



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.

December 18, 2012

Dear Colleague,

We first told you about a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles about a year ago that could possibly affect you all.

Recently, some parents in Los Angeles filed a lawsuit that will undoubtedly have ramifications all over the state and perhaps elsewhere. It seems that the “Stull” evaluations we have undergone in our teaching careers have been “incomplete.” According to the Stull Act (Section 44660 of the state’s education code, (<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=edc&group=44001-45000&file=44660-44665>), part of a teacher’s evaluation is required to include a student achievement component, but this has not happened anywhere in the state.

Earlier this month the suit was tentatively settled. The agreement, awaiting a final okay from the judge and acceptance by the union rank-and-file, is embedded here - <http://www.scpr.org/programs/airtalk/2012/12/03/29514/la-unified-and-teachers-union-reach-agreement-on-p/>The question is, has anything really changed? It seems to us that this agreement won’t have much effect at all. Apparently, the Los Angeles Times agrees - <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/dec/09/local/la-me-lausd-eval-20121210>

Accessing her inner Joel Klein, American Federation of President Randi Weingarten came out recently in favor of a “rigorous professional exam for K-12 teachers that would serve the same function as the bar exam for lawyers and board certification for doctors.” It certainly is an interesting thought to ponder, but near the end of a Washington Post piece(http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/union-proposes-bar-exam-for-teachers/2012/12/01/883f8bc8-3b38-11e2-8a97-363b0f9a0ab3_print.html), the union leader seems to expose her real agenda. Teacher, blogger and CTEN board member Darren Miller nails it in a 12/3 post - <http://rightonthelleftcoast.blogspot.com/2012/12/putting-fox-in-charge-of-henhouse.html>

In an attempt to rally the troops both the California Teachers Association and the Chicago Teachers Union have come out with videos that push the class warfare theme but, in our opinion, do little to advance the union cause. See if you agree. The CFT video can be found here -

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=S6ZsXrzF8Cc and the CTU video here - http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=g1eV8EHII5Q

Perhaps the teacher (and any) union story of the year is that Michigan, just last week, became the nation's 24th right-to-work state. This means very simply that teachers and other workers can choose whether or not they want to join a union. Contrary to what many believe, collective bargaining will not be affected. Much has been written about this, but perhaps the most eloquent piece came from the *Wall Street*

Journal. (http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323401904578157453687608428.html?mod=googlensws_wsj) The op-ed makes the case why right-to-work is a good thing. She ends the piece with,

As impressive as all of this evidence is, the best case for right to work is moral: the right of an individual to choose. Union chiefs want to coerce workers to join and pay dues that they then funnel to politicians who protect union power. Right to work breaks this cycle of government-aided monopoly union power for the larger economic good.

If you have a different take, please post your thoughts on the CTEN blog - <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com>

The National Council on Teacher Quality has come out with a study well worth paying attention to. *No One Benefits* is a report

that examines how teacher pension systems are failing both teachers and taxpayers. In addition to a 50-state analysis of the funding crisis, we explore the technical and sometimes hidden features of teacher pensions that make them so costly and identify the features of these systems that aren't fair, advantageous or beneficial to all teachers.

Some of the key findings are

- *Pension systems are severely underfunded.*
- *Most retirement eligibility rules are burdensome and unfair.*
- *Costs to teachers and school districts are on the rise.*
- *The squeeze is on teachers in numerous other ways.*

To learn more, go to <http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=c9b11da2ceffae94e1dc196f6&id=d38162825c&e=9dc9a1baf8>

The always interesting *Education Next* yearly survey has just been published in the hard copy of the magazine. (One of the things that makes their polling different from others is that they will ask a question like, "Do you think that teachers are paid enough?" Then they will tell those being polled what teachers make and then repeat the question. Needless to say, the second response is frequently different than the first one.) Highlights from this year's poll include:

- *the Republican tilt of the education views of independents*
- *the especially high marks that Hispanics give their public schools*
- *strong support among the general public for using test-score information to hold teachers accountable*

- *lower confidence in teachers than has previously been reported*
- *the public's (and teachers') growing uneasiness with teachers unions*
- *the shaky foundations of public support for increased spending*
- *majority support for a broad range of school choice initiatives.*

To read more and access the survey's results, go to <http://educationnext.org/reform-agenda-gains-strength/>

If you are interested in giving CTEN brochures to colleagues, you can print them right from the home page - <http://www.ctenhome.org/index.htm> 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 PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.htm> As a non-profit, we exist only through the generosity of others.

It has been another exciting year for CTEN - www.ctenhome.org/ and we look forward to an even more vigorous 2013. We remain grateful for your support and wish you and your families the happiest of holidays. See you in January!

Sincerely,

Larry Sand
CTEN President