



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.

June 19, 2012

Dear Colleague,

As the 2011-2012 school year draws to a close, there are two pieces of litigation in the news that will affect just about every teacher in the state. The first case – *Doe vs. Deasy*-- first came to light last November (<http://www.city-journal.org/2012/cjc0119ls.html>) when EdVoice, a reform advocacy group in Sacramento, filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court against the LAUSD, district superintendent John Deasy, and United Teachers Los Angeles. The lawsuit accuses the district and the union of a gross dereliction of duty.

According to the parents' complaint, the district and the union have violated the children's "fundamental right to basic educational equality and opportunity" by failing to comply with the Stull Act which is part of the California Education Code. The 1971 law states that school districts must include student achievement as part of a teacher's evaluation. Los Angeles Unified has never done so: the teachers union wouldn't allow it. The case was settled last Tuesday in favor of the plaintiffs.
(<http://www.scpr.org/blogs/education/2012/06/12/6587/draft-l-unified-must-include-student-performance-t/>)

Though only LAUSD was named as a defendant, every district in the state will be affected, as no district outside LA has followed the law either. Then, last month, a suit with even broader ramifications for teachers was filed on behalf of eight students from around the state, claiming provisions of California's education code—rigid tenure rules, a seniority-based firing system that ignores teacher quality, and a "due-process" system that makes it all but impossible to remove incompetent or criminal teachers—violate student rights. As a result of these arbitrary distinctions in hiring and firing, the complaint reads, "children of substantially equal age, aptitude, motivation, and ability do not have substantially equal access to education. Because education is a fundamental interest under the California Constitution, the statutes that dictate this unequal, arbitrary result violate the equal protection provisions of the California Constitution." To read more, go to <http://www.city-journal.org/2012/cjc0606ls.html>

The worst union in the country? Troy Senik makes his case that it is our very own California Teachers Association. See if you agree. (http://www.city-journal.org/2012/22_2_california-teachers-association.html) As always, if you have opinions one way or the other, please share them on the CTEN blog - <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/>

Then there is a snippet from the May Issue of CTA's magazine, *California Educator*, the hard copy of which is mailed to all its members. For the rest of us, it is now available online. (HT Darren Miller.) On page 20-21 of the current issue -- (<http://digital.copcomm.com/i/65746>) --there is a two page spread in which CTA excoriates *Stop Special Interest Money Now*, an initiative that will be on the ballot in November. CTA commits two sins here. First, it shamelessly lies about the details of the initiative. The second and worse sin is on page 22 where CTA suggests that teachers tear out the poster on the previous page and hang it in their classrooms:



On the lighter side, Choice Media has posted a cartoon which concerns itself with the teachers unions - <http://youtu.be/LdACxVeaq3Q> which brings to mind an earlier effort called "Teachers Unions Explained" -<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kxc6kzH-uI> A report from the National Council on Teacher Quality delves into what teacher candidates are learning about student assessment. This disturbing document quantifies the magnitude of a serious problem. "Before going into the classroom, teacher candidates' exposure to the task of assessing student learning, including how to interpret results and better plan instruction, is pretty thin--and that includes helping teachers do a better job designing their own pop quizzes, tests and exams." This is yet another example of what a poor job of so many of our education schools are doing. To read the report, go to http://www.nctq.org/p/publications/docs/assessment_report.pdf

Better schools for less money? Marcus Winters thinks this is possible by giving individual schools more autonomy. He makes a good case for it here - http://www.city-journal.org/2012/22_2_public-education-spending.html

If you are a supporter of school choice, *National School Choice Week* is giving you the opportunity to get involved by posting a photo of yourself with a placard of your own creation on Facebook or Twitter. For more information, go to <http://www.schoolchoiceweek.com/resources>

To see what it looks like on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/schoolchoiceweek> If

you would like some hard copies of the placards, I'd be happy to send you some.

If you are still using a school email to receive these newsletters, please consider sending us your personal email address. More and more school districts are blocking CTEN. 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, and we would like to be one of those sources.

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 whether or not we will be sending out the newsletter in July and August. Absolutely. We will certainly do our best to update you on any important educational issues. As such, even if you are traveling, please try to stay in touch. Thanks – and have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Larry Sand
CTEN President