



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

August 18, 2009

Dear Colleague,

Now and for the next three weeks, teachers and students begin to return to school for the new school year. For everyone's peace of mind, we had hoped the various unsettled issues would have been thrashed out by now. Unfortunately, nothing could be further than the truth.

Perhaps the most interesting and most misunderstood issue at this time is the *Race to the Top* competition. There is \$100 billion in federal aid for education and it will be doled out to those states that fulfill certain requirements. The best article we have seen on this subject was written by Michele McNeil at Education Week. To read the article, please go to <http://tiny.cc/DhNVd> California is in a particularly sticky situation due to a California Teachers Association backed law which prohibits the state from linking student data to teacher data "for the purposes of pay, promotion, sanction or personnel evaluation." To read Dana Hull's San Jose Mercury piece in full, please go to <http://tiny.cc/XIwgi>

Confusion is the order of the day in Los Angeles. It seemed that in mid-July, LAUSD and the local teachers union, UTLA, were close to reaching a deal whereby the 2,000 teachers who had received layoff notices in the spring would be rehired - <http://tiny.cc/GjnKN> Five weeks have passed and there is still nothing definitive. Apparently the school district is still unclear as to how much money it will be receiving from the state. It seems to us that the longer it takes to resolve this situation, the better the chance that teachers will be finding other lines of work. So, if LA gets the opportunity to rehire the 2,000 teachers, many may very well turn down the offer, leaving LA with a teacher shortage. Stay tuned on this one.

And speaking of job loss, while it is certainly very sad for anyone to experience this, it should not come as a total surprise. The data tell us that many of the laid off never should have been hired in the first place. In his August 10 *Communiqué*, <http://tiny.cc/G1B4k> Mike Antonucci states,

The entire United States public school system enrolled only 60,966 more students in 2006-07, yet it hired 20,564 more teachers. Twenty-six states showed a decline in student enrollment, but only 14 had fewer teachers than the year before.

The California numbers are a case in point. In our state in 2003-2004 there were 305,855 teachers and 6,298,413 students, according to the California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office. In 2007-2008 those numbers became 310,361 and 6,275,469. In other words, **the student population in the state decreased by 22,944, but the teacher population increased by 4,506.**

For those of you who don't know the name John Paul Gatto, you are in for something special. He is a former New York City and NY State Teacher of the Year and has some *very* interesting ideas about what education should look like and it is nothing like what exists today. For a very provocative essay please go to <http://tiny.cc/Ufm02> You will not be disappointed.

In these tough economic times, when salaries are being cut, union dues are being raised and anything considered to be an educational luxury is being stripped away, we at CTEN will have a gift – no strings attached - for our supporters in September. We promise you will like what we have in store.

Also, please visit our website - www.ctenhome.org regularly. We do our best to keep it up to date. And if you need information and can't find it on the website, please send us an email – cteninfo@ctenhome.org or call us at 888-290-8471 and we will get back to you in short order. And finally, good luck to all during those always hectic first few weeks of the new school year.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand