



# 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.*

July 21, 2021

Dear Colleague,

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, hours after issuing guidance that schools must send home students who refuse to wear masks indoors at schools in the fall, the California Department of Public Health rescinded its order. As John Fensterwald reports in *EdSource*,

*The overall requirement that students and adults must wear masks inside school buildings will remain, but the new position will be that local schools can decide for themselves how to deal with noncompliant students, as they have for the past year, Alex Stack, a spokesman for Gov. Gavin Newsom, said Monday. Stack said revisions to the guidance, clarifying the issue, will be released on Tuesday. He didn't cite a reason for the change.*

*The [guidance published Monday afternoon](#) said that schools “must exclude students from campus” who are not wearing a mask indoors and who refuse to wear one that the school provides. It had elaborated on a masking requirement that the Public Health Department announced on Friday.*

*California's mask requirement differs from the guidance issued last week by the Centers for Disease Control, which said only unvaccinated students and staff would be required to wear masks. However, the CDC said states do have the discretion to impose additional protections as conditions warrant.*

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

The state also has had second thoughts on the proposed math curriculum. As reported by Fox News,

*The [California](#) Board of Education is set to push back against implementing an overhaul of its mathematics [curriculum](#) after opponents argued the plan needlessly inserts politics and social justice initiatives into lessons.*

*"California is on the verge of politicizing K-12 math in a potentially disastrous way. This postponement means the State Board of Education has heard the message loud and clear. STEM leaders don't want California students left behind by introducing politics into the math curriculum," said in a statement Dr. Williamson M. Evers, a senior fellow of the [Independent Institute](#).*

*The California board is slated to postpone implementing its proposed Mathematics Curriculum Framework during a Wednesday meeting, pushing final action on the curriculum to May 2022, [according to the board's agenda for this month](#).*

*The move comes after hundreds of former and current professionals working in science, math, and engineering fields, as well as educators and venture capitalists, [signed an open letter denouncing the plan](#) as one that will "de-mathematize math" and instead insert "environmental and social justice" teachings into curriculum.*

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

On the Critical Race Theory front, parents are fighting back. Parents Defending Education, a “national grassroots organization working to reclaim our schools from activists imposing harmful agendas,” believes children’s education “should be based on scholarship and facts, and should nurture their development into the happy, resilient, free-thinking, educated citizens every democracy needs. Our classrooms should include rigorous instruction in history, civics, literature, math, the sciences, and the ideas and values that enrich our country.” On the group’s homepage, there’s a map where you can locate school districts and learn about parent organizations, incidents and FOIAs.

To visit the PDE website, go [here](#).

Re CRT in California, the Hayward Unified School District (HUSD) Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve a new \$40 million ethnic studies policy, according to Tammi Rossman-Benjamin.

*In its [press release](#), the district noted, “The policy and efforts to develop an Ethnic Studies framework are informed by and will include Critical Race Theory and the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.”*

*... The “Liberated” curriculum adopted by Hayward is the brainchild of the [Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Institute](#) (LESMC), a for-profit educational consulting firm established by the authors of the rejected first-draft of the ESMC as a lucrative means of peddling a version of their rejected draft — including its anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist lessons — in school districts throughout the state. The anti-Zionist tenets of the “Liberated” curriculum were on display at a May 26 ethnic studies teacher training workshop for HUSD teachers, where they learned, “In Palestine...the people who are seeking to maintain systems of oppression and racial domination are sharing ideologies, strategies and weapons. For example, police strategies have been transnationalized, with the US and Israeli police departments exchanging tactics...*

*Let's continue to share ideas and resources and hold brave conversations [in classrooms] ... We continue to see the ethnic cleansing and genocide of Palestinians due to settler colonialism."*

To continue reading, go [here](#).

The national teachers unions are certainly embracing CRT. At its yearly convention earlier this month, the National Education Association delegates adopted [New Business Item A](#), which, among other things has NEA “supporting and leading campaigns that result in increasing the implementation of culturally responsive education, critical race theory, and ethnic (Native people, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern, North African, and Pacific Islander) Studies curriculum in pre- K-12 and higher education.”

[NBI 2](#), which also passed, claims that attacks on anti-racist teachers are increasing. To fight back, “NEA will research the organizations attacking educators doing anti-racist work and/or use the research already done and put together a list of resources and recommendations for state affiliates, locals, and individual educators to utilize when they are attacked.” While only the Heritage Foundation was mentioned in the NBI, the list of anti-CRTers is growing by the day. Hence, the \$56,500 the union will set aside for its opposition research may not be nearly enough.

On a similar note, [NBI 18](#), which was adopted, directs NEA to “identify, compile, and share on NEA EdCommunities, existing ‘decolonizing the curriculum’ resources to educators seeking to be anti-racist in its classrooms and use existing communications and social media to promote it through their affiliates so that rank and file educators can utilize the resources in the classrooms.” To support its CRT work, NEA is offering a “[Confronting White Nationalism in Schools](#)” [toolkit](#).

[NBI 39](#) continues the CRT theme and has the union joining forces with two Marxist groups – Black Lives Matter at School and the Zinn Education Project – to push their agenda, which includes providing a study that “critiques empire, white supremacy, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, racism, patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression at the intersections of our society.” The NBI also maintains that “October 14 – George Floyd’s birthday – should be used as a national day of action to teach lessons about structural racism and oppression.”

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

“New federal data confirms pandemic’s blow to K-12 enrollment, with drop of 1.5 million students; pre-K experiences 22 percent decline” writes Kevin Mahnken in *LA School Report*.

*Data released last month revealed a startling decline in the number of American children attending public schools: Total K-12 enrollment dropped by roughly 3 percent in 2020-21 compared with the previous school year.*

*The overall number obscures an even more dramatic drop among the youngest children. According to the data circulated by the National Center for Education Statistics — the federal agency charged with analyzing and disseminating information about schools and education —*

*the combined number of preschool and kindergarten students decreased by 13 percent last year. All told, the decline is the largest since the turn of the century.*

*U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said that in order to help students recover from the setbacks of the last year, educators needed to re-engage with families whose ties to schools had been frayed by COVID-related upheaval.*

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

Between the move toward CRT and the Covid-related lockdowns, school choice is thriving across the country. As Mike McShane writes in *Forbes*,

*It is difficult to understate just how huge a year school choice has had in state legislatures across the nation. When I last wrote about it, [in late May](#), 13 states had created five new private school choice programs and expanded 13 existing ones. Those numbers are now up to 18 states creating seven new programs and expanding 21 existing ones. While we have seen years before with large numbers of new programs enacted, we have not seen the depth, breadth, size, and scope of new programs and program expansions that we have seen in 2021.*

*...This will be the legacy of the coronavirus on the American education system. It was finally made clear to a critical mass of legislators that families need options, and the one-size-fits-all nature of the contemporary public education system is not fit for purpose in an uncertain and changing world. Funding a more diverse and decentralized system means creating a more resilient system and a system better tuned to the needs of the people it serves.*

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

If you have any valuable resources that you would like to share, or report on what your school district is doing – good, bad or indifferent – to deal with the “new normal,” please do so by emailing [cteninfo@ctenhome.org](mailto:cteninfo@ctenhome.org) or posting on Facebook if you prefer. The CTEN page can be accessed [here](#), and the CTEN group can be found [here](#).

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. Thanks, as always.

Sincerely,  
Larry Sand  
CTEN President