



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 18, 2013

Dear Colleague,

As the 2012-2013 school year draws to a close, there is a piece of litigation in the news that could become law by the time school starts again in late summer. AB 1266 would require that a pupil be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school programs, activities, and facilities, including athletic teams and competitions, consistent with his or her perceived gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the pupil's records. In other words, if a boy thinks he's a girl, he gets to play on female sports teams, use the girls' bathroom, shower, etc. For more info on the bill, go to http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_1251-1300/ab_1266_bill_20130425_amended_asm_v98.htm

If you believe the education establishment and mainstream media, you might think we are going through a bullying epidemic. However, as Choice Media's Bob Bowdon reports, this is false.

... according to a task force report by the American Educational Research Association, that isn't so. In fact, the report found that the idea that bullying is worse now than in the past is simply not true. It says bullying is down 50 percent between 1995 and 2009.

To read more and access the AERA report, go to <http://choicemedia.tv/2013/06/03/how-much-school-bullying-is-media-myth/>

Bowdon also exploded another myth about the alleged evils of "for profit" charter schools.

The most recent serving of anti-for-profit narrative was in a Washington Post blog of May 20, by David Pickler, President of the National School Boards Association, titled "What's wrong with school 'choice'? Here's what." (Choice was put in quotation marks.) He referred to Louisiana's voucher law as "driven primarily by outside forces that want to make big profits on the backs of our nation's most vulnerable children." Sounds bad, eh?

It was enough to set off Jason Bedrick of the Cato Institute, who published a response the very next day, using a parallel interrogative title structure. His piece was called, "Who's Afraid of School Profits?"

Bedrock pointed out that most of the private schools taking Louisiana vouchers are, in fact, non-profit. Then he goes on to explain in the piece how selectively people like Pickler apply their "money is corrupting" logic. Jason Bedrick explained it to me too.

Oh, "outside forces want to make big profits on the backs of our nation's most vulnerable children." Which is just patently absurd. Nobody says, "That business, they're making a profit on the backs of their paying customers." It doesn't make any sense at all. When you think about it, really, these are schools that these families have chosen. Who's really benefiting on the backs of these vulnerable children? I would say it's the people that are fighting to continue the public school monopoly.

To continue reading, go to <http://choicemedia.tv/2013/05/28/backlash-against-for-profit-school-bashing/#.UbnkQpxQCJ8>

Researcher Greg Forster recently released his latest study on school choice and, as usual, his findings fly in the face of what the educational establishment tells us. A few of the key findings:

- *Twelve empirical studies have examined academic outcomes for school choice participants using random assignment, the "gold standard" of social science. Of these, 11 find that choice improves student outcomes—six that all students benefit and five that some benefit and some are not affected. One study finds no visible impact. No empirical study has found a negative impact.*
- *Twenty-three empirical studies (including all methods) have examined school choice's impact on academic outcomes in public schools. Of these, 22 find that choice improves public schools and one finds no visible impact. No empirical study has found that choice harms public schools.*
- *Six empirical studies have examined school choice's fiscal impact on taxpayers. All six find that school choice saves money for taxpayers. No empirical study has found a negative fiscal impact.*

To read more, go to <http://www.edchoice.org/Research/Reports/A-Win-Win-Solution--The-Empirical-Evidence-on-School-Choice.aspx>

In the current *Education Matters*, the Association of American Educators newsletter, there is a very interesting piece about online learning and one teacher's experience with it. "How Blended Learning Saved My Teaching Career" details the story of a young teacher who had reached the breaking point and found that the blended learning model saved his career.

Blended learning is not about replacing teachers with machines. Rather, it's about leveraging technology to provide students and teachers with immediate feedback, holding each individual student accountable for his or her academic success, and personalizing course work to best meet students exactly where they are. Dave Levin, one of the founders of the KIPP charter network, recently emphasized that blended learning relies upon skilled teachers. This point is absolutely critical: without highly effective teachers and instruction, a blended-learning model cannot be successful or sustainable.

To continue reading this compelling story, go to <https://www.aeteachers.org/images/em/2013junnews.pdf>

In the current issue of *Education Next*, there is a very informative article in which June Kronholz examines the recipe that has made Teach for America's 24 year record of growth possible.

Among the key reasons, she finds, are TFA's accountable, analytical, and adaptable managerial practices....

TFA placed 10,400 teachers in 2012 and its plans call for expansion to 15,000 teachers by 2015. Its teachers worked in 3,200 public schools in 2013. Of the 48,000 applicants for TFA openings in 2012, which included 11 percent of Yale's graduating class, only 8,200, or 17%, were accepted. TFA reports that 550 alumni have become school principals, 100 are system leaders, and 70 hold elected offices. Almost three-quarters of TFA's revenues came from philanthropy in 2011—\$194 million, up \$40 million from 2010. To meet the new goals, including projects in another 18 countries, TFA will need revenues of a half billion dollars a year.

To read more, go to <http://educationnext.org/still-teaching-for-america/>

It's hardly a secret that America's schools of education – to understate the case –don't do a very good job. In the summer 2013 issue of *Education Next*, National Council on Teacher Quality president Kate Walsh does an excellent job of pinpointing the problems and makes some good common sense suggestions as to how to improve teacher training.

Shocked by teacher education's refusal to train teachers to use scientifically based reading methods, Reid Lyon, who headed a 30-year study at the National Institutes of Health of how people best learn to read, once stated, "If there was any piece of legislation that I could pass it would be to blow up colleges of education."

To read this hard-hitting piece, go to <http://educationnext.org/21st-century-teacher-education/>

Talking about "hard-hitting," LAUSD chief John Deasy, fed up with playing nice with abusive teachers, got rid of a bunch of them last month. He axed 100, got 200 more to resign and is "housing" 300 others.

The personnel files stretched the length of the 15-foot conference table in Superintendent John Deasy's office, a chronicle of the corporal punishment, verbal and physical abuse and sexual misconduct reported in the classrooms of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Cuts and bruises. Curses and racial slurs. Caresses and pornography.

In the past, the misdeeds detailed in the teachers' files would likely have earned the offender a disciplinary memo, maybe a week's suspension, perhaps a transfer to another school.

Today, they're grounds for firing.

Under the zero-tolerance policy that Deasy enacted after the Miramonte Elementary sex-abuse scandal erupted in February 2012, the school board has voted to dismiss more than 100 teachers for misconduct, and accepted the resignations of at least 200 others who were about to be

terminated. Nearly 300 additional teachers accused of inappropriate behavior remain "housed" in administrative offices while officials investigate the complaints.

To read more, go to http://www.whittierdailynews.com/bellremembered/ci_23220307/lausd-cracks-down-teacher-misconduct-100-fired-200

We recently sent you a special email about National Employee Freedom Week. In case you missed it, here is the salient information:

National Employee Freedom Week is a national effort to inform union employees of the freedom they have regarding opting out of union membership and making the decision about union membership that's best for them. Often that choice is freeing themselves from union membership, becoming an agency fee payer, or identifying as a religious/conscientious objector.

Additionally, many employees are thrilled to learn that alternative professional associations provide better benefits and professional development opportunities for a fraction of the cost of union membership.

To learn more, visit the NEFW website –<http://employeefreedomweek.com/>

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 and encourage them to join us.

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. And have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Larry Sand
CTEN President