



Teacher Union Reform Network

of AFT and NEA Locals

TURN home page: <http://www.turnexchange.net>

July 8, 2010

Dear Colleague,

When polled at the recent NEA convention, delegates voted “No Confidence” in the policies promoted by the Department of Education and Secretary Arnie Duncan. AFT delegates will take up the conversation at their convention this week in Seattle.

As our state and national affiliates continue to challenge the current federal agenda, saying no is only half of the fight to preserve public education. You and your members live the impact of decisions made by elected officials in Washington and Sacramento. What can we, as teacher leaders do to change the trajectory of “charters as the only answer” or “test, test, test students and then evaluate teachers on those questionable test results?” How can we change the conversation from competition- à la *Race to the Top*-to constructive conversations and cooperation among ourselves that will expand our ability to promote viable and creative alternatives to the status quo?

Several local chapters in California are members of the Teachers Union Reform Network (TURN), which is composed of NEA and AFT affiliates. TURN has been at the forefront of exploring and new ideas that improve the lives of students, teachers, and empowering local leaders *like you* to implement these progressive ideas in their local districts. We meet three times each year to discuss school reform and the role of the union in these changes.

Our goal now is to establish a regional California TURN satellite. You are invited to a day-long meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup> in Los Angeles at UCLA. Dennis Shirley, Professor of Education at Boston College and co-author of *The Fourth Way*, will share his impressive body of information describing education policies in high achieving countries that are starkly different from those we find ourselves working within. He will also provide examples of successful innovations here in the US after which we will work together to ‘connect the dots’ to our local conditions. (<http://www2.bc.edu/~hargrean/> is a link to a short ASCD article written with Andy Hargreaves that will give you an idea about Dennis’ work and its relevance to ours.)

The agenda will be framed around four broad issues that affect members each day.

- Teacher Quality
- Student Assessment
- Teacher Union Leadership
- Innovative Schools

If you are interested in attending, please respond to: Kate McKenna [katemck@coxn.net](mailto:katemck@coxn.net) as soon as possible, indicating you would like further information.

Every union leader has said to members, “Together we can make a difference,” at least once. We believe in the effectiveness of collective action. ***We hope you will join us in Los Angeles as we begin to establish an effective network for creative solutions.***

Thank you,

Tom Alves, TURN Co-Director, Executive Director of San Juan Teachers Association  
Steve Duditch, President, San Juan Teachers Association