



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

June 15, 2022

Dear Colleague,

As reported recently by *EdSource*, “Covid challenges, bad student behavior push teachers to limit, out the door.”

In the last six months of 2020 – after the pandemic began – there were 5,644 [teacher retirements](#), a 26% increase the same period the previous year, according to the California State Teachers’ Retirement System. By the end of the school year, [12,785 teachers](#) had retired – 8% higher than the previous year. Data for this school year is not yet available, but CalSTRS reports that the number of retirements has leveled off since 2020.

Most of the retirees who completed a CalSTRS survey said they retired earlier than they had planned. Almost half of the retirees surveyed in the 2020-21 school year said challenges related to teaching during Covid were among the primary reasons for their early departure.

“I can’t speak for others, but even in our worst years prior to Covid, we did not see the mass exiting that we do now,” said Lindsay Mendoza, president of the Cutler-Orosi Unified Teachers Association.

These resignations come as California school districts are already struggling with staff shortages that have meant larger class sizes and more teachers giving up preparation and lunch periods to cover classes when other teachers are sick.

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

As teachers leave the profession, they also leave the teachers union. But the California Teachers Association’s finances are in good shape, according to Mike Antonucci who asserts, “California Teachers Union Expects to Lose 4,000 Members, Gain \$2.3M.”

The union has lost more than 35,000 members since its high-water mark in 2018. That’s equivalent to the entire membership of the Colorado Education Association.

The California union thinks the bleeding will continue. Its 2022-23 budget assumes a loss of almost 4,000 more working members from March 2022 levels. And there are even bigger worries on the horizon.

In her preamble to the budget, obtained exclusively by The 74, Secretary-Treasurer Leslie Littman singles one out.

“Another growing concern is enrollment in California public schools,” she wrote. “The number of students has been steadily declining for years, which studies attributed to excessive cost of living in the state, declining birth rates and migration patterns. But the pandemic exacerbated the decline as parents’ frustration over distance learning intensified. Certain studies project a 9 percent decline in public school enrollment in California within the next 10 years.”

...But membership losses won’t translate into financial pain for the union’s three executive officers and its 415 employees. State dues are indexed to increases in the state’s average teacher salary. Each member will pay the state union \$768 in 2022-23, an increase of \$15. Despite the projected membership losses, the union will actually rake in \$2.3 million more next year, for a total of \$214 million, tax-exempt.

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

In the meantime, California is “set to launch hundreds of community schools with \$635 million in grants.”

Approved a year ago by the Legislature, the \$3 billion California Community Schools Partnership Program will be the nation’s most ambitious effort to create schools serving multiple health and learning needs of children. Community schools have come to be known as schools with “wraparound services.” The underlying assumption is that a holistic approach to education, particularly in low-income areas with unmet basic needs, creates the best conditions for children to thrive emotionally and academically. Gov. Gavin Newsom is proposing to increase the community schools program by \$1.5 billion – 50% – in his revised 2022-23 state budget, which he released on May 13.

On the recommendation of the California Department of Education, [192 districts, county offices of education and charter schools will receive](#) \$200,000 two-year planning grants in the first round.

The other 73 districts, with at least some existing community schools, will receive [implementation grants covering 444 schools](#); each school will receive over five years between \$712,500 for schools with fewer than 150 students to \$2.375 million for schools with more than 2,000 students. Schools serving at least 80% low-income children will receive priority funding.

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

Also concerning education finances, “Legislature disagrees with Newsom on how to spend additional billions for education.”

School districts and charter schools would get \$4.5 billion more than Gov. Gavin Newsom is proposing for the Local Control Funding Formula, under a draft 2022-23 state budget that the Legislature released this week.

But to do it, lawmakers would cut into some of Newsom's favored proposals like his early literacy proposal for \$500 million over five years to train and hire literacy coaches and reading specialists in elementary schools and \$200 million to create or expand multilingual school or classroom libraries with "culturally relevant texts" to support reading. The Legislature also wants to cut an additional \$1.5 billion to establish community schools in schools with concentrations of low-income families; the 2021-22 budget included \$3 billion to launch the program.

The literacy proposals are backed by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond's task force on early literacy.

Since legislative leaders are basing their alternative budget on the same revenue projections for 2022-23 that Newsom used, they would eliminate or reduce some of Newsom's top priorities to make room for the \$4.5 billion.

The Legislature would further slice Newsom's pot of one-time funding by dropping \$1.8 billion for deferred maintenance of K-12 facilities and reducing increased funding for dual enrollment and career pathways.

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

In a very questionable move, "The California State Senate has passed a bill that would allow schools not to report threats or attacks against employees or officials to law enforcement, despite the ongoing national shock and outrage over the Uvalde, Texas, mass school shooting."

The bill, [SB 1273](#), introduced by State Sen. Steven Bradford (D-Los Angeles), passed easily last Thursday — just two days after the Uvalde shooting, in which an 18-year-old gunman murdered 19 children and two teachers in an elementary school.

The bill repeals a provision of existing law that requires that "whenever any employee of a school district or county superintendent of schools is attacked, assaulted, or physically threatened by any pupil, the employee and any person under whose direction or supervision the employee is employed who has knowledge of the incident are required to promptly report the incident to specified law enforcement authorities." SB 1273 would make such reports to law enforcement voluntary.

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

Additionally, the ethnic studies battle rages on here in California. As John Fensterwald reports, "Debate turns hot over UC proposal to set criteria for high school ethnic studies."

An influential University of California faculty committee has shelved a draft policy to require criteria for high school ethnic studies courses that critics characterized as narrow, ideological and activist.

The professors who wrote the draft are vowing to fight for it, in what could become a combative and very public battle over who gets to decide what California high school students will learn about the heritage, history, culture and struggles of the state's historically underrepresented groups.

The proposal had gone through several iterations and had appeared to be on track to go before the UC Board of Regents for approval. Instead, the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools or BOARS, which initiated the effort, has backpedaled amid continued questions and debate within and outside of UC.

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

Also in the political realm, Pacific Research Institute scholar Lance Izumi writes, "Woke Math Returns to California."

Last year, the California Department of Education released the first draft of a new curriculum framework for K-12 mathematics, which would guide teaching in the classroom.

The first draft was widely criticized for politicizing math instruction by inserting "environmental and social justice" into the math curriculum, having students solve "problems that result in social inequalities," and rejecting the notion that math is a "neutral discipline."

Because of intense backlash, including an open letter signed by more than 1,200 mathematicians, scientists, and education leaders, the first draft was pulled back. But now, a second draft has been released and it is still filled with woke concepts and prescriptions.

The second draft says that the goal of teaching math will be to "promote racial justice." Indeed, five of the 14 chapters of the framework are focused on equity, with the CDE saying that "equity influences all aspects of this document."

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

Most recently, the results of a [Harvard University study](#), which investigated the role of remote and hybrid instruction in widening gaps in achievement by race and school poverty, have been released.

Using testing data from 2.1 million students in 10,000 schools in 49 states and D.C., the researchers found that "shifts to remote or hybrid instruction during 2020-21 had [profound consequences for student achievement](#). In districts that went remote, achievement growth was lower for all subgroups, but especially for students attending high-poverty schools. In areas that remained in-person, "there were still modest losses in achievement, but there was no widening of gaps between high and low-poverty schools in math (and less widening in reading)."

Another study, by curriculum and assessment provider Amplify, examined test data for some 400,000 elementary school students across 37 states and found a spike in students not reading at grade level, with literacy losses "disproportionately concentrated in the early elementary grades

(K-2).” The report also found that minority children suffered disproportionate learning loss. As The Wall Street Journal reports, “During the last normal school year, only 34% of black and 29% of Hispanic second graders needed intensive intervention to help catch up. This school year [47% of black and 39% of Hispanic second graders](#) have fallen this far behind on literacy, compared to 26% of white peers.”

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

And finally, in a world awash with data, we at [CTEN](#) make every effort to keep up with the latest info. If you have any questions, or want more information about anything related to education, please let us know. Also, if you appreciate these letters and find them informative, please pass them along to your colleagues and encourage them to join us.

As always, thanks for your continued interest and support of [CTEN](#).

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President