



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.

October 21, 2015

Dear Colleague,

Veteran teacher union watchdog Mike Antonucci has written a piece for *Education Next* about the possible ramifications of the *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* case which he states could “fundamentally alter the education labor landscape.” The in-depth article should be able to answer many of your questions about the case which will be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court next year. He points out the many fuzzy areas of union expenditures and addresses the exclusive representation argument:

“No one is forced to join a union—that’s already illegal,” said Michigan Education Association president Steve Cook. The banning of agency fees “allows workers to get out of paying their fair share of what it costs to negotiate the contract they benefit from. Whether proponents call this ‘right-to-work’ or ‘freedom-to-work,’ it’s really just ‘freedom-to-freeload.’”

That’s a pretty strong argument, as far as it goes. Wouldn’t a Friedrichs defeat for the union effectively force CTA members to subsidize benefits for nonpaying employees? Perhaps, if the state government or the local school district were forcing the CTA to be the exclusive representative of all bargaining-unit workers. But it is the union that demands exclusive representation.

To access Antonucci’s piece, go here - <http://educationnext.org/teachers-unions-risk-losing-agency-fees-friedrichs-california/>

On the subject of *Friedrichs*, the event sponsored by CTEN and the Association of American Educators last month in Long Beach was very informative. As announced in the last newsletter, we examined the *Friedrichs* and *Bain* lawsuits and their possible ramifications for teachers and the general public. The panel discussion featured lawyers and plaintiffs from both cases, and a lively audience Q&A followed. The video of the event will be accessible on our website very soon. We will alert you when it’s available.

Los Angeles a half-charter district? If Eli Broad and some other philanthropists get their way, that will be a reality within the next eight years. *Los Angeles Times* education writer Howard Blume broke the story:

According to a 44-page memo obtained by The Times, the locally based Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and other charter advocates want to create 260 new charter schools, enrolling at least 130,000 students.

Organizers of the effort have declined to publicly release details of the plan. But the memo lays out a strategy for moving forward, including how to raise money, recruit and train teachers, provide outreach to parents and navigate the political battle that will probably ensue.

... the proposed expansion would mean more than doubling the number of charter schools in Los Angeles, a feat that even backers say might prove demanding.

Needless to say, the United Teachers of Los Angeles is outraged about this plan. To read Blume's piece and access the Broad memo, go to <http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-laUSD-charter-20150922-story.html>

An article posted last month by the Foundation for Economic Education describes an educational model "in which the student is the customer." Written by Thomas Bogle, a public school teacher from Arizona, the piece examines public education from a libertarian perspective.

When education becomes a public good, the power to make decisions about the educational opportunities for the majority of students falls directly into the hands of politicians and unelected bureaucrats. While these groups can be responsive to parents with children in the public education system — at least occasionally to a bloc of angry voters — their voices are simply few among many. Even if the policymakers offer more than lip service to the voting public, they have myriad other constituents who all want their voices to be represented in this domain, too — from developers who want to build \$70 million football stadiums to the teachers' associations and unions.

He then goes on to suggest that education adopt a business model. To read this provocative article, go to <http://fee.org/freeman/students-for-sale/>

In a similar vein, Greg Forster, a senior fellow at the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, writes:

At the root of our education debates is a debate about the family. The government school monopoly is one of the most important factors undermining the family unit; universal school choice would be a big step toward strengthening it.

To continue reading "Choosing Choice Is Choosing Families," go here - <http://www.ocpathink.org/article/choosing-choice-is-choosing-families>

It's no secret that too many of our students are not "college ready" and, according to a new study, it's because students' critical thinking skills are not what they should be.

California teachers say critical thinking skills, not scores on standardized tests, are the best way to assess whether students are prepared for success in college and the workplace, according to an online survey by EdSource in partnership with the California Teachers Association.

Teachers said they have received much more training on how to prepare students for college – and far less on preparing them for non-college options.

They also said college and career readiness has not been fully integrated into the professional development training they have received to implement the Common Core State Standards.

While important for all teachers, high school teachers and administrators especially should take note. To read about the study, go to <http://edsources.org/2015/teachers-say-critical-thinking-most-important-indicator-of-student-success/87810>

The National Council on Teacher Quality, a nonprofit and nonpartisan education policy organization, has a new project called “Path to Teach.” Its website allows you to “determine cost, location and where you’ll get the best preparation for the realities of the classroom.” The site is excellent for would-be teachers and those in the field looking to advance. You can access rankings of more than 1,100 colleges and universities and 85 alternative certification programs to find the one that will guide you toward a successful career path. To learn more, go here - <http://www.pathtoteach.org/what-is-pathtoteach.jsp>

Have a bullying problem at your school? Bridg-it may be worth looking into. According to Lauren Weisbarth, teacher and Bridg-it team member,

Bridg-it collects and analyzes individual school data to increase school safety and to create a positive school climate. It is a digital platform that enables the school community to use strategies that employ proven, restorative techniques when dealing with student incidences.

If this sounds like something your school can use, please visit their website – <http://www.bridgit.com/>

If you are a CTA/NEA agency fee payer, now is the time to submit your rebate request. **You must request your rebate this year (and every year!) by November 15th.** If you are as much as one day late, you will not get a penny back. Also, because liability insurance is important for teachers, we suggest joining the Association of American Educators (<http://www.aeteachers.org/>) or Christian Educators Association (<http://www.ceai.org/>) Both AAE and CEAI are professional organizations, not unions, and are apolitical. (Also, teachers who mention CTEN when they sign up with AAE for the first time will get a \$30 discount off the regular \$198 first year membership.) For more information, go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/how-to-opt-out-teachers-union-nea-cta-aft-cft.html>

If you are interested in giving CTEN brochures to colleagues, you can print them right from the home page - <http://www.ctenhome.org/PDFdocs/CTEN - Brochure.pdf> Or, if you prefer, we will be happy to send you as many preprinted ones as you need.

Also, anyone wishing to donate to CTEN can do so very simply through check, money order or PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.html> As a non-profit, we exist only through the generosity of others. Thanks, as always.

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President