



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.

February 19, 2013

Dear Colleague,

Richard Lee Colvin, former Executive Director of Education Sector and currently a Visiting Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation, has written an article for the Spring 2013 *Education Next*, in which he claims that

A new analysis examines the growing array of groups spawned by the “teacher voice” movement, which promotes opportunities for teachers to have much greater involvement in shaping and improving their profession than they have had under the traditional union-dominated system. More than half of all teachers now have fewer than 10 years of experience, and this younger generation is driving the movement.

It seems that we have been hearing these claims for a while now, but maybe this time it's for real. To read Colvin's piece, go to <http://educationnext.org/taking-back-teaching/>

In another piece in the same issue of *Education Next*, writer June Kronholz, documents the amount of education lost when a teacher calls for a sub.

...Duke researchers found that being taught by a sub for 10 days a year has a larger effect on a child's math score than if he'd changed schools, and about half the size of the effect of poverty. Columbia researchers Mariesa Herrmann and Jonah Rockoff concluded that the effect on learning of using a substitute for even a day is greater than the effect of replacing an average teacher with a terrible one, that is, a teacher in the 10th percentile for math instruction and the 20th percentile in English instruction.

To read more, go to <http://educationnext.org/no-substitute-for-a-teacher/>

The history wars continue. Professor Larry Schweikart recently came out with “A Patriot's History of the Modern World: From America's Exceptional Ascent to the Atomic Bomb: 1898-1945” as a follow up to his 2007 tome, “A Patriot's History of the United States: From Columbus's Great Discovery to the War on Terror.” Whereas too many modern textbooks give a revisionist brand of history (and in Howard Zinn's case, a fictitious one), Dr.

Schweikart's heavily documented tomes go into great detail to ensure the reader that there is a singular truth to be learned. To read more about Dr. Schweikart and his books, please go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larry_Schweikart

On a similar note, back in 2010, AEI launched a major new initiative,

...the Program on American Citizenship, dedicated to strengthening the foundations of American freedom and self-government by renewing our understanding of American citizenship. The ultimate goal of the Program is to deepen Americans' appreciation for and attachment to those principles that are necessary to keep the United States free, strong, and democratic.

AEI is now in its second phase of its program, "Counting on Character: National Heritage Academies and Civic Education." This part of the initiative focuses on National Heritage Academies (NHA) charter schools. Here they focus on Ridge Park, a NHA school. Every day starts

with the Pledge of Allegiance, the Star-Spangled Banner, and the school creed: "I am a Ridge Park scholar. I strive to achieve academic excellence. I exemplify high moral character. I work diligently to prepare for the future . . ." Character education is ubiquitous and relentless at NHA schools. Each month is assigned a "moral focus" or virtue, which teachers are supposed to weave into their lessons and students write about from kindergarten through eighth grade. Signs in classrooms and hallways honor examples of virtue. Like other charter schools, NHA promises parents to teach a rigorous curriculum that will prepare their children for success in college. It also promises a moral education imbued with traditional values such as love of country and family. Good character is not just a private asset, NHA leaders believe. It leads to good citizenship.

To learn more about the AEI project, please go to <http://www.citizenship-aei.org/projects/> and <http://www.citizenship-aei.org/2013/01/aei-report-counting-on-character-national-heritage-academies-and-civic-education/>

The National Council on Teacher Quality is out with its latest state by state report on teacher preparation, and it's not pretty. You may not be shocked to learn that NCTQ gives California a "D." To read about thereport, go to <http://www.nctq.org/p/tqb/viewStory.jsp?id=33564> To read specifically about CA, go to http://www.nctq.org/stpy11/reports/stpy12_california_report.pdf

In the light of the Sandy Hook massacre, California state assemblyman Tim Donnelly has written AB 202, which would make it legal for qualified teachers to carry firearms on school grounds anonymously. Needless to say, the bill is controversial and it will be a tough sell in the legislature. To read more, go here - <http://politichicks.tv/column/ca-assemblyman-proposes-marshall-program-in-ca-schools/> To read the bill, go to http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_0201-0250/ab_202_bill_20130129_introduced.html Independent of Mr. Donnelly's proposed law, Fontana has gone ahead and bought AR-15s to protect its students. (<http://news.yahoo.com/fontana-calif-schools-high-powered-rifles-184934771.html>) CTEN will be surveying its members in the near future. One of its questions will concern itself with the level of armed security that you are comfortable with on your campus.

Looking for a way to celebrate Black History Month? A viewing of Dr. Ben Carson's National Prayer Breakfast talk may be an uplifting experience for your students. Please preview the video and see what you think. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8kJbNPLSR8>) For a shorter video, in which Dr. Carson talks about role models, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxXGSbam7JE>

And finally, there is the very sad story about Hamlet Garcia and his family. As former California state senator Gloria Romero reports in the *Orange County Register*,

The latest arrest occurred in Pennsylvania where Mr. and Mrs. Hamlet Garcia were arrested, handcuffed, made to perform the "perp walk," charged and, if convicted, face up to seven years in prison for enrolling their 5-year-old daughter in a school outside their Zip Code.

The Garcias are naturalized citizens. They own a local business. They were separated, during which time Mrs. Garcia moved out and went to live with her father in neighboring Montgomery County, enrolling their child in the local school. Eventually, the couple reconciled. Rather than further disrupting the child's life, they left her in the school to complete the academic year.

This is a school that is under-enrolled. It has less than 10 minority students. The district dispatched a private investigator to follow the parents. Based on this, the Garcia's were arrested. Their offer to make financial restitution to the district was declined. The district attorney vowed to "make an example of them." Their first court appearance occurred this week.

This case has drawn national attention and you will very likely be hearing more about it. To read the rest of Romero's piece, go to <http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/school-495499-education-arrested.html>

As we mentioned earlier in this letter and in last month's mailing, in the near future, CTEN will be conducting an internal poll to get your take on various educational issues. Some suggested topics are:

- thoughts on Props. 30 and 32
- the *Students Matter* case
- armed presence on school campuses
- common core
- the Smarter Balanced assessment

If you would like to add any suggestions to this list we will consider using them in the poll.

As always, we at CTEN want to thank you for your ongoing support. Please keep providing feedback so that we can continue to meet your needs by keeping you informed as well as provoking lively discussion.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand
CTEN President