



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 19, 2017

Dear Colleague,

The never-ending teacher shortage debate goes on, and, accordingly, there is a raft of bills that lawmakers have put forward this session meant to increase the supply of teachers or keep existing ones in the profession. Just a few of the many:

- Assembly Bill 169 creates the Governor's Teaching Fellowship Program, offering \$20,000 grants to would-be teachers who commit to working in math, science, bilingual education or other high-need fields.
- AB 1182 offers down-payment assistance to teachers in counties with high housing costs.
- SB 436 creates a new program to recruit and retain science and math teachers.

But as the *Sacramento Bee's* Jim Miller points out,

California had 332,640 teachers as it climbed out of recession during the 2010 school year. By 2015-16, the state had 352,000 teachers.

The number of public school students, meanwhile, has barely changed from several years ago, with enrollment of 6.22 million in 2010-11 to 6.23 million in 2016-17.

To learn more, go to <http://www.sacbee.com/site-services/databases/article157360184.html>

AB 1220, a tenure bill which we have been following, has taken a weird turn. As *Ed Source's* John Fensterwald writes, "The latest attempt in the Legislature to lengthen the probation period for new teachers has stalled for the year. On Wednesday, the author of a bill (Shirley Weber) to add an optional extra probationary year pulled her bill amid the surprise emergence of a competing bill by Assemblyman Tony Thurmond, D-Richmond, a candidate for state superintendent of public instruction." After, Weber pulled her bill, Thurmond yanked his, which

adopts the position of the California Teachers Association. To be continued in the next legislative session.

For more information go here – <https://edsources.org/2017/author-shelves-teacher-tenure-bill-union-backed-alternative-emerges/584760>

One more bill, AB 119, has already become law and is pretty well summed up here: “...the ability of an exclusive representative to communicate with the public employees it represents is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of state labor relations statutes, and the exclusive representative cannot properly discharge its legal obligations unless it is able to meaningfully communicate through cost-effective and efficient means with the public employees on whose behalf it acts.”

In other words, the unions want time with new employees so that they can pressure them to become members. The bill also stipulates that the employer must give the union the “name, job title, department, work location, work, home, and personal cellular telephone numbers, personal email addresses on file with the employer, and home address of any newly hired employee within 30 days of the date of hire....”

The mechanism of delivery – when, where how, etc. – for the union spiel will be have to be worked out by each union local and the school district. If terms can’t be resolved, an arbitrator will be called in, the costs of which would be shared by the union and school district.

To learn more about AB 119, go here - https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB119

The yearly National Education Association convention is on the books and, while typical in many ways, this year’s meeting seemed a bit more angst-ridden than usual. NEA President Lily Eskelsen García expressed great dislike for and distrust of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. Additionally, the union passed a motion that if DeVos doesn’t address its concerns, it will demand her resignation. While NEA had also called for the head of her predecessor, Arne Duncan, the tone this year was considerably harsher.

The NEA rolled out a new [charter school policy](#) which is similar to its old one, but the 2017 version is more strident. If the union had its way, charters would be just like traditional public schools, which, of course, would render them meaningless.

In a rather bizarre turn, the union adopted [Resolution A-4](#) which states, “The Association further believes that public education should be publicly and democratically controlled, without undue influence in decision-making on the part of any private interests, including, but not limited to, business concerns and philanthropic organizations.”

But as Mike Antonucci notes, the NEA itself is a private interest. So is this something of a murder-suicide pact?

To read García’s talk, go here - <http://neatoday.org/2017/07/02/eskelsen-garcia-nea-representative-assembly/>
To read the new charter school policy, go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/intercepts/2017/07/05/nea-policy->

[statement-on-charter-schools-final-version/](https://ra.nea.org/business-items/?pg=all) To see all the New Business Items and resolutions go here - <https://ra.nea.org/business-items/?pg=all>

Education reformers Howard Fuller, Derrell Bradford and Chris Stewart have collaborated on a powerful essay about “Liberating Black Kids From Broken Schools – By Any Means Necessary.”

Education reform is at a crossroads in this country. And it seems the issue of parent choice – who should have it, how much of it there should be, and for what schools – will determine the direction many reformers will take.

While some may have difficulty defining where they stand on “choice,” others of us – who have spent years, decades, and lifetimes advocating for the liberation of Black children from schools that have not worked for them – do not suffer this crisis of clarity. Our belief is that low-income and working-class families need, as one of the few levers of power at their disposal, the power to choose the right school for their children – and that those choices should include traditional public, public charter, and private schools. Our belief is grounded not just in our understanding that no one type of school is the right fit for every type of child, but in the frank, stark, brutal reality and history that colors the pursuit of education by Black people in this country.

To continue reading, go here - <https://www.the74million.org/article/bradford-fuller-stewart-liberating-black-kids-from-broken-schools-by-any-means-necessary>

Also, on school choice Matt Barnum has penned a thought-provoking piece, “Contradictions of the School Choice, Food Choice – Er, Food Stamps – Debate.”

It’s a government program that funnels public dollars to private, usually for-profit companies that critics say lack appropriate accountability and oversight and leave recipients to make poor decisions with taxpayer money.

Supporters counter that it’s a necessary lifeline that empowers low-income families, via the free market, to make decisions that best suit their needs.

The program is food stamps, but the description and the critique could just as easily be applied to school choice vouchers.

Some observers see striking parallels between the debate about school vouchers and food stamps, while others point to a number of important differences. The arguments also scramble ideological lines, with conservatives generally supportive of vouchers for schools but skeptical of subsidies for food, while progressives take precisely the opposite view.

For more, go to <https://www.the74million.org/article/the-political-parallels-and-contradictions-of-the-school-choice-food-choice-er-food-stamps-debate>

The late Cato Institute scholar Andrew Coulson devoted his final years to a project which first saw the light of day on selected PBS stations across the country in April. But now, all three

installments of *School Inc.* are available online. According to the Free To Choose Network, the documentary's producer,

Coulson takes viewers on a worldwide personal quest for an answer to the question—if you build a better way to teach a subject, why doesn't the world beat a path to your door, like they do in other industries? The three-part documentary exposes audiences to unfamiliar and often startling realities: the sad fate of Jaime Escalante after the release of the feature film Stand and Deliver; Korean teachers who earn millions of dollars every year; private schools in India that produce excellent results but charge only \$5 a month; current U.S. efforts to provide choices and replicate educational excellence; and schools in Chile and Sweden in which top K-12 teachers and schools have already begun to “scale-up,” reaching large and ever-growing numbers of students.

To view the videos, go to http://www.freetochoose.tv/broadcasts/school_inc.php

And finally, as you well know, information is frequently used to score political points and make cases for various causes. To that end, CTEN has a “cheat sheet,” which has been recently updated on our website – all with original sources. To see it, go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/cheatsheet.html>

If you have information that counters what's there or would like to see something added, please let us know.

As always, thanks for your continuing interest and support.

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President