



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

February 22, 2012

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.

Dear Colleague,

Every year, the National Council on Teacher Quality puts out a yearbook, a 52-volume, 9,000-page compendium examining the state of the states on their policies to promote teacher quality. (<http://www.nctq.org/p/tqb/viewBulletin.jsp?nlIdentifier=286>)

“For the first time ever, this year's *Yearbook* includes a progress rating for states on goals that have been measured since 2009. In addition to receiving an overall grade, states also receive overall progress rankings, showing how states compare to each other in moving forward on their teacher policies.”

Unfortunately, California came in 51st in 2011. Please look at the CA report and see if you think we have been treated fairly - http://www.nctq.org/stpy11/reports/stpy11_california_report.pdf I think this report might make for a good discussion to have our blog. If you agree, let's start a conversation at <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/>

No Child Left Behind and the federal role in education are topics that are debated constantly. The following three links seem to generally encapsulate the differing factions. (There is no shortage of written material on the subject!) No one likes it as is, but suggested fixes vary considerably. Once again, if you would like to start a dialogue about NCLB, please do so at <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/>
<http://dropoutnation.net/2012/02/09/obama-and-duncan-waive-good-bye-to-systemic-reform/>
<http://www.hoover.org/news/press-releases/107411>
<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/01/student-success-act-reforming-no-child-left-behind>

If you are a charter school teacher, your pension may be endangered. The IRS “recently issued a Proposed Regulation titled ‘Determination of Government Plan Status.’ This regulation would *force states to prohibit charter school teachers from participating in state retirement plans*. Presently, every single state that authorizes charter schools either requires or permits charter school participation in the state’s retirement system. Therefore, *this regulation would negatively impact nearly all charter school teachers in*

the country.” To learn more, go to <http://www.publiccharters.org/Additional-Pages/IRS-Proposed-Regulations.aspx>

Last month, CTEN board member Darren Miller went to see Diane Ravitch speak in Sacramento -- hoping for one thing, but getting another. To read his excellent in-depth report on the former reformer who has done a remarkable 180, please go to <http://rightonthelleftcoast.blogspot.com/2012/01/my-evening-with-diane-ravitch-and.html>

In case you haven't heard, March 5th, during the school day, the California Teachers Association will take a leading role in an “Occupy the Capitol” demonstration in Sacramento. CTA President Dean Vogel is quoted on the union's website:

“We have seen class sizes grow, college tuitions increase, and job opportunities vanish at the same time that banks have received bailouts and large corporations and millionaires have received tax cuts. We are the 99%. It's time to put Main Street before Wall Street, and for corporations to pay their fair share of taxes.”

We at CTEN can't help but wonder why CTA is demanding that “corporations pay their fair share of taxes” when the current rate is 35 percent, already the second highest of all industrialized countries. Also worth noting is that CTA is itself a corporation that brings in almost \$200 million a year and pays no taxes at all.

Bob Bowdon, director of *The Cartel*, has made an excellent video in conjunction with the Association of American Educators about why school choice is not only good for kids, but also good for teachers. To see this 16 minute video, released during National School Choice Week, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHQThKptwQc>

On February 8th, I had a brief debate with Joel Flores, a California Federation of Teachers union organizer, on *SoCal Insider* broadcast on KOCE in Los Angeles and Orange Counties - <http://video.wttw.com/video/2196615360> I also wrote a piece for *City Journal* in which I analyze the state of school choice in the Golden State - <http://www.city-journal.org/2012/cjc0124ls.html>

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.

If you would like to see us address certain issues, topics, etc. in these newsletters or on our website – <http://www.ctenhome.org> - please let us know.

As always, we at CTEN want to thank you for your ongoing support and feedback.

Larry Sand
CTEN President