



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

November 16, 2010

Dear Colleague,

With the major political upheaval most of us experienced two weeks ago, there are sure to be changes in the educational landscape across the United States. In *Time Magazine*, Andrew Rotherham wonders “Will John Boehner Be Good for Education?”

(<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2029309,00.html>) According to Rotherham, the probable new Republican majority speaker is “education friendly” but wonders whether his passion and drive will be enough to get much done in today's tough political environment...” Mike Antonucci tells us that NEA had a fairly straightforward look at the election scenario here - <http://www.eiaonline.com/intercepts/2010/11/05/neas-view-of-the-near-future/>

For more of a state by state analysis of what might transpire on the education scene, *Education Week's* Sean Cavanaugh weighs in with “In States, GOP Winners Mapping Course for K-12.” (http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/11/05/11governors_ep.h30.html) In California, which voted very much unlike the rest of the country, we elected former governor Jerry Brown again and union friendly Tom Torlakson as Superintendent of Public Instruction. As such, it's difficult to know how education will be affected in the nation's largest state. Mr. Brown claims he will play no favorites as he has in the past, but only time will tell.

After the LA Times unleashed a major controversy over the summer with its public release of “value added” teacher scores, New York City was about to do the same thing -- (<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/21/local/la-me-1021-new-york-value-added-20101021>) However, the city backed off when the United Federation of Teachers, the local teachers' union in NY, threatened a lawsuit over the release -- (<http://www.uft.org/feature-stories/doe-backs-release-teacher-data-reports-face-uft-lawsuit>) A judge is due to come forth with a decision some time this month. Additionally, NY City School Chancellor Joel Klein resigned after eight very active and high-profile years on the job. (<http://tinyurl.com/2edmo55>)

In the current *National Council on Teacher Quality Bulletin*, a few stories caught our eye. As we reported before, there seems to be no connection between the \$10 billion “Edujobs” bill and actually saving teachers' jobs. Another story centers around a study that lets us know why our high school graduates reading ability “has declined over the last twenty years, as shown by NAEP scores and the number of college freshmen required to take remedial English or reading classes (currently more than one-fourth of

traditional freshmen). Part of the problem may be that high school English teachers are spending less time teaching their students how to parse texts.” To read the current edition of this always interesting and provocative bulletin, go to <http://www.nctq.org/p/tqb/viewBulletin.jsp?nlIdentifier=272>

Yet another “bad news” study has just been released, this one advising us that the “Percentage of U.S. Students Achieving at Advanced Levels in Math Trails Most Industrialized Nations.” This in-depth study, sponsored by *Education Next*, is very troubling. It asserts that “New analysis finds U.S. ranked 31st out of 56 countries in the percentage of students performing at a high level of accomplishment, trailing Korea, Canada, the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland and Lithuania, among others.” For more information, the press release can be found at <http://educationnext.org/percentage-of-u-s-students-achieving-at-advanced-levels-in-math-trails-most-industrialized-nations/>

Regarding agency fee payers - we sincerely hope that if you are an existing agency fee payer, you have sent in a request for your rebate. The deadline was November 15th and if you didn't file by then, you will not get your rebate this year. However, if you are a first time filer, you may resign from the union after the 15th. However, you will not get the full amount, but rather a prorated one, depending on how long after the 15th you file.

We received an interesting email from a teacher in the southern part of the state, who tells us how she got the word to people who are unaware that California teachers do have options about union membership.

FYI, had a great time last week sharing the information about this year's rebate check with my colleagues. Bought doughnuts and blew up a copy of my check in the teacher lounge to celebrate with both of the schools I work with. My check this year was a whopping \$376 !! (the amount of money the union spends on politics.)

This is \$40 more than last year. Since it came on Election Day, the pickings were pretty ripe for discussion. Folks snapped up those CTEN flyers and other info that I offered like hot-cakes. I really didn't realize how hostile people were feeling about the union. The most often cited line I heard that day was the reference to all the political ads saying "California teachers endorse...." They absolutely hated that when nobody asked THEM who they endorsed...LOL

I know for sure that at least 4 teachers applied to become agency fee payers last week, and another half dozen were seriously considering it. Even one union rep was astonished at how much the rebate was, and said she was going to "look into that..."

For more on union membership options, please go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/know.htm> If any of you would like CTEN flyers to disseminate, please let us know.

Also, many of you are not aware that in addition to personal options regarding union membership, *your local school district does not have to be unionized.* If you'd like more information on school districts that have no union contract, please go to this abstract

<http://www.ctenhome.org/Nocontracts.htm> from a Pacific Research Institute Paper “Contract For Failure” -- (http://www.pacificresearch.org/docLib/20070205_contractforfailure.pdf)

On November 5th, we sent out a special email about an event which would be taking place on November 11th. The discussion between Eric Hanushek and Richard Rothstein about the use of value added teacher assessments was quite interesting. A recording of the program can be heard in Los Angeles on November 22nd at 10am on KPCC and the podcast should be available online shortly thereafter. The broadcast information can be found here - <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=73329334&ign-mpt=uo%3D6>

Also, for those of you who didn't get the other special email we sent out and are interested, here is a link to an op-ed about the teachers' unions' resistance to education reform I had published in the San Diego Union-Tribune last month - <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2010/oct/21/waiting-for-the-teachers-unions/> Additionally, the week before Election Day, CTEN ran the following provocative radio ad in LA and San Diego - <http://www.ctenhome.org/PDFdocs/CTEN%20-%20radio%20ad%20mp3%20-%20NEA%20and%20CTA%20spending.mp3>

As always, we at CTEN want to thank you for your ongoing support. Please visit our website - www.ctenhome.org regularly. We do our best to keep it up-to-date. And if you need information and can't find it on the website, please send us an email – cteninfo@ctenhome.org or call us at 888-290-8471 and we will get back to you in short order.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand
CTEN President