



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.

July 18, 2012

Dear Colleague,

The Los Angeles chapter of New York based Educators 4 Excellence has come up with an evaluation plan for teachers, which was rolled out last month. On hand for the presentation were local teachers, media and LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy. While Deasy had a few issues with the plan, he found much to his liking. In any event, kudos to E4E for embarking on this teacher-led project. Teachers have complained for a long time that decisions were being made over which they had no control. It is heartening to see an organization made up of teachers take the lead. For more about their plan, go to http://educators4excellence.s3.amazonaws.com/8/e7/3/461/E4E-LA.Teacher_Evaluation.final.pdf

Talking about LAUSD, according to a report released last week by the *Education Action Group*, the teachers' contract in Los Angeles is costing the city, which is on the verge of bankruptcy, unnecessary millions that it can ill afford to spend at this time. "Sucking the Life Out of America's Public Schools" gives us the gory details. It is also a primer on what other districts should **not** do. To read the report, please go to - <http://eagnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Los-Angeles-contract-report.pdf>

Is it possible that the NEA is in deep trouble? According to Mike Antonucci,

After a year of unprecedented membership losses driven by economic stresses and political attacks, the National Education Association stands at a crossroads. Unlike in the past, our shrinking membership is not the sole product of a down economy from which we could expect to eventually recover. The forces impacting us are so strong that they have indelibly changed our industry, the educational system, and society at large. Things will never go back to the way they were. Attacks on collective bargaining and the role of the union, the nation's changing demographics, education reform efforts, and an explosion in the use of education technology and online learning have radically changed the role of educators and the system of educating our nation's students.

To read more of Antonucci on the subject, go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/archives/20120611.htm>

On the same subject, Greg Toppo in *USA Today* writes,

The National Education Association (NEA) has lost more than 100,000 members since 2010. By 2014, union projections show, it could lose a cumulative total of about 308,000 full-time teachers and other workers, a 16% drop from 2010. Lost dues will shrink NEA's budget an estimated \$65 million, or 18%. (<http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/story/2012-06-28/Teacher-unions-education/55993750/1>)

I throw in my two cents on the subject here - <http://www.capoliticalreview.com/top-stories/the-national-education-association-finds-itself-in-a-big-hole-and-keeps-digging/>

In a story that garnered a lot of angry editorials in California newspapers, the teachers unions managed to prevail on state assembly education committee members to kill SB 1530, a bill that if passed would have shortened the endless “dismissal procedures” thus making it easier to get rid of a teacher who has abused children with drugs, sex and violence. An editorial from the SF Chronicle typifies the POV of many of the CA newspapers who wrote about this situation. The editorial begins with,

The influence of the California Teachers Association was rarely more apparent - or more sickening - than in the defeat of SB1530.

To read the rest of it, go to

<http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/editorials/article/SB1530-defeat-a-disservice-to-children-3684559.php>

Back in April 2010, we told you about the strange case of Eileen Blagden who was a principal at Stowers Elementary School in Cerritos in South Los Angeles County. “Her troubles began when she questioned the history of a teacher she was ordered to place at her school. This eventually led to her being removed from her position after seven years on the job. According to Ms. Blagden, she has not been given any reason for her removal.” In the intervening years, she was “demoted” to a classroom position as court proceedings went forth.

The facts have now been revealed and it would seem that she lost her job as principal because she reported death threats made by one of her teachers against two other teachers to the police. Her superiors in the district told her not to tell anyone about the threats, not even the teachers whose lives were threatened. For more on this woman who did the right thing and paid a heavy price for it, please watch this brief video on KNBC about the story - <http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Demoted-Principle-Accuses-District-of-Trying-to-Hide-Threats-161315835.html>

The *Long Beach Press Telegram* had a front page article on July 4th -

http://www.presstelegram.com/education/ci_21002087/former-principals-lawsuit-claims-she-was-demoted-reporting

Then the most damning piece to date in the July 6th *Los Cerritos News* ran with the headline “Court Rules ABC School District Fabricated Evidence Used to Demote Former Stowers Principal.” (<http://www.loscerritosnews.net/2012/07/06/court-rules-abc-school-district-fabricated-evidence-used-to-demote-former-stowers-principal/>)

We received an email recently from *The American Center for School Choice*, an organization that is launching a "Commission on Faith-based Schools." Its objectives are

to “expand public understanding of the role(s) of faith-based schools in American education, especially in low-income communities” and to “address the need for expanding publicly funded school choice to increase family ability to choose a faith-based school.”

If you are teacher who supports this concept and would consider being a Commission member of this fledgling group, please let me know and I will pass your information on. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Last week, Andrew Coulson penned a provocative op-ed in the Wall Street Journal that raised the hackles of many. As of this writing, “America Has Too Many Teachers” has garnered 680 comments. Please read the article and at least some of the comments to get an idea of how volatile this subject really is.

(<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303734204577465413553320588.html#articleTabs%3Dcomments>)

As always, we at CTEN want to thank you for your ongoing support. Please visit us regularly at www.ctenhome.org. We do our best to keep our website up-to-date, but if you need information and can't find it there, please send us an email at cteninfo@ctenhome.org or call us at 888-290-8471 and we will get back to you in short order.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand
CTEN President