



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.

February 20, 2019

Dear Colleague,

It's no secret that the media push stories that confirm their bias, and frequently pile on quite heavily. But just because a matter gets a lot of attention doesn't mean it tells the full story. Case in point: "Teachers are leaving the profession in droves" is a typical headline. But is it true? Absolutely not, says Mike Antonucci. Using a database, he found that "the average monthly percentage of public education employees who left their jobs one way or another in the first 10 months of 2018 was 1.65 percent. That was a record high." He goes on to write,

Doing the same for the hire rate for the same time frame, we find the figure was 1.73 percent. That also was a record high. We have increased the size of the public education workforce every year for the past five without a headline about teachers entering the profession in droves.

To read Antonucci's piece, go [here](#).

For the first time in six years, California has released the names of its lowest-performing schools. There are 780 schools in this group, which includes the bottom 5 percent of public k-12 schools as measured by the California School Dashboard. The schools are said to need "comprehensive school improvement."

- *A total of 1,640 schools were identified for assistance, representing 16.5 percent of all California public schools*
- *300 of these schools are identified for having a graduation rate under 67 percent. Of these, 223 are alternative schools, such as court schools, community day schools and continuation schools*
- *481 of these schools are identified for overall low performance*
- *859 of these schools are identified for low student group performance*
- *Of the 1,640 schools identified for assistance, 1,471 are non-charters and 169 — or 11.5 percent — are charters*

To read more and see a list of the schools, go [here](#).

A group of parents in Santa Barbara have filed a lawsuit against an activist group and their local school board over taxpayer-funded “inclusivity” instruction. They claim these sessions indoctrinate kids to believe that America is a cruel, oppressive, and racist country.

The school district and a left-wing nonprofit called Just Communities Central Coast (JCCC) are named as defendants in the lawsuit....

The nonprofit says its teachings are aimed at closing what it characterizes as an achievement gap between Latino and white students. Critics counter that the group is attempting to radicalize students and encourage them to become political activists who see the world through the Marxist lens of race, sex, and class.

They add that the group teaches students and teachers that white people in the United States routinely oppress non-whites, men oppress women, Christians oppress non-Christians, heterosexuals oppress gays, and the wealthy oppress the poor.

To read more about the lawsuit, go [here](#).

The Los Angeles teachers union strike has come and gone, and UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl is very pleased. He writes in the *Washington Post*,

I was proud to lead the organization that is finally setting Los Angeles schools on a better pathway after years of battling forces arrayed against public education in California, as they are across much of the country.

However, Chris Bertelli, founder of Bertelli Public Affairs, an education consulting firm, has a very different take.

Yet Caputo-Pearl, who most speculate has his eyes set on a state or national union leadership position, will be the ultimate winner in this whole sad affair. What better political platform to run on than to be the union leader who bullied a broke district into hiring more union members in a post-Janus world? The district is in desperate need of more funds. If it gets more money than needed to meet its current financial obligations, then Caputo-Pearl succeeded in locking that surplus into union priorities. It was a stunning display of bare-knuckled political power.

To read Caputo-Pearl’s and Bertelli’s pieces, go [here](#) and [here](#).

“Spate of lawsuits challenge teachers’ and other unions’ dues collections” read a recent headline from *EdSource*’s John Fensterwald.

Some teachers and other public employees are complaining their unions are wrongly continuing to collect union dues — despite a U.S. Supreme Court decision last June that said public workers are no longer required to pay fees to the unions representing them.

The California Teachers Association says that these disgruntled workers, like other union members, have signed annual contracts to pay dues to the CTA and local affiliates. The CTA

asserts that the agreements, which have had the effect, for now, of pre-empting a drop in memberships and revenue, are, like other contracts, legally binding and don't abridge free-speech rights.

To read Fensterwald's piece, go [here](#).

These lawsuits will be with us for a while. If you feel that your union is not conforming with the law, please let CTEN know. We may be able to get you free legal help.

On a similar note, CTEN, in conjunction with the California Policy Center, erected several billboards in Los Angeles which let teachers know they no longer had to pay the union as a condition of employment.

To read about, and see the billboards, go [here](#).

After the billboards went up, California Policy Center President Will Swaim was on *Fox News* talking about the reaction to them. To watch the *Fox* clip, go [here](#).

While strikes have been in the news a lot over the last year, little has been written about collective bargaining which is the centerpiece of every union. But does it really help teachers? Kids?

No, says researcher and education policy expert Greg Forster. He writes that [collective bargaining is not a good fit for k-12 teachers](#). "Teachers are like doctors and lawyers. Standardizing the work they do into a one-size-fits-all mold creates major headaches for them." Collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) demand standardization, "so processes and outputs can be specified in labor-management negotiations." He maintains that unhindered by collective bargaining, private school teachers nationally are more likely to have control over selection of textbooks and other instructional materials by 53 to 32 percent; content, topics and skills to be taught (60 to 36 percent); performance standards for students (40 to 18) curriculum (47 to 22) and discipline policy (25 to 13).

To read more about how collective bargaining hurts teachers and their students, go [here](#).

Writing for *The Hill*, Vicki Alger, a research fellow with the Independent Institute in Oakland, reports that a new American Federation of Children poll shows strong support for school choice across the political spectrum,

...including: Democrats, 56 percent, up two percentage points from last year; Independents, 69 percent, a seven percentage-point increase from last year; and Republicans, 80 percent, up 5 percentage points compared to last year. Fully 68 percent of white Americans support school choice, compared to 61 percent last year. Support among minorities (is) even higher among African-Americans, 67 percent, and higher still among Latinos, 73 percent, a one percentage-point increase each compared to last year.

Generationally, millennials are the strongest school-choice supporters, 75 percent. Not far behind are parents and grandparents, including ones of public-school students, who favor school choice by a 3-to-1 margin.

Alger adds,

Like the American Federation for Children national survey, a recent nationally representative survey conducted by EdChoice also finds Americans overwhelmingly support educational choice program, including: educational savings accounts, 74 percent; tax-credit scholarships, 66 percent; and public charter schools, 61 percent.

To read more about the polls, go [here](#).

And finally, as you well know, data and solid information are very useful in scoring political points and making cases for various causes. To that end, CTEN has a fact sheet on our website which has been updated – all with original sources. To see it, go [here](#).

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