, your email address will be kept confidential unless we have your permission to share it.
2. I would like email updates on local information. (Your email address will be shared with local CTEN leaders if you answer, “Yes.”) [Yes/No] If you say, “Yes,” please give us the district where you teach so you can be placed on a local leadership email list.
3. For purposes of feeling connected to and communicating with other like-minded teachers in my local area, I would like local CTEN leaders to share my email address with others who wish the same. [Yes/No] Please let us know the district where you teach to help us with your general location.

4. I would consider volunteering to fill a CTEN role or participate in a local or online CTEN project. (If you answer, “Yes,” you will receive a future email detailing some of the ways CTEN could benefit from your help.) [Yes/No]

And finally, please visit our website – www.ctenhome.org. We try to update it regularly. If you have something that you would like to see on our website that is not currently there, please let us know and we will try to accommodate you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand, President