



# 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.*

April 16, 2014

Dear Colleague,

Cato Institute's Andrew Coulson has done a telling analysis of education spending in California and its relationship to SAT scores.

*Using a time-series regression approach described in a separate publication, this paper adjusts state SAT score averages for factors such as participation rate and student demographics, which are known to affect outcomes, then validates the results against recent state-level National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test scores. This produces continuous, state-representative estimated SAT score trends reaching back to 1972. The present paper charts these trends against both inflation-adjusted per pupil spending and the raw, unadjusted SAT results, providing an unprecedented perspective on American education inputs and outcomes over the past 40 years.*

As you can see from the chart (<http://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/state-education-trends#/CA>), so far, more money spent does not translate to better results. So the question becomes, do we need to spend even more money on education, or do we need to spend more wisely?

If you teach in a wired classroom or are planning to delve more into digital learning, the Association of American Educators has posted an important read in its March newsletter. "For Teachers, Wired Classrooms Pose New Management Concerns" digs into issues that teachers must deal with when their classroom is wired.

*How do you ensure the devices are safe and well-maintained? And how do you compete with your most tech-savvy students? "I think this is the new frontier frankly with classroom management. We've never confronted this," said Kyle Redford, a fifth-grade teacher at Marin Country Day School in Corte Madera, California.*

*Redford's school introduced iPads in the middle grades three years ago. "I think we were a little wide-eyed and naïve initially. We were letting students guide the exploration into technology," she said.*

*While district firewalls and pre-loaded applications are certainly helpful in keeping kids on task, they are far from foolproof. Educators generally need to take additional measures to prevent students from straying.*

*Perhaps the most stringent guidance Redford's school has come up with, for example, is that when students are on digital devices, teachers must walk around the classroom. "The siren call of technology and its bells and whistles is just too powerful for kids," said Redford. "If they know we're moving around the room they're much less likely to wander down the path of distraction. We are literally doing laps around the room."*

The piece continues with other teachers discussing problems and how they deal with them. To learn more, go to <https://www.aeteachers.org/images/em/2014marnews.pdf>

*Harris v. Quinn* is a case that the Supreme Court will hear in the near future. The suit revolves around

*... a states' authority to require that home-based workers submit to an exclusive representative for collective bargaining—i.e., a labor union. Organizing home-based workers has been among the labor movement's greatest prospects for adding to its diminishing ranks, and over the past decade, national unions have convinced more than a dozen states to recognize home-care and day-care workers receiving state subsidies as state employees. Consequently, these employees may be unionized and made to pay dues.*

Its relevance to teachers? It is possible that SCOTUS could deliver a ruling beyond this case and make all union dues optional. For more, go to <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/01/harris-v-quinn-an-end-to-the-forced-unionization-of-home-care-workers>

In an age where just about every student has a cell phone with a camera, teachers are fair game for becoming YouTube stars. Such was the case in a recent incident at Santa Monica High School when a video depicted a teacher wrestling with a student. The teacher was immediately suspended, but there was an outpouring of support from both students and parents for the popular science teacher and wrestling coach. At this time the facts are still incomplete, but it is a story that bears watching. More here - <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-santa-monica-teacher-fight-20140405,0,5147513.story#axzz2yPU6GQW1>

AB 215 would seem to be a done deal. This legislation would make dismissing teachers charged with severe misconduct quicker, easier and cheaper. Whereas prior legislation along these lines – SB1530 and AB 375 – could not bring the reform and union factions to agreement, this bill amazingly seems to have the support of both sides. To learn more about AB 215, go to <http://edsource.org/2014/deal-announced-on-teacher-dismissal-bill-that-governor-would-support/60576#.U0bGzHeBpL5>

In 2010, the American Civil Liberties Union filed *Reed vs. California*, a class-action lawsuit alleging that the state's seniority policy violated poor students' right to a quality education, and Judge William Highberger ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. But in 2012, after a United Teachers of Los Angeles appeal, the decision was reversed and "remanded to the superior court for a trial on the merits of UTLA's claims." Just last week, a tentative settlement, pending approval by the LA school board and the state Superior Court, was announced.

*Under the terms of the new agreement, the result of a long negotiation between LAUSD, the Los Angeles Teachers Union (UTLA), the Administrators Association and a group of LAUSD schools that operate through the non-profit, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, a host of new resources will be allocated to 37 affected schools, though the underlying practice of seniority is not challenged.*

*Each school will receive new mentor teachers, another administrator, additional counselors or social workers, additional assistant principals, support positions for special education students, support for special training at each of the schools, incentives for leadership stability, and more planning time for new teachers.*

While this settlement doesn't address the issues brought up in the original lawsuit, do you think the new agreement will be helpful? To read more about the original suit, go to <http://www.city-journal.org/2011/eon0322ls.html> To learn more about the latest turn of events, go here - <http://laschoolreport.com/new-settlement-reached-on-lawsuit-challenging-teacher-layoffs/>

For a good “one-stop-shop” on the benefits of school choice, Heritage Foundation’s Lindsey Burke does a good job of reporting on the latest research. She sums up her paper (<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/03/the-value-of-parental-choice-in-education-a-look-at-the-research>) by writing that,

*A growing body of empirical evidence demonstrates the many positive benefits of providing choice in education. Instead of policies to increase spending on the public education system, states and local school districts would better serve students by empowering parents with control over their share of education funding.*

And on the subject of choice, a recent study in New York (<http://educationblog.ncpa.org/school-choice-benefits-income-and-property-values/>) showed that choice even benefits property values.

*A recent study, “The Economic Benefits of New York City’s Public School Reforms, 2002-2013,” found that student achievement gains in New York City schools was enhanced by the addition of 200 charter schools. The increased student performance and graduation rates led to increases in net income and the demand for housing.*

- *Graduation rates increased 11.3 percent from 2006 to 2012 followed by an increase in housing values by as much as \$37.1 billion.*
- *The expansion of charter schools added as much as \$22.45 billion to property values in New York City.*
- *Each additional new charter school is associated with a 3.7 percent increase in home values in that ZIP code the following year.*
- *The additional income that high school graduates should earn over their lifetimes is \$8.9 billion.*
- *The additional income that college attendees should earn over their lifetimes is \$6.4 billion.*

At long last, the CTEN website ([www.ctenhome.org](http://www.ctenhome.org)) has been fully updated now. Please take a look and let us know what you think.

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.

As always, thanks for your continued interest and support of CTEN.

Larry Sand  
CTEN President