



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, 2017

Dear Colleague,

“Steve Bannon Tried to Recruit Teachers Union to Trump’s Agenda While in the White House” reads the eye-catching headline in a post on *The Intercept* earlier this month. From the piece:

“Look, I will meet with virtually anyone to make our case, and particularly in that moment, I was very, very concerned about the budget that would decimate public education,” Weingarten said. “I wanted it to be a real meeting, I didn’t want it to be a photo-op, so I insisted that the meeting didn’t happen at the White House.”

*Weingarten didn’t take notes at the meeting, which was held at a Washington restaurant, but told *The Intercept* she and Bannon talked about “education, infrastructure, immigrants, bigotry and hate, budget cuts ... [and] about a lot of different things.”*

She came away a bit shook. “I came out of that conversation saying that this was a formidable adversary,” she said.

He was looking, Weingarten said, for some common ground that could assist him in realigning the two parties, his long-term goal in politics.

To continue reading, go to <https://theintercept.com/2017/11/01/steve-bannon-aft-teachers-union-randi-weingarten/>

Core knowledge advocate E.D. Hirsch, who argues that “only a well-rounded, knowledge-specific curriculum can impart needed knowledge to all children and overcome inequality of opportunity,” has written a compelling piece on the subject.

Our schools now exhibit a diminished sense, once widely held, that a central goal of American schooling is to foster national cohesion—“out of many, one.” The loss of that sense of mission in the early grades has occurred because of two intellectual changes that have gained ascendancy during the past 80 or so years. The first and most important change was a shift, starting in the

1920s and '30s, from an emphasis on initiating children into the mores of the national tribe to an emphasis on developing the nature of the individual child.

To read on, go to <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/44/a-sense-of-belonging/>

According to the Learning Policy Institute, the U. S. annual teacher attrition is about 8 percent and LPI finds this number alarming. Should this be a cause for concern? The Bureau of Labor Statistics tells us that in 2016, the “quit rate” for teachers was indeed 8.8 percent. But other fields didn’t fare nearly as well. In manufacturing the rate was 14.6 percent, in real estate 18.5 and in retail trade it was over 35 percent. In fact, BLS reports that 25 percent of all workers left their jobs in 2016. So teachers quit their jobs only about one-third as much as all workers.

Nothing really new here, as Mike Antonucci wrote about the issue in 2007. Using numbers from a 2004-2005 National Center for Educational Statistics report, he acknowledges that while some teachers do leave the profession because of education-related issues, most leave for non-education related reasons – to pursue a position other than that of K-12 teacher, retirement, pregnancy or child rearing, personal reasons, health and changed residence, etc.

To see the LPI report, go here - https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Teacher_Turnover_BRIEF.pdf To see BLS numbers, go to <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t18.htm> Antonucci’s piece can be accessed here - <http://www.aateachers.org/newsletters/augnews07.pdf>

Early literacy specialist Patrick Herrera is back again this month, this time with some advice for ESL teachers. He writes that decoding exists in TWO areas of language.

Decoding is converting text to speech fluently. The listening skill also needs fluent decoding to achieve comprehension. Consider the following:

- A. *“Did you give the umbrella to mom that I gave you? It’s going to rain.”
“I gave it to her, but she didn’t need it. She already has one.”
“Give it back to me. I’ll need it if it rains.”*

The same information in the syntax of Spanish:

- B. *“To her did you give the umbrella to mom that to you I gave? It is going to rain.”
“To her it I gave, but she not it needed. Already she has one.”
“Return to me it. It I will need if it rains.”*

The second language learner receives information in an unfamiliar sequence. Internalizing the structures of another language must be presented in an organized manner.

To learn more, go to www.phonicstoliteracy.com

Is the Youth Entrepreneur program right for you? It “equips young people with the values and vision to pursue their dreams. We strive to change the mindsets of young people, so they believe in themselves and what they can accomplish. Our experiential education model instills

entrepreneurial and economic principles built for prosperity. We inspire students to overcome barriers and seize opportunities for good.”

Additionally, YE is not just a business class. It is “an engaging elective course and alumni program that prepares students from fragile communities for success in the workplace and in life.”

To learn more go here - <https://youthentrepreneurs.org/>

The Independent Institute’s Vicki Alger has released a report on the value of educational savings accounts. She writes that “California is among the bottom five states in the nation in reading and math. Currently, nearly one out of five high school students does not graduate, and just 43 percent of those who do graduate meet California’s four-year college course requirements.” She continues,

The proven policy-path for dramatic improvements in student achievement is parental choice: giving parents the ability to choose the methods and means of their children’s education, including the freedom to use education savings accounts, or ESAs.

To read Alger’s in-depth report, go to

http://www.independent.org/publications/policy_reports/detail.asp?id=46

On the union front, if the *Janus v AFSCME* case, due for a hearing early next year, is successful, no teacher or any public employee in the U.S. would have to pay money to a union as a condition of employment. The American Federation of Teachers is getting ready for the worst case scenario and sent its director of field programs Rob Weil to speak to the Baltimore Teachers Union. In a presentation titled “Janus, Unions, and the Rest,” Weil details the potential ramifications of the lawsuit. In one of his more interesting comments, he posits that “Unions may be forced to spend larger amounts of time and money on membership maintenance instead of other more progressive union activities.” He adds that the progressive moment (sic) as a whole, and many specific groups, “will lose resources (both \$\$ and people) which will lessen their impact. Some social partners may, unfortunately, no longer exist.”

In other words, without forced dues, the unions may actually have to pay attention to their members and their political preferences. Mike Antonucci has a different take, however. He writes, “Although their overall numbers will be reduced, it is conceivable that unions will become more progressive organizations. Those who pay dues out of personal choice, rather than mandated obligation, are more likely to support their unions’ political goals as well. There will be less union, but it could be union concentrate.”

So will the unions become even more politically strident? Or will they soften their political positions to attract more members? Only time will tell.

To read more about Weil’s talk go to <http://www.baltimoreteachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/What-You-Need-to-Know-about-Janus.pdf> To read Antonucci’s thoughts, go here - <https://www.the74million.org/article/analysis-teachers-unions-will-argue-in-court-that-agency-fees-dont-fund-political-activities-but-theyre-saying-something-different-to-members/>

For an in-depth look at the history of labor reform going back to 1935, Sean Higgins has written an excellent piece on the subject for the *Washington Examiner*. It includes an interesting quote from former SEIU President Andy Stern: “If states are going to adopt right-to-work laws, they should release unions from the responsibility of representing non-members in collective bargaining. If you are not a member of something, you shouldn't get the benefits.”

To read Higgins article, go here - <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/after-70-years-washington-gets-serious-about-labor-reforms/article/2638782>

For CTA agency fee payers, the November 15th deadline has passed, so we hope you have already submitted your 2017 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>

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