



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.

November 16, 2016

Dear Colleague,

Eight days ago, Donald Trump became our president-elect. And just what will this mean for educators? Hard to say because very little of the campaign was spent on K-12 education issues. Our soon-to-be 45th President did say that school choice is a priority, however.

GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump is pledging that, if elected, he'd be the "nation's biggest cheerleader for school choice" and would offer states the chance to use \$20 billion in federal money to create vouchers allowing children in poverty to attend the public, charter, or private school of their choice.

"There is no policy more in need of urgent change than our government-run education monopoly," Trump said. "The Democratic Party has trapped millions of African-American and Hispanic youth" in struggling schools.

"We want every inner-city child in America to have the freedom to attend any school," he said.

Trump said that the \$20 billion in federal funds could be combined with more than \$100 billion in state and local money to create vouchers of up to \$12,000 annually for the nation's poorest kids.

Trump also said that he supports merit pay for teachers. For more, go here - <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/09/14/donald-trump-backs-merit-pay-funds-for.html?r=1979129823>

Of note to Californians, the three education-related measures on the ballot all passed. Prop. 58 will largely undo Prop 227, and restore bilingual education. Prop 55 will continue Prop 30, the "temporary tax" on people earning over \$263,000 a year through 2030. And Prop 51, a school bond measure, will "help to repair, upgrade and improve California's K-12 public schools and community colleges" according to its proponents.

The latter initiative was opposed by Gov. Jerry Brown and others. Brown argued that it would “promote sprawl and continue an inequitable system based on which school districts get to the application line fastest, not which ones need it the most.” For more, go to <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-proposition-51-20160921-snap-story.html> To examine the problem of mounting bond debt, go here - <http://californiapolicycenter.org/calculating-californias-total-state-and-local-government-debt/>

On the subject of school choice, many in the education establishment contend that any privatization of education hurts teachers. Not so, says University of Arkansas’ Corey DeAngelis, who makes the case that “School Choice Benefits Teachers Too.”

Obviously, diverting resources to private schools must harm teachers in public schools, right? This is debatable, especially since public school teachers do not face a serious threat of dismissal or decreasing salaries. Moreover, even if this caused a realistic dismissal threat, the high-quality teachers would certainly remain shielded. What is unquestionable, however, is that this diversion of resources benefits teachers in private schools voluntarily chosen by families.

Which group of teachers should benefit more? The ones that forcefully receive resources from the taxpayers, or the ones that produce educational outcomes that are desired by children and parents?

To continue reading, go to <https://fee.org/articles/school-choice-benefits-teachers-too/>

To state the obvious, as charter schools and other forms of educational choice proliferate, traditional public schools lose market share. While some school districts complain to legislators and the media about the loss of students and revenue, the more creative ones have turned to marketing.

Joel Dahl, an administrator in the Westonka district, said his small school system outside of Minneapolis was losing children to charters, private schools and neighboring districts for about six years before the flow subsided around 2014, in part because of the outreach to young children.

In addition to sending out about 100 baby bags every three months, the district also sends birthday cards to newborns through their fifth birthday and offers programs to children from birth. One class involves a teacher leading parents and newborns in playtime and singing to help the babies with communication and socialization skills.

“We try and start young and recruit them, and hope they try to stay all the way through,” Mr. Dahl said. “Our goal is to get them in.”

To read more, go to <http://www.wsj.com/articles/public-schools-turn-to-marketing-to-win-back-students-from-charters-1477647005>

One of the edu-myths making the rounds these days is that teachers are burning out because of tougher tests and evaluations. Mike Antonucci looks at the evidence and finds the claim to be essentially not true, with perhaps one exception.

...as one review of the published evidence put it: “Research to date suggests that accountability has not dramatically changed the career choices of teachers overall, but that it has likely increased attrition in schools classified as failing relative to other schools.” There is less research on teacher evaluation policies, but what exists suggests that turnover and dissatisfaction may be particularly acute for teachers who receive poor ratings.

To read more of this well-researched piece, go here - <https://www.the74million.org/article/the-74-fact-check-are-teachers-really-burning-out-due-to-tougher-tests-and-evaluations>

On the subject of testing, the always provocative Jay Greene has written a most interesting blog post, “Evidence for the Disconnect Between Changing Test Scores and Changing Later Life Outcomes.”

Over the last few years I have developed a deeper skepticism about the reliability of relying on test scores for accountability purposes. I think tests have very limited potential in guiding distant policymakers, regulators, portfolio managers, foundation officials, and other policy elites in identifying with confidence which schools are good or bad, ought to be opened, expanded, or closed, and which programs are working or failing. The problem, as I’ve pointed out in several pieces now, is that in using tests for these purposes we are assuming that if we can change test scores, we will change later outcomes in life. We don’t really care about test scores per se, we care about them because we think they are near-term proxies for later life outcomes that we really do care about — like graduating from high school, going to college, getting a job, earning a good living, staying out of jail, etc...

To continue reading this thought-provoking piece go to <https://jaypgreene.com/2016/11/05/evidence-for-the-disconnect-between-changing-test-scores-and-changing-later-life-outcomes/> In a similar vein, John Katzman, CEO of Noodle, has made a worthwhile video on the subject which can be accessed here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9bmrusUG6w>

Earlier this month, the California Charter Schools Association released a ranking of every school – charter and traditional – in the state. As reported in *LA School Report*,

Each school is ranked from 1 to 10 as a statewide rank and a “similar student” rank, which compares schools with similar demographics, including race and socioeconomic status. Elizabeth Robitaille, CCSA’s senior vice president of achievement and performance management, said the “similar student” rank tells more about how a school is educating its students. Students who have educated parents and are from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to do better on standardized tests. Schools that are “beating the odds” rank high on the similar students rank, meaning students are scoring higher on tests than students from other schools with similar demographics.

To learn more go to <http://laschoolreport.com/new-data-rank-all-public-charter-and-traditional-schools-in-california/>

For CTA agency fee payers, the November 15th deadline has passed, so we hope you have already submitted your 2016 rebate form. However, if you are a first time filer, you may resign from the union after the 15th. You will not get the full amount, but rather a prorated one depending on how long after the 15th you file. For more information, please visit <http://www.ctenhome.org/know.htm>

If you are interested in giving CTEN brochures to colleagues, you can print them right from our 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