



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.

September 17, 2014

Dear Colleague,

Courtesy of the Fordham Institute, we again learn that there has been a large uptick in the number of non-teaching staff employed in our public schools. “The Hidden Half: School Employees Who Don’t Teach,” informs us that:

The number of non-teaching staff in the United States (those employed by school systems but not serving as classroom teachers) has grown by 130 percent since 1970. Non-teachers, more than three million strong, now comprise half of the public school workforce. Their salaries and benefits absorb one-quarter of current education expenditures. But is this growth necessary—or even sustainable?

A look at countries which typically beat us in international comparisons tells an important story. Switzerland spends 70 percent of its compensation dollars on teachers and just 14 percent on other staff. In Finland those numbers are 51:11 and Slovakia 54:14. But in the U.S., we spend 54 percent on teachers and 27 percent on non-teaching staff.

In another study, The Friedman Foundation – using U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics data – found that between fiscal years 1950 and 2009,

... the number of K-12 public school students in the United States increased by 96 percent while the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) school employees grew 386 percent. Public schools grew staffing at a rate four times faster than the increase in students over that time period. Of those personnel, teachers’ numbers increased 252 percent while administrators and other staff experienced growth of 702 percent, more than seven times the increase in students.

Take a look around. Are all the personnel at your school really necessary? To read more about the two studies, go to <http://edexcellence.net/articles/the-hidden-half-school-employees-who-don%E2%80%99t-teach> and <http://www.edchoice.org/Research/Reports/The-School-Staffing-Surge--Decades-of-Employment-Growth-in-Americas-Public-Schools.aspx>

The *Vergara* case was back in the news again at the end of August. After Judge Rolf Treu reaffirmed his original decision, CTA, CFT and the state of California immediately appealed. The unions issued a joint statement, stating that “Judge Treu’s decision striking down five California Education Code provisions is without support in law or fact, the appeal says that Treu’s reversible errors are too numerous to list.” To read the entire statement, go here - <http://www.cta.org/en/About-CTA/News-Room/Press-Releases/2014/09/20140903.aspx> During their recent debate, Governor Jerry Brown and challenger Neel Kashkari had a brief discussion about the appeal. Brown’s comments (<http://www.c-span.org/video/?c4507788/debate-governor-brown-vergara>) and Kashkari’s heated rejoinder (<http://www.c-span.org/video/?c4507792/debate-kashkari-rebuttal-vergara>) leave no doubt as to where the two men stand on the case.

On the Common Core front, there was a reasoned discussion in the *Washington Times* between Fordham Institute’s Mike Petrilli and Cato Institute’s Neal McCluskey. While the two men differ greatly on the subject, they do agree on certain facts as laid out in this informative piece. To read it, go to <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/sep/1/restarting-the-common-core-debate/>

We have come across a website that you and your students might find beneficial. Brainly.com offers homework help and claims that “...80% of questions get answers within 10 minutes.” To check it out, go to <http://brainly.com/> If you find the website beneficial and helpful to your students, please let us know.

Regarding the seemingly endless Los Angeles Unified School District iPad saga, a new chapter has been written. Via some “smoking gun” emails, there are allegations of impropriety by LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy and his top adviser Jaime Aquino. No charges have been filed ... yet. For a basic overview on the latest turn of events, go to <http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/08/27/343549939/the-l-a-school-ipad-scandal-what-you-need-to-know>

According to a report on school choice by Katie Furtick, a policy analyst at the Reason Foundation, more than 2.3 million American students were enrolled in public charter schools in 2012-2013. Additionally,

States continued to expand their school choice options last year, with 13 states creating or expanding their tuition tax credit programs, private school scholarships or school choice vouchers.

- *Forty-eight school choice programs are now available to children and their families in the United States. This includes 22 voucher programs, 16 tax credit scholarship programs, one education savings account program and eight individual tax credit programs.*
- *260,000 students used vouchers and tax credit scholarships in 2013.*
- *Enrollment in public charter schools increased by more than 250,000 between 2012 and 2013, totaling 5 percent of public school enrollment nationwide.*

To continue reading this brief overview, go to http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=24387
To access the entire report, go to <http://reason.org/files/apr-2014-education.pdf>

The teachers unions seem to be getting it from all sides these days. The *Wall Street Journal's* "Teachers Unions Under Fire" (<http://online.wsj.com/articles/teachers-unions-under-fire-1409874404>) informs us that the percentage of elementary and secondary teachers who are union members is down about 20 percent since 1988.

Also tenure, an important component for the unions in the *Vergara* case, has fallen out of favor with the public. In an *Education Next* poll (<http://online.wsj.com/articles/paul-e-peterson-the-public-turns-against-teacher-tenure-1408420803>) released in August:

... Survey respondents favor ending tenure by a 2-to-1 ratio. By about the same ratio, the public also thinks that if tenure is awarded, it should be based in part on how well the teacher's students perform in the classroom. Only 9% of the public agrees with current practice in most states, the policy of granting teachers tenure without taking student performance into account.

And finally, there are some interesting results in the yearly Gallup poll that surveys Americans on their attitudes toward labor unions. This year a question was added about right-to-work laws, and the responses were not good news for the unions. As Mike Antonucci writes,

The poll finds 82% of Americans agreeing that 'no American should be required to join any private organization, like a labor union, against his will,' a position advanced by right-to-work proponents. Pro-union forces partly oppose right-to-work laws because of the 'free-rider' problem, with non-union workers benefitting as much as union workers when unions negotiate pay and benefit increases with employers. But by 64% to 32%, Americans disagree that workers should 'have to join and pay dues to give the union financial support' because 'all workers share the gains won by the labor union.'

To read more, go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/intercepts/2014/09/04/gallup-poll-shows-public-doesnt-buy-unions-fair-share-argument/>

And a reminder: If you are an NEA/CTA agency fee payer, you must apply for your yearly rebate between now and November 15th. For more info and form letters, go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/optout.html>

If you are a member of AFT/CFT or UTLA, please call 888-290-8471 or email cteninfo@ctenhome.org for more information.)

And finally, we still have a limited number of T-shirts available. They are navy blue with the CTEN logo on front and "A resource for all who care about education" printed on the back. They come preshrunk, in small, medium, large and XL. If you would like one, all you have to do is make a \$15 donation to CTEN via PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.htm> - and let us know what size and where to send it and we will get it out to you promptly.

As always, thanks for your continued interest and support of CTEN.

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President