

Contact: Rachel Schwartz/PR Advantedge
Tel/Cell : 310.990.2764
E-mail: rachel@pr-a.biz



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2009
2 Pages

MEDIA ADVISORY – AVAILABILITY FOR COMMENT

24-YEAR VETERAN LAUSD SCHOOL TEACHER WHO CHALLENGES UTLA'S LAYOFF PROTESTS AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE PLANNED FOR TOMORROW AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

**LARRY SAND, PRESIDENT OF THE CALIFORNIA TEACHERS
EMPOWERMENT NETWORK, AN UNPRECEDENTED AND
ALTERNATE EDUCATION INFORMATION RESOURCE FOR
TEACHERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC OFFERS DIFFERENT
PERSPECTIVE ON BUDGET CRISIS AND LAYOFFS**

**WHO: Larry Sand, President, California Teachers Empowerment Network
(www.ctenhome.org)**

The California Teachers Empowerment Network (CTEN) was started in 2006 by Larry Sand, a classroom teacher for over 27 years (24 of those years in the Los Angeles Unified School District)

WHY: Sand offers an alternate perspective to the California Teachers Association (CTA) from within the teaching community. He argues that teachers are not, in fact, the victims that CTA is portraying them to be in the current budget crisis. What the CTA describes as a “Stand Up For Schools” action tomorrow, Sand and CTEN describe as a “Stand Up For Making Teachers A Protected Class” action on the part of the CTA.

1. Several school districts throughout California are mandated to send out Reduction In Force (RIF) notices by March 13. **These notices go to teachers who may have to be laid off at the end of this school year. This is a warning shot, not a bullet to the head.** With the state budget unsettled until at least the May 19 election and the effects of the federal stimulus package on school districts yet to be decided, no one really has any idea what will happen come September. Add to that early retirement bonuses for teachers, which have been proposed by some districts, and the waters get

even murkier. **With so much up in the air, why is the CTA throwing a tantrum at this time? To stage a statewide protest at this time without offering an alternative plan in light of the dire economic situation and painful cuts faced by so many fellow Californians seems to suggest that the CTA, and its teachers union affiliates throughout the state are using this as a cynical publicity ploy, and are not really interested in working with their respective districts and the state to find a workable solution to save as many jobs as possible and ensure that students' education is not disrupted during a very hard time.**

2. **The CTA seems to be unaware of the budget crisis we are experiencing in CA, or not to care. They seem to be unwilling to give any ground at all on crucial issues. If we were to keep the present level of teachers, where does the CTA propose we get the money to pay them? We are already the highest taxed state in the country, as well as the state with the highest-paid teachers, on average. According to the CTA's parent union, the National Education Association, California teachers were the highest paid in the nation, with \$64,424 average annual salary in 2007-08. According to a study by the American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO, another very large national public school teacher union, which was conducted a year before the CTA study, the data found that "for the second consecutive year, California had the highest average teacher salary in 2006-07 at \$63,640, or about 25 percent above the national average." With a generous pay scale, considerably above average benefits plans, pension benefits, and a tenure system that virtually guarantees a job-for-life, how much more pain is the CTA willing to inflict on the working people of California?**

3. **While school districts should trim down their bureaucracies to minimal levels before affecting classroom teachers and students, Sand also believes that the CTA's dues, which average close to \$1,000 a year in California, should be cut. The CTA and its affiliates throughout the state are always preaching about unity and loyalty. Sand thinks it's about time they practice what they preach, and that the CTA should share in the proverbial pain and belt tightening that we are all experiencing as a result of the dire economic situation by lowering their hefty dues. As a good faith gesture, the CTA could at least, in these hard times, give each**

teacher a rebate of \$300 – the amount the union claims to spend on non-collective bargaining type issues.

4. Make no mistake about it, losing young teachers who are new to the field could have serious ramifications for years to come. However, the CTA is complicit in this scenario. **Due to a ridiculous archaic tenure or *permanence* system, the layoffs, should they happen, would be by seniority, not quality. Hence, some terrific young, idealistic teacher would be let go, but not a mediocre or poor teacher who has been on the job for a longer period. The union does not care about teacher quality, only longevity. The next time a union official starts talking about *the children*, please ask him or her why the union insists on this system, which clearly does not benefit children.**
5. Regarding concerns about reducing the number of teachers, the CTA is on shaky ground. In 2003-2004, there were **305,855** teachers and **6,298,413** students in California, according to the California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office. In 2007-2008 (latest year for which there are figures) 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.** With a student/teacher ratio of around 20, and the schools de-populating, it would be justified for the state to require less teachers. However, the CTA and its affiliate unions hate the thought of fewer teachers – it means less money in the form of dues for them.

Larry Sand/CTEN - Background Information

After graduating from college on the East Coast, Sand spent four and a half years as a classroom teacher in the New York City public school system. After leaving the profession for a number of years, he had a radical change of heart at age 38 and made the active choice to become a teacher because he passionately believed, and continues to believe, that teaching is a noble profession. He received his California credentials, and started teaching in the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1985. During his 24 years in the LAUSD, Sand has taught in inner city schools, as well as schools on the affluent Westside. He has taught Math, English, English as a Second Language, History, and he has also worked as a Title 1 Coordinator. Sand became aware of the need for an organization like CTEN three years ago, in the wake of Proposition 75. Prop 75, which was on the ballot in California in

2005, was a measure that was fiercely opposed by labor leaders yet alluring to many in the rank and file. The measure would have barred government employee unions from spending members' dues on political campaigns without prior consent. Sand worked on the campaign to pass Prop 75, and the manner in which the teachers unions fought against, and handled that campaign, was an eye-opener for him. Sand realized that many of his fellow teachers were unaware of information concerning their union, as well as other education issues and policies, and he wanted to change that reality. Sand started the CTEN network with fellow teachers in 2006 as the first organization of its kind in California -- a non-partisan, non-political group dedicated to providing teachers with free reliable and balanced information that includes multiple viewpoints about professional affiliations and positions on educational issues, information teachers may not get from their unions or other information sources, and which is critical to them making informed choices about their careers.

***** END*****

Contact: Rachel Schwartz/PR Advantedge
Tel/Cell : 310.990.2764
E-mail: rachel@pr-a.biz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2009

MEDIA ADVISORY – AVAILABILITY FOR COMMENT

**24-YEAR VETERAN LAUSD SCHOOL TEACHER WHO
CHALLENGES CTA'S LAYOFF PROTESTS PLANNED FOR
TOMORROW AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT**

**LARRY SAND, PRESIDENT OF THE CALIFORNIA TEACHERS
EMPOWERMENT NETWORK, AN UNPRECEDENTED AND
ALTERNATE EDUCATION INFORMATION RESOURCE FOR
TEACHERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC OFFERS DIFFERENT
PERSPECTIVE ON BUDGET CRISIS AND LAYOFFS**

WHO: Larry Sand, President, California Teachers Empowerment Network
(www.ctenhome.org)

The California Teachers Empowerment Network (CTEN) was started in 2006 by Larry Sand, a classroom teacher for over 27 years (24 of those years in the Los Angeles Unified School District)

WHY: Sand offers an alternate perspective to the California Teachers Association (CTA) from within the teaching community. He argues that teachers are not, in fact, the victims that CTA is portraying them to be in the current budget crisis. What the CTA describes as a “Stand Up For Schools” action tomorrow, Sand and CTEN describe as a “Stand Up For Making Teachers A Protected Class” action on the part of the CTA.

6. Several school districts throughout California are mandated to send out Reduction In Force (RIF) notices by March 13. **These notices go to teachers who *may* have to be laid off at the end of this school year. This is a warning shot, not a bullet to the head.** With the state budget unsettled until at least the May 19 election and the effects of the federal stimulus package on school districts yet to be decided, no one really has any idea what will happen come September. Add to that early retirement bonuses for teachers, which have been proposed by some districts, and the waters get even murkier. **With so much up in the air, why is the CTA throwing a tantrum at this time? To stage a statewide protest at this time without offering an alternative plan in light of the dire economic situation and painful cuts faced by so many fellow Californians seems to suggest that the CTA, and its teachers union affiliates throughout the state are using this as a cynical publicity ploy, and are not really interested in working with their respective districts and the state to find a workable solution to save as many jobs as possible and ensure that students' education is not disrupted during a very hard time.**

7. **The CTA seems to be unaware of the budget crisis we are experiencing in CA, or not to care. They seem to be unwilling to give any ground at all on crucial issues. If we were to keep the present level of teachers, where does the CTA propose we get the money to pay them?** We are already the highest taxed state in the country, as well as the state with the highest-paid teachers, on average. **According to**

the CTA's parent union, the National Education Association, California teachers were the highest paid in the nation, with \$64,424 average annual salary in 2007-08. According to a study by the American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO, another very large national public school teacher union, which was conducted a year before the CTA study, the data found that "for the second consecutive year, California had the highest average teacher salary in 2006-07 at \$63,640, or about 25 percent above the national average." **With a generous pay scale, considerably above average benefits plans, pension benefits, and a tenure system that virtually guarantees a job-for-life, how much more pain is the CTA willing to inflict on the working people of California?**

8. While school districts should trim down their bureaucracies to minimal levels before affecting classroom teachers and students, **Sand also believes that the CTA's dues, which average close to \$1,000 a year in California, should be cut.** The CTA and its affiliates throughout the state are always preaching about unity and loyalty. Sand thinks it's about time they practice what they preach, and that **the CTA should share in the proverbial pain and belt tightening that we are all experiencing** as a result of the dire economic situation by lowering their hefty dues. As a good faith gesture, **the CTA could at least, in these hard times, give each teacher a rebate of \$300** – the amount the union claims to spend on non-collective bargaining type issues.
9. Make no mistake about it, losing young teachers who are new to the field could have serious ramifications for years to come. However, the CTA is complicit in this scenario. **Due to a ridiculous archaic tenure or *permanence* system, the layoffs, should they happen, would be by seniority, not quality. Hence, some terrific young, idealistic teacher would be let go, but not a mediocre or poor teacher who has been on the job for a longer period. The union does not care about teacher quality, only longevity. The next time a union official starts talking about *the children*, please ask him or her why the union insists on this system, which clearly does not benefit children.**
10. Regarding concerns about reducing the number of teachers, the CTA is on shaky ground. In 2003-2004, there were **305,855** teachers and **6,298,413** students in

California, according to the California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office. In 2007-2008 (latest year for which there are figures) 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.** With a student/teacher ratio of around 20, and the schools de-populating, it would be justified for the state to require less teachers. However, the CTA and its affiliate unions hate the thought of fewer teachers – it means less money in the form of dues for them.

Larry Sand/CTEN - Background Information

After graduating from college on the East Coast, Sand spent four and a half years as a classroom teacher in the New York City public school system. After leaving the profession for a number of years, he had a radical change of heart at age 38 and made the active choice to become a teacher because he passionately believed, and continues to believe, that teaching is a noble profession. He received his California credentials, and started teaching in the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1985. During his 24 years in the LAUSD, Sand has taught in inner city schools, as well as schools on the affluent Westside. He has taught Math, English, English as a Second Language, History, and he has also worked as a Title 1 Coordinator. Sand became aware of the need for an organization like CTEN three years ago, in the wake of Proposition 75. Prop 75, which was on the ballot in California in 2005, was a measure that was fiercely opposed by labor leaders yet alluring to many in the rank and file. The measure would have barred government employee unions from spending members' dues on political campaigns without prior consent. Sand worked on the campaign to pass Prop 75, and the manner in which the teachers unions fought against, and handled that campaign, was an eye-opener for him. Sand realized that many of his fellow teachers were unaware of information concerning their union, as well as other education issues and policies, and he wanted to change that reality. Sand started the CTEN network with fellow teachers in 2006 as the first organization of its kind in California -- a non-partisan, non-political group dedicated to providing teachers with free reliable and balanced information that includes multiple viewpoints about professional affiliations and positions on educational issues, information teachers may not get from their unions or other information sources, and which is critical to them making informed choices about their careers.

***** END*****