



# 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.*

April 17, 2019

Dear Colleague,

An ongoing theme of many education establishmentarians is that teachers are “leaving the field in droves.” But is it true? No, not really. As Mike Antonucci explains, many of the doom-and-gloom reports include all education related workers “such as administrators, accounting and finance specialists, computer and database analysts, psychologists, counselors, social workers, public relations specialists, speech pathologists, security guards, food service workers, landscapers, receptionists, clerks, construction and maintenance workers, vehicle maintenance workers, and other laborers.”

Antonucci goes on to say,

*The teacher quit rate hit a record low of 0.48 in 2009, and so it has increased by 73 percent. Alarming, yes? But only if you ignore the rest of the American economy, which had a quit rate of 1.35 in 2009 and so has increased 71 percent.*

*... “Quits” include those who left their present job to accept a different job. So if a teacher leaves District A for a higher-paying job in District B, she quits and is counted in the statistics. If we examine quits without examining hires, we get only half the picture.*

To learn more, go [here](#)

Democratic Presidential hopeful Kamala Harris wants to give every teacher in the country a \$13,500 or so raise. Writing in the *Washington Post*, she insists,

*We must acknowledge this simple truth: We are a country that claims to care about education, but not so much about the education of other people’s children. At the most fundamental level, our children are being raised by two groups of people: families and teachers. Yet, we fail to pay teachers their value.*

*The United States is facing a teacher pay crisis. Public school teachers earn 11 percent less than professionals with similar educations. Teachers are more likely than non-teachers to work a second job. In 30 states, average teacher pay is less than the living wage for a family of four.*

But many have a different take. California lawyer Harmeet Dhillon counters,

*What the plan lacks in details, it makes up for with broad federal overreach into public school operations at a time when teachers, principals, and parents desperately need less bureaucracy rather than more. News coverage has focused on the incredible cost of the plan at \$315 billion and its implications for the presidential ambitions of Harris, yet left unexamined is the hidden hand of unions seeking a lease on life in the wake of a Supreme Court ruling.*

*... Now that teachers are free to leave, public unions are beginning to feel the financial pinch, but Harris is poised to come to the aid of her old friends, while leaving unaddressed the root issues causing poor school performance.*

To read more – pro and con – go [here](#) and [here](#).

Speaking of unions, Bloomberg reports, “Mass Exodus of Public Union Fee Payers After High Court Ruling.” It was something of a mixed bag for the teachers unions, however.

*The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers submitted their disclosure forms to the Labor Department last year, but they cover less time since Janus was decided. While AFSCME and SEIU collect data for each calendar year, NEA uses a September to August schedule and AFT uses a July to June schedule.*

*The NEA, which had nearly 88,000 agency fee payers in its 2017 report, left that section blank in its latest report because of the Janus ruling, an NEA spokesman said. The report showed that the union’s non-retired membership grew by more than 13,000.*

*The AFT’s reporting period for its 2018 submission closed days after Janus was decided, but a union spokesman told Bloomberg Law that it lost 84,600 agency fee payers as a result of the ruling. Nevertheless, the AFT added 100,000 members from February 2018 to February 2019, more than offsetting the departure of fee payers, the spokesman said.*

To learn more, go [here](#).

Many teachers in California are fond of their locals, but don’t think they should have to also be a part of CTA and NEA. So one option is to start a “local only” union. NEA is in the process of making this action very difficult, however. Mike Antonucci writes,

*Apparently concerned that such secessions could occur more frequently in the future, the NEA Executive Committee recently drafted a bylaw amendment that would make it extremely difficult for locals to disaffiliate.*

*The proposed amendment would require a local to commission a neutral third party to conduct an all-member election by mail. The election would have to take place according to a timeline defined by NEA. Disaffiliation would require a two-thirds majority of votes cast.*

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

On the school choice front, an in-depth study just released by the University of Arkansas shows that money allotted to charters is money very well spent. “A Good Investment: The Updated Productivity of Public Charter Schools in Eight U.S. Cities,” examines the cost-effectiveness and return-on-investment for charter schools. The report finds that in each city, charters yield more learning per education dollar – on average 53 percent greater than for traditional public schools. The report also finds that for each dollar invested in a student enrolled in a traditional public school, that student secures \$4.41 in lifetime earnings. However, the same dollar invested in a student enrolled in a charter school yields \$6.37 in lifetime earnings for that student – 45 percent more.

To learn more about the study, go [here](#).

Additionally, *The B.A. Breakthrough: How Ending the Diploma Disparity Can Change the Face of America*, a soon-to-be released book by Richard Whitmire, reveals that college success records at major charter networks serving low-income students produce bachelor’s degrees at rates of two to four times the 11 percent rate expected for that student population.

For more on Whitmire’s book, go [here](#).

Also on charters, Lance Izumi has a new book in which he shows that “charter schools are not just different from traditional public schools but are very different from each other.”

*For many parents, choosing a charter school that offers a safe-learning environment or a technology-focused curriculum is much more important than test scores alone. Every day, parents choose diversity in sending their children to the charter schools that best meet the individual needs of their kids.*

To learn more about *Choosing Diversity: How Charter Schools Promote Diverse Learning Models and Meet the Diverse Needs of Parents and Children*, go [here](#).

Terry Moe also has a new book on charters, written from a very different perspective. When Hurricane Katrina hit, it physically destroyed New Orleans' school buildings, “but it also destroyed the vested-interest power that had protected the city's abysmal education system from major reform. With the constraints of power lifted, decision makers who had been incremental problem-solvers turned into revolutionaries, creating the most innovative school system in the entire country.”

For more about *The Politics of Institutional Reform: Katrina, Education, and the Second Face of Power*, go [here](#).

The Los Angeles Unified School District battles continue. After agreeing to a contract with the teachers union, the district's fiscal condition is anything but sound. LA County is once again threatening a takeover if they don't get their finances straight. A sternly worded letter from county DOE "is the latest in a series of warnings from the agency that oversees LAUSD's budget, which took the unprecedented step in January of assigning a team of fiscal experts to help. The letter also arrives as voters consider whether to support a parcel tax on the June ballot to increase school funding."

*LACOE gave LAUSD a "qualified certification," citing district failure to address deficit spending, which has led to a "distressed financial condition." LACOE also cited "inattention" to LAUSD's \$15.2 billion unfunded retiree healthcare liabilities (the promises made to future retirees, which the district has not set aside money to pay for) and its "inability to consider long-term effects of collective bargaining agreements."*

To learn more, go [here](#)

Do bad kids earn more money in later life? Seemingly to defy conventional wisdom, a working paper circulated by the National Bureau of Economic Research in February 2019 claims just that.

*...kids with these behavioral issues are less likely to please their teachers and succeed in school. And the more years of education you have, the more income you'll make, on average. It's not that the benefits of behaving badly trump a college education. But among people with the same amount of education, the badly behaved child is likely to outearn the well-behaved one.*

To learn more, go [here](#).

And finally, CTEN has been updating its website. It is still a work in progress, and if you have any thoughts or suggestions, we'd love to hear from you. Please check it out [here](#).

CTEN will continue to keep up with post-*Janus* doings in addition to any other issues pertinent to education and teachers, and keep you informed you as they develop. If you have any questions, or have experienced any problems because of your decision to leave your union, please let us know, and we will do our best to help you in a timely manner. We will also be able to share your concerns with other teachers across the state. And speaking of sharing, please pass this email along to your colleagues and encourage them to join us.

Also, anyone wishing to donate to CTEN can do so very simply through check, money order or PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.html> As a non-profit, we exist only through the generosity of others.

Sincerely,  
Larry Sand  
CTEN President