



# 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 15, 2015

Dear Colleague,

**We are sending you this email twice this month – via the traditional route and also through MailChimp. Any feedback on which you prefer will be greatly appreciated.**

Many studies have shown that teachers don't improve after the first three to five years on the job, but now a new study refutes the prior ones.

*... the researchers found teachers' ability to improve student achievement persisted well beyond the three- to five-year mark. While the teachers did make the most progress during their first few years in the classroom, teachers improved their ability to boost student test scores on average by 40 percent between their 10th and their 30th year on the job, the study shows.*

*The improvements were seen in both reading and math teachers, but were stronger in mathematics.*

To read more about this report, go to <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/03/25/new-studies-find-that-for-teachers-experience.html>

If the above is true, then Los Angeles should have the best teachers around. The *Los Angeles Daily News* reports that the seniority system has brought us to a point where “Los Angeles Unified’s teachers are old and costly.”

*For every teacher under the age of 25, there are more than 19 teachers older than 56, according to district data recently compiled for a retirement plan.*

*Additionally, nearly half of the district’s teachers, 49.4 percent, are older than 46, while 15.5 percent are younger than 36.*

*This school year, 37.1 percent of the district’s classroom teachers had more than 19 years of experience. Each one of those veteran teachers cost the district at least 37.8 percent more in salary than a freshman teacher who earned \$45,637 compared with \$75,024 for the veteran*

*teacher, according to LAUSD documents. Additionally, an older workforce increases the cost LAUSD pays for health care benefits.*

To learn more, go to <http://www.dailynews.com/social-affairs/20150405/los-angeles-unifieds-teachers-are-old-and-costly>

And speaking of Los Angeles, the talks between the district and teachers union are not going well. There are several issues including salary. While the union is offering a 5 percent raise, UTLA is demanding 8.5 percent. They are in the mediation phase, which is the penultimate step. If mediation bears no fruit, fact-finding follows and then a strike could take place if there is still no meeting of the minds. For the latest on the negotiations and all things educational in Los Angeles, *LA School Report* is a great one-stop shop. Their daily reports can be accessed here - <http://laschoolreport.com/>

A popular trend in education circles these days is “restorative justice,” which tries to deal with student misbehavior issues by utilizing a kinder and gentler approach, and avoiding the traditional “punish and suspend.” But New York charter operator Eva Moskowitz isn’t buying any of the new methods. In fact, she wrote an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal* in which she points out that restorative justice is nonsense. To read “Turning Schools Into Fight Clubs” go to <http://www.wsj.com/articles/eva-moskowitz-turning-schools-into-fight-clubs-1427930575>

Do you think you are ready to teach Common Core? If not, you have company. In fact, the president of the state Board of Education estimates that less than half of California's teachers are fully prepared to teach the new instructional standards. Michael Kirst, Stanford University professor emeritus of education and head of the state panel that sets policies followed by school districts, gave that assessment during an interview in late March. “It requires a very different kind of classroom teaching. In education reform, the hardest thing to change is instruction within the classroom,” he said. He went on to say that he thinks it will take “at least four years to fully roll out the new standards in state schools,” and called for patience. For more on Kirst’s thoughts, go to <http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/03/23/50468/half-of-california-teachers-not-fully-prepared-to/>

Speaking of Common Core, reformer Andrew Rotherham asks if “the logical next step for the anti-Common Core 'opt-out' movement is opting out of entire schools.” In other words, if parents are allowed to remove their kids from certain tests, why not allow them full-blown school choice? To read this provocative piece, go here - <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/knowledge-bank/2015/04/07/whats-next-for-the-opt-out-of-common-core-movement-school-choice>

You may or may not be an expert on Common Core, but are you ready to teach labor history? If the teachers unions get their way, that’s what some of you will be doing every May. Labor expert Kevin Dayton writes, “Do you want your local high school to offer a Labor Studies class to prepare the next generation of union organizers? In California, students soon might have that opportunity, if the state’s Instructional Quality Commission adopts a recommendation from the California Federation of Teachers and the California Assembly Speaker’s Commission on Labor Education.” To read more of Dayton’s report, go to <http://unionwatch.org/will-california-students-get-to-take-labor-studies-as-a-class-elective/> If you want to let the state know your thoughts about the addition of Labor Studies to the high school curriculum (or any other curricular changes), please contact Kenneth McDonald ([KMcDonal@cde.ca.gov](mailto:KMcDonal@cde.ca.gov)) at the State Board of Education.

A couple of weeks ago, Mike Antonucci “declassified” a document which shows that NEA is trying to prepare its state affiliates for the inevitable day when “right-to-work” will be a national reality. When that happens, the union will have to recruit its members, and not rely on the old forced-dues way of doing things. Its 23 pages are packed solid with endless lists, bullet points and a lot of useless information – not exactly scintillating reading. But if you want to plow through it, here is the link - <http://www.eiaonline.com/NEAAgencyFeeToolkit.pdf>

And speaking of the unions, there is another teacher initiated lawsuit in California. Whereas *Friedrichs et al v CTA* is about making union dues-paying voluntary, *Bain v. CTA* would enable agency fee payers to remain union members. To learn more about the lawsuit, which was filed by Students First on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, go to <http://edsources.org/2015/another-lawsuit-challenges-teachers-unions-dues#.VSWeoBjEW2J>

And finally, we still have a limited number of T-shirts available. They are navy blue with the CTEN logo on front and “A resource for all who care about education” printed on the back. They come preshrunk, in small, medium, large and XL. If you would like one, all you have to do is make a \$15 donation to CTEN via PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.htm> - and let us know what size and where to send it and we will get it out to you promptly.

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

Sincerely,  
Larry Sand  
CTEN President