



Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

July 17, 2008

Dear Colleague,

We at CTEN know that many of you are traveling this summer and have your minds on things beyond the classroom. As such, we will keep this month's letter brief.

July is the month when the nation's two national teacher's unions have their yearly conventions. This year has seen a changing of the guard in both unions. Dennis Van Roekel and Randi Weingarten are the new chiefs of the NEA and AFT respectively.

These conventions can be very tedious affairs, long on procedure and short on substance. One of the more interesting moments occurred during Barack Obama's speech, delivered to the NEA on July 5. Mr. Obama spoke from afar - his appearance via video screen originated from Butte, Montana. He went through the usual reform litany to the delight of the crowd - slamming NCLB, calling for more money, railing against teaching to the test, etc. But when he talked about the need for some sort of performance or merit pay for teachers, he was booed.

It seems to us that merit pay is an issue that just isn't going away. Even Newsweek's Jonathan Alter, never having been at the forefront of serious education reform, wrote an article on the subject well worth reading -

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/145843/output/print> If you would like to share your thoughts on this article or merit pay in general, please send us an email.

Some other issues that were talked about at the NEA affair were the establishment of a peace academy, in-state college tuition for illegal immigrants and whether or not to recognize Norwegian Constitution Day. When we hear things like this, we really have to wonder just whom the representative assembly really represents. In any event, if you want to learn more about the NEA convention, Mike Antonucci, as always, does a superb job. His "Intercepts" (including many videos) can be found here --

http://www.eiaonline.com/2008_07_01_archive.html

CTEN will be holding another conference call on July 24 at 6pm for teachers who are interested in connecting with like-minded souls. You will have a chance to learn more

about CTEN and have an opportunity to get more involved with us, if you so choose. And as always, we are eager to hear from you about how we can best serve the teachers of California. If you would like to be a part of that call, please let us know and we will send you contact information.

And finally - a reminder - we have signed up with Cars 4 Causes. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to CTEN by donating a car, boat, motorcycle, etc., please visit their website <http://www.cars4causes.net/> to find out how to do so. For cash donations, please send those to our snail mail address --

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Thank you.

Larry Sand, President