



*Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues*

June 14, 2011

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,

In our June 2010 newsletter, we opened with this statement:

*As the 2009-2010 school year grinds to a close, it is apparent that the recession has taken a toll on education and educators – layoffs, cuts in salaries, larger class sizes, loss of music and arts programs have become part of the diminishing landscape for teachers and students at all levels. And there are many different opinions as to when the economy will turn around.*

Unfortunately, the same paragraph is still relevant. However, there are twists this year. While the June 15th budget deadline is not new, the fact that legislators won't get paid if there is no agreement is a new wrinkle. Also, by June 15th, a new bipartisan commission (created by a 2008 ballot initiative) will release California's new redistricting map. This could radically alter the character of some lawmakers' districts. This could also have an effect on the budget. And then of course there is the off-again, on-again aspect of a ballot initiative that would extend the temporary tax cuts.

Mike Antonucci had a very interesting piece in his May 31 Communiqué which puts things into perspective regarding the number of teachers we employ. He writes, "The latest Census Bureau report provides details of the 2008-09 school year, as the nation was in the midst of the recession. That year, 48,238,962 students were enrolled in the U.S. K-12 public education system. That was a decline of 157,114 students from the previous year. They were taught by 3,231,487 teachers (full-time equivalent). That was an increase of 81,426 teachers from the previous year." To read more of this factual piece – no grandstanding - go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/archives/20110531.htm>

In May, we told you about the budding Commission on Teacher Credentialing scandal. Among other things, auditors found that in August 2009 there was a three-year backlog of 12,600 arrest or prosecution reports to be entered into commission records. Finally, heads have begun to roll. Among the major players to leave their posts were CTC Executive Director Dale Janssen and General Counsel Mary C. Armstrong, but hopefully the fallout won't end there. There seems to be too much gone wrong for just two people to leave their jobs.

Regarding the pension tsunami, the National Council on Teacher Quality has posted a chart which lists how fully funded teacher pensions are on a state-by-state basis. Not surprisingly, California is not doing well. As your teaching career rolls on, please be cognizant of possible ramifications of underfunded pensions. For more, go to <http://www.nctq.org/p/tqb/viewStory.jsp?id=26263>

Several education reform issues have been in the news recently. AB 401, sponsored by the California Federation of Teachers and supported by CTA, is rolling along. Authored by Democratic Assemblyman Tom Ammiano of San Francisco, this bill would arbitrarily cap the number of charter schools in CA at 1450. The proposed law would sunset in January 2017 unless a subsequent law deletes or extends that date. So just when charter expansion could be beneficial, the teachers unions are trying to strong-arm state legislators into applying the brakes. The bill, passed by the Assembly on May 19th, is scheduled for a hearing by the Senate Education Committee on June 15th. For more about this bill, go to <http://e-lobbyist.com/gaits/text/290957>

The Parent Trigger wars continue, now replete with a CTA monkey wrench. With the latest developments in this ongoing saga, Ben Boychuk has an excellent piece on the City Journal California website - <http://www.city-journal.org/2011/cjc0607bb.html>

About a year ago, I was on a conference call with a group of terrific young education students at Princeton called Students for Education Reform. They were a dedicated group of teachers-to-be who were going into the profession with the idea of reforming it. We have just learned that SFER has branched out and are now on 20 campuses and hope to expand to 100 by 2012. To learn more, go to <http://www.studentsforedreform.org/>

The following is an email from a CTEN subscriber. If you'd like to offer input, please do so on the CTEN blog - <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com>

*As a possible issue to address with respect to the newsletter, I would like to know why California schools are essentially forced to buy new textbooks every few years when the California Content Standards have not change since, I believe, 1997? The average cost of a textbook has to be around \$70; multiply this by the number of students in California public schools using textbooks. The numbers become staggering very quickly. The new textbooks are essentially reshuffled versions of the current text; the standards drive the curriculum-content of the textbooks. If every textbook since the standards were created covers all the standards, why do we need new textbooks unless they are physically worn? Could you find out what the total monetary impact of this ridiculous practice is and why*

*it is occurring when State of California is so impacted by the lack of financial restraint of our lawmakers?*

In any event, if you enjoy these letters, 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.

Some of you have asked and yes, as usual, we will be sending out the newsletter in July and August. We will certainly do our best to update you on any important educational issues. As such, even if you are traveling this summer, please try to stay in touch. Thanks -- and have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Larry Sand  
CTEN President