



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 17, 2015

Dear Colleague,

As we head into summer, the California legislature is still dealing with AB 575 and SB 499, two teacher evaluation bills. They are similar in several ways, including the fact that the evals will be subject to collective bargaining. Interestingly, the unions have not yet taken a position on them. For some background on the two bills, go to <http://edsources.org/2015/teacher-evaluation-bills-face-stiff-resistance/78911#.VXhXrZVZu-j> For the latest info on the bills go here - <http://www.dailynews.com/social-affairs/20150606/state-lawmakers-want-to-change-teacher-evaluations>

The mainstream education media have been sounding the alarm bells about a teacher shortage for some time now. But is it real? Not really, says the National Council on Teacher Quality in its May newsletter. It says that while we are deficient in some areas, generally speaking, there is no shortage of teachers. (<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=c9b11da2ceffae94e1dc196f6&id=5d1a94e0e6&e=9dc9a1baf8>)

Actually California has been overproducing teachers in most subject areas for years. Mike Antonucci has reviewed the Census Bureau and National Center for Education Statistics data for California from 2006-2011 and reports that we have a pool of more than 42,000 experienced K-12 teachers who are available for work. He says, "Not only did the teacher workforce shrink by 14 percent in that five-year period, but there are fewer students to educate as well. Statewide, enrollment dropped almost one percent, and 15 of the 20 largest school districts lost students." For more, go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/intercepts/2013/06/06/california-solves-teacher-shortage/>

Also in its May newsletter, NCTQ asks, "In the race for teacher quality, how much does teachers' race matter?" They answer:

...having race-congruent teachers appears to nudge the needle on student achievement, but what gets overlooked is that other interventions can move it more. Here we compare the effect sizes of teachers of the same race as their students with the effect sizes of a few other interventions, mostly achieved when schools have altered the curriculum.

To read more, go to <http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=c9b11da2ceffae94e1dc196f6&id=5d1a94e0e6&e=9dc9a1baf8>

Continuing on the subject of race, there is a new report by two Stanford researchers that accuses white teachers of treating black students different than white ones. While “Race and the Disciplining of Young Students” is a paying download, the following abstract is available for free.

There are large racial disparities in school discipline in the United States, which, for Black students, not only contribute to school failure but also can lay a path toward incarceration. Although the disparities have been well documented, the psychological mechanisms underlying them are unclear. In two experiments, we tested the hypothesis that such disparities are, in part, driven by racial stereotypes that can lead teachers to escalate their negative responses to Black students over the course of multiple interpersonal (e.g., teacher-to-student) encounters. More generally, we argue that race not only can influence how perceivers interpret a specific behavior, but also can enhance perceivers’ detection of behavioral patterns across time. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical benefits of employing this novel approach to stereotyping across a range of real-world settings.

To buy the full text of the study, go to <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/26/5/617> To read the Fordham Institute’s take on it, go to <http://edexcellence.net/articles/two-strikes-race-and-the-disciplining-of-young-students>

Worried about your students cheating on exams? You’re not alone. In fact, China is so concerned that it’s getting ready to send in the drones.

Cheating is a common problem in the examination rooms, with students employing a variety of tactics to increase their chances of getting into one of China's best higher education institutions. Chinese authorities have not released figures about how many people are caught cheating every year, but in 2014 Kotaku detailed some of the equipment being used by cheats to try and fool invigilators. One such method involved using pens to send test questions to a remote location, with answers being sent back to the cheats via in-ear receivers.

This is where the drone comes in, reports Edu People. Introduced by the Luoyang Radio Authority, it can search for and identify the location of radio signals, intercepting the cheating students in their tracks. The drone hovers 500 metres above the test site and has a range of around 1km. When it identifies a radio signal, it transmits the location of the signal to tablets used by staff.

To read more, go to <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-06/03/drones-identify-cheats-in-chinese-exams>

The school choice world was rocked this month when Nevada became the first state in the country to embrace universal Educational Savings Accounts. Whereas vouchers give parents the freedom to choose a private school for their children, using some public funding, ESAs – now a reality in five states – are more expansive, typically allowing restricted but multiple uses of the money. Nevada’s version covers tuition at approved private schools, as well as textbooks, tutoring services, tuition for distance learning programs, fees for special instruction if the child has a disability, etc. Money will be dispersed to students’ ESAs on a quarterly basis, and there will be two tiers to the program. As reported by the Friedman Foundation’s Michael Chartier,

For those children with disabilities or students from families with incomes less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level (\$44,863 for a family of four), students will receive 100 percent of the statewide average basic support per-pupil, or around \$5,700. For families with incomes exceeding 185 percent of the federal poverty level, the funding amount is 90 percent of the statewide average basic support per pupil, or around \$5,100.

To learn more, go to <http://www.edchoice.org/Blog/May-2015/Everything-You-Need-to-Know-About-Nevada-s-Univers>

Has the government gone too far in trying to feed kids breakfast? Mike Antonucci thinks so and drives the point home in “Beating Kids With a Breakfast Club.”

- 1) School receives federal money to provide breakfast to students who live under the poverty line.*
- 2) Participation is low.*
- 3) School provides breakfast to all students, regardless of parental income, “as a means of protecting low-income students from being ostracized by their peers or feeling embarrassed.”*
- 4) Participation is low because students can’t get to school early enough.*
- 5) School provides mid-morning snack during recess.*
- 6) Participation is low because students prefer to play rather than eat during recess.*

To continue reading, go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/intercepts/2015/05/26/beating-kids-with-a-breakfast-club/>

We have recently updated our “cheat sheet,” which is available on the CTEN homepage. What do we really spend on education in California? What are teachers’ salaries nationwide? Where does California rank nationally on NAEP scores? We answer these questions and a lot more on this very popular page. To visit it, go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/cheatsheet.html>

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