



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 17, 2013

Dear Colleague,

The National Education Association's yearly convention has come and gone. No earth-shattering events this year, but the NEA share of union dues will go up \$2 to \$182 for 2013-2014. For a recap of the convention, Mike Antonucci has it all in a one-stop shop - <http://www.eiaonline.com/2013/07/08/direct-links-to-all-nea-convention-blog-posts/>

National Employee Freedom Week was a great success. Sixty-five groups in 37 states participated, with CTEN and the California Public Policy Center representing CA. There were over 20 op-eds published around the country, three appearances on national TV shows, numerous interviews on state and national radio shows, and coverage from *The Wall Street Journal* and many state and local media outlets.

Having spoken to many teachers, I know that I am not alone in my thoughts that ed school was pretty much a waste of time. As a step toward addressing the problem, the National Council on Teacher Quality has released the results of a very ambitious undertaking. According to the NCTQ website,

The first edition of the NCTQ Teacher Prep Review is an unprecedented evaluation of more than 1,100 colleges and universities that prepare elementary and secondary teachers. As a consumer tool, it allows aspiring teachers, parents and school districts to compare programs and determine which are doing the best -- and worst -- job of training new teachers.

If you are already credentialed, this may not be of particular interest to you, but for any aspiring young teachers, it could be a great help. To see the report go to http://www.nctq.org/dmsStage/Teacher_Prep_Review_2013_Report

“Failing NYC school principals are rarely fired” read the headline in a recent *New York Post* story.

They dole out discipline to teachers and students, but city school principals rarely get a taste of their own medicine.

In the past three years, just two of 14 principals formally accused of misconduct have been fired — and not a single boss in the city’s 1,600 schools was charged with incompetence, officials told The Post.

The disciplinary deficiency raises questions when 217 elementary and middle schools received grades of F, D or consecutive C’s on the city’s latest report cards, and 31 high schools rated D or F.

In an era where teacher accountability has become a serious topic, principals should certainly be brought into the discussion. While the story deals with New York City only, I think it’s safe to say that most veteran teachers in other parts of the country have had an encounter with a principal who has been subpar. To read this story, go here - http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/failing_principals_are_ax_evaders_NASA_SNO64LagnjDYiTTyK

And while we are talking about accountability, as a not-too-subtle protest against Los Angeles Superintendent John Deasy’s new teacher accountability plan, the United Teachers of Los Angeles conducted a poll of its members in which the supe was evaluated. The Los Angeles Times’ Howard Blume wrote,

The L.A. teachers union pressed its campaign of criticism against L.A. schools Supt. John Deasy Thursday with the release of a survey in which 85% of those who responded rated him below average or poor.

The superintendent scored poorly on every one of 25 questions, which, taken together, were a read on the morale of teachers who participated. About 26% of union members returned the survey, according to United Teachers Los Angeles.

It is interesting to note that while the results were very one-sided, only about a quarter of LA’s teachers actually voted, which suggests that most teachers do not have deep feelings — one way or the other — about Deasy. To read the Times article, go to <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-deasy-poor-union-marks-20130711,0,5623534.story>

Wonder about the value of high school sports? According to a new study, athletics can be quite valuable.

A random-assignment study of a high school athletics program shows that participating young men experienced a significant reduction in arrests for violent crimes and a significant increase in grade point averages and the probability of graduation. Athletics help young men channel their aggression in acceptable ways, increases their grit, and moves them toward a path of success.

To learn more, go here - <http://jaypgreene.com/2013/06/06/becoming-a-man-sports-edition/>

According to TheHeartland Institute, “California Schools to Train Kids to Sell ObamaCare.” Limited to Los Angeles for now, it could spread to the rest of the state.

The Los Angeles Unified School District will use a state grant to train teens to promote ObamaCare to family members. Covered California, the state's health insurance exchange, announced grants of \$37 million on May 14 to promote the nationally unpopular law.

LAUSD will receive \$990,000. The district listed as a primary outcome for its project, "Teens trained to be messengers to family members."

Covered California spokeswoman Sarah Soto-Taylor said staff have not questioned this goal.

"We have confidence that the model LA Unified brought to the table will be successful in reaching our target population, which includes family members of students," she said.

LAUSD will also use tax-paid staff to promote ObamaCare through phone calls to students' homes, in-class presentations, and meetings with employees eligible for ObamaCare's taxpayer-covered healthcare, the grant award says.

To read more, go to <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/06/20/california-schools-train-kids-sell-obamacare>

Recently, there was a brief televised debate between CTA President Dean Vogel and former State Senator (and current California director of Democrats for Education Reform) Gloria Romero. The discussion on *SoCaL Insider with Rick Reiff* was civilized, but it's obvious that there is no love lost between these two. To watch it, go to <http://watch.thirteen.org/video/2365019621/>

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.

Hope you are all having a great summer!

Sincerely,

Larry Sand
CTEN President