



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.

August 16, 2017

Dear Colleague,

A recent study from New York City has the education establishmentarians in a tizzy. Alex Zimmerman summarizes the results in Chalkbeat. “The study finds that being closer to a charter school led to small increases in math and reading scores, boosts in reported student engagement and school safety, and fewer students being held back a grade. The test score gains increased slightly more in traditional public schools that are co-located with a charter.”

So not only don't charter schools hurt traditional public schools, they make those schools better. Sarah Cordes, a professor at Temple University and the study's author, thinks a close proximity “might really get administrators to get their act together.” She adds that the charter sector “is working as it was intended: creating pressure on administrators to improve the quality of their schools.”

Cordes' study is not the first on the subject. Brian Gill, a senior fellow at Mathematica Policy Research in Cambridge, MA, looked at 11 studies in 11 different states which compared the effects of charter schools on traditional public schools and found that “six studies found some evidence of positive effects, four found no effects, and one found negative effects.”

To learn more about the NY study, go here - <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2017/07/28/do-charter-schools-hurt-their-neighboring-schools-a-new-study-of-new-york-city-schools-says-no-they-help/> To see Gill's findings, go to <http://educationnext.org/the-effect-of-charter-schools-on-students-in-traditional-public-schools-a-review-of-the-evidence/>

Also on the school choice front, a 1995 interview with the late Apple founder Steve Jobs has just resurfaced and is available on YouTube. While the interview, conducted by *Computerworld's* Daniel Morrow, went on for 75 minutes, the brief time Jobs spent talking about education is memorable. The Silicon Valley visionary and strong universal voucher proponent saw the unions as a stumbling block.

The problem there, of course, is the unions. The unions are the worst thing that ever happened to education because it's not a meritocracy. It turns into a bureaucracy, which is exactly what has happened. The teachers can't teach and administrators run the place and nobody can be fired. It's terrible....

Twenty-two years later, not much has changed – at least in strong union states – where there is little choice for parents, massive school districts are entangled in bureaucracy, and meritocracy is just an eleven-letter word. Jobs went on to explain the effect that a monopoly has on a customer.

What happens when a customer goes away and a monopoly gets control, which is what happened in our country, is that the service level almost always goes down. I remember seeing a bumper sticker when the telephone company was all one. I remember seeing a bumper sticker with the Bell Logo on it and it said "We don't care. We don't have to." And that's what a monopoly is. That's what IBM was in their day. And that's certainly what the public school system is. They don't have to care.

To watch the brief video, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-8JiOQOe6U>

Tami DeVine is a media professional who would like to teach young people the ins and outs of broadcast journalism. Please read the following, and if this sounds like something you might be interested in, please contact Tami directly.

Crown City Network presents the "News Makers" TV News Training Program. This program provides a terrific opportunity to teach young people how to do TV News and gives them skills they can use in any newsroom in the world if they decide to pursue broadcast journalism as a career. It's a fun program and teaches invaluable life skills including proper communication, self-confidence, asking the right questions and so much more. Some of the on-camera and behind-the-scenes skills they'll learn include:

- 1) TV News Reporting
- 2) TV News Writing & Producing
- 3) Videography
- 4) Video Editing
- 5) On-Camera Vocal Delivery
- 6) Professional Dress and Makeup for TV News
- 7) Proper Interview Technique
- 8) And More!

The "News Makers" Program also works great for individual as well as group training after school and during the summer for elementary, high school and college students. We're able to provide quality, professional, broadcast level training because we have tremendous experience in TV News. We have launched many people into their [dream TV careers](#), and we train them based on my experience working for more than 20 years at broadcast TV network affiliates like ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX. We've trained people nationally and internationally. I hope this is a program you'll let us implement in your school. It's fun and teaches so many great skills that students can use even if they choose another career path!

Here are links to a couple of different levels of training we provide depending on the age of the trainees: [Alexis Walker, Feature Story: New Voice of the Dodgers](#), [Chandler School](#) and [Chandler School - 1-3rd Graders](#)

The shows and stories the students create run on broadcast television reaching 18 million viewers in 7 Southern California counties and stream online. This is valuable TV News experience and exposure that many professionals would love to have! Students can include this on their resumes and will look great if they decide to pursue a career in broadcast journalism. They'll be head and shoulders above their competition!

Please contact Tami DeVine at 626-365-3741 or tami@crowncitynews.com to learn more.

Are public schools really public schools? EdChoice President Robert Enlow doesn't think so.

The legend says that public schools accept all comers. That is simply not true, and it never has been.

In fact, the entire system is set up to ensure that public schools don't really accept all comers. That's because attendance in public schools is based on geography—on where people live. What this means in practice is that public schools accept all kids who look like each other or who live in similar types of houses and whose family income is the same. K-12 public schools are more segregated by race and income than ever before.

To read Enlow's provocative piece, go to <https://jaypgreene.com/2017/06/05/public-schooling-is-a-myth/>

It's no secret that illiteracy is a growing problem in the U.S. In fact, according to The Literacy Project, there are currently 45 million Americans who are functionally illiterate, unable to read above a 5th grade level, and half of all adults can't read a book at an 8th grade level. Professor Patrick Herrera would like to do something about this.

Latinos and blacks continue to show a lack of achievement in reading. These two communities represent over 35% of the 48-plus million children in our schools. Over half will drop out of school due to lack of reading skills. Millions face low-paying jobs.

Reading requires a pre-reading foundation, which begins with phonics. This is a cognitive, neural skill that links a group of sounds to a group of letters, both representing a word. The second skill is converting sounds into writing. A third skill is converting text into speech. This is the preparation for the reading skill, which usually begins at home.

Many disadvantaged parents have limited literacy skills. They are not able to prepare their children for first grade. It becomes the responsibility of the schools. The answer lies in teacher training and the right curriculum. There is a solution.

To learn more, go to <http://phonicstoliteracy.com/>

CTEN is again participating in National Employee Freedom Week, which begins August 20th and runs through August 26th. NEFW is a national campaign whose purpose is to let employees know that they have the freedom to opt out of their union and become agency-fee payers or religious/conscientious objectors. An important objective is to reach those in union households nationwide who are unaware they can opt-out of union membership without losing their job or incur any other penalty. For more information, please visit the NEFW website – <http://employeefreedomweek.com/> For info specific to teachers in California, go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/how-to-opt-out-teachers-union-nea-cta-aft-cft.html>

Also, on August 24th at noon EDT, there will be a live-streamed panel discussion at the Heritage Foundation: “Protecting Public Employees’ First Amendment Rights: Major Cases Challenging ‘Abood.’” For more info, go here - <http://www.heritage.org/the-constitution/event/protecting-public-employees-first-amendment-rights-major-cases-challenging>

On the subject of employee freedom, is this the time for Congress to push for the Employee Rights Act? A *Wall Street Journal* editorial thinks so and describes one facet of the bill:

The House bill would require unions to obtain permission from workers to spend their dues on purposes other than collective bargaining. Current labor law lets unions deduct money from worker paychecks to fund political activities. Workers then must go through the tortuous process of requesting a refund for the share not spent on collective bargaining, which unions may broadly define to include member engagement that boosts voter turnout. No other political outfit enjoys this fundraising fillip.

To read more about of the Employee Rights Act, go to <http://employeeightsact.com/> To read the WSJ editorial, go here - <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-gops-labor-project-1500678214>

CTEN has three Facebook pages. If you have a Facebook account, we urge you to visit ours and let us know your thoughts. Having a dialogue among teachers is an effective way to spread information and share our experiences and ideas. Our original Facebook page can be found here <https://www.facebook.com/groups/125866159932/> Our second page, which deals with teacher evaluation and transparency, can be accessed here - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/126900987357825/> Our newest page is *Teachers for School Choice* and can be accessed here - <https://www.facebook.com/teachersforchoice?fref=ts>

In any event, if you enjoy these letters and find them informative, please pass them along to your colleagues. We know that there are many independent-minded teachers in California who are looking for alternative sources of information. Many thanks, as always, for your interest and support.

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President