Remembering the Bad Old Days
A Lesson from the New York State Teachers Union About the Days Before a Union
By Kara Smith

When you hear the value of collective bargaining questioned in the faculty room, at the water cooler or after the morning meeting, remember the struggles of those who came before you — the battles teachers waged in the early days to earn the benefits you enjoy today.

Imagine being forced to resign from your teaching position — with no guarantee of being rehired — just because you got pregnant. Or not having a designated lunch break during your workday; forced instead to either eat with your students or to cover lunchroom duty. Or imagine this: After earning your academic degrees and participating in months of teacher training, finding out that your take-home pay is less than the workers at the neighborhood car wash.

Stories like these sound crazy today. But before widespread teacher unionization, these scenarios were real. In fact, they were just a handful of the many injustices educators faced. Prior to the 1960s, teachers' professional lives were governed by administrators who held absolute power over what was taught, who was hired, who was fired and class sizes.

In his book, Teachers United: The Rise of New York State United Teachers, author Dennis Gaffney details the antics of administrators like Abe Greenberg, an assistant principal at Astoria Junior High in Queens, who spied on teachers with binoculars throughout the day. Among other questionable opinions Greenberg held, he believed that educators should only lecture while standing. Teachers were chastised for sitting during class; Greenberg called it unprofessional.

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The Bad Old Days Continued....

In a 1996 New York Teacher story detailing the early days of the union, United Federation of Teachers retiree Lou Carrubba, said teachers had to "eat a lot of crow" back then. "Today's teachers have no idea. I'm telling you, hardly a day went by when we weren't humiliated in one form or another," he said. "There was no real grievance machinery, no protections, no due-process procedures. Besides, if you complained, they'd make your life even more miserable."

Sick days required a doctor's note or teachers weren't paid. Until 1957, pensions didn't exist and to get one educators had to be 65 or have 35 years of service. And lunch and other breaks were unheard of. "You lined up with your kids in the schoolyard and stayed with them the whole day, even eating with them — not even a bathroom break," remembered Janet Miller, UFT retiree.

Said UFT retiree Alice Marsh of one first-grade class of 48 students she taught, "I had to leave 12 children back because I couldn't get to them when they were slipping. This was par for the course." A 1952 New York Post article, "The Scandal of Our Schools," reported that one Queens elementary school built for 1,140 students had an enrollment of just under 3,000.

And teachers really did earn less than car washers. A January 1955 New York Times editorial, titled "Teach or Wash Cars," asked why anyone would take a teaching position at $66 a week when washing cars paid $72.35.

Longtime NYSUT retiree activist Sylvia Matousek, remembers earning $4,400 as a new teacher in North Syracuse in 1964 — a sum that forced many educators to apply for food stamps. Teachers were also required to inform the district superintendent immediately if they became pregnant. "The big joke was that you'd call the superintendent at two o'clock in the morning, and say, 'Oh, well, I think I just got pregnant,'" said Matousek.

Many current NYSUT members are too young to remember the early union struggles, but those struggles paved the way for what educators now consider the status quo. But with the stroke of a lawmaker's pen, or a single U.S. Supreme Court decision, today's "status quo" could become tomorrow's "good old days."

Your hard-won rights, your voice at the table, could be lost — unless you remain vigilant.

When you hear the value of collective bargaining questioned in the faculty room, at the water cooler or after the morning meeting, remember the struggles of those who came before you — the battles teachers waged in the early days to earn the benefits you enjoy today. If today's political climate teaches us anything, it's that nothing is guaranteed. You must be vigilant to ensure your rights are not stripped away.

Don't let complacency return us to the bad old days.
Please join the Association of Rowland Educators in celebrating the California Day of the Teacher and thanking educators for ALL THEY DO!

Location: El Cholo Restaurant
840 E. Whittier Blvd.
Whittier, CA 90631
Time: May 10th, 3:30 - 6pm

We will also be honoring the retirement of our CTA Executive Director Eileen Fetters

Please RSVP directly with Monica Ibarra at 626-912-1508 or email teachersunionoffice@gmail.com

Starbucks Coffee Social
Monday
May 15th
6:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Fairway & Colima Location
Join your fellow union members for some good conversation and free coffee.
11.2 Involuntary Transfers

11.2.1 When the Board initiates a transfer, all Unit members being administratively transferred shall have equal opportunity for placement at existing openings identified by the District to be filled by permanent, probationary or temporary Bargaining Unit members. When a choice of positions is possible, Bargaining Unit members may indicate an order of preference for consideration of vacancies within the credentials of the transferee.

11.2.2 Members of the Bargaining Unit affected by the involuntary transfer shall meet with the administration in advance of the effective date and the member will be informed of the reasons for the transfer. Reasons for the transfer may include:

- 11.2.2.1 Teaching experience and specialized skills;
- 11.2.2.2 Placement of Bargaining Unit members returning from leaves, or specially funded programs, or positions;
- 11.2.2.3 Instructional program requirements, i.e., bilingual, affirmative action, or specially funded programs;
- 11.2.2.4 Performance improvement: A Bargaining Unit member may be transferred no more than once every two (2) years in order to provide a reasonable opportunity for an improvement of performance.

11.2.2.5 Fluctuations in pupil enrollment: An over-staffed situation may be deemed to exist when the number of Bargaining Unit members present in a given school exceeds the established pupil-teacher ratio. The site administrator will determine where a staff surplus exists. An opportunity will be provided for any Bargaining Unit member in the surplus area to voluntarily transfer to any existing opening in the staff and/or District for which an appropriate credential is held and for which the Unit member is qualified under Section 3 of the article. In the event an appropriate voluntary transfer is not obtained, an involuntary transfer will be effected.

11.2.2.6 Elimination or reduction of classes in special areas or programs.

11.2.3 When an involuntary transfer is initiated, the site administrator will base his/her decision on criteria that will include the following:

- 11.2.3.1 Credential authorization;
- 11.2.3.2 Major or minor field of study;
- 11.2.3.3 The special requirements for the vacancy as set forth under the specific requirements section of the “Rowland Unified School District personnel Requisition and Status Report;”

11.2.3.4 Number of staff moves involved and any new assignment or reassignment of students that will have the least detrimental effect on the educational program;

11.2.3.5 Qualified volunteers.

11.2.4 When two (2) or more Bargaining Unit members equally meet the criteria in the preceding paragraph, the Bargaining Unit member with the least District-wide seniority shall be transferred, except for volunteers. "can not be transferred more than once every two years."

Read more about transfers, and view the entire contract at:

www.aremembers.org
Broad Coalition of Legislators, Educators and Parents Back 3 Bills to Stop Waste, Fraud and Abuse, Ensure Equal Access for All Students at California’s Charter Schools

SACRAMENTO – Lawmakers, educators, parents and a broad coalition of community supporters joined for a news conference today in the State Capitol to shed light on a very important package of bills that must be enacted to ensure California charter school accountability and transparency and to also ensure unbiased access to all students.

**SB 808** by Sen. Tony Mendoza, **AB 1478** by Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer and **AB 1360** by Assembly Member Rob Bonta would address many of the injustices and fraudulent practices that are negatively impacting California’s students.

SB 808 would ensure local control by allowing charter schools to be authorized only by the school district in which the charters would be located. “It is important, especially as an educator, to have people engage in open discussion about ensuring that our children’s educational system continues to improve. Part of ensuring that our education system advances is to make sure that all schools – charter and traditional – are held accountable for the concerns of parents and students,” said Senator Mendoza, author of SB 808.

AB 1478 would require charter school governing boards to comply with existing laws rightfully demanding transparency and accountability to parents and the public in the operation of taxpayer-funded schools.

“Evidence shows that this lack of accountability has led to financial gains for for-profit corporate charter operators, has too often been disastrous for thousands of California students and has cost taxpayers millions of dollars in waste, fraud and abuse,” said Terri Jackson, California Teachers Association Board Member and fourth-grade teacher in Contra Costa County. “Public education should be about kids, not profits. Instead of subsidizing corporate charter schools run by for-profit companies with taxpayer dollars, we should be using the money to strengthen our local neighborhood public schools for all California children.”

The California Federation of Teachers also co-sponsored the bills urging lawmakers and the governor to enact them to stop the fraudulent and wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars. “By creating non-profit shells, charter corporations are able to hide behind a technicality to skim off profits from public dollars. AB 1478 will help put an end to this practice, and this package of bills will make charter schools more accountable overall,” said Gemma Abels, a CFT Vice President and president of the Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers.

AB 1360 would set new requirements for charter schools’ admission, suspension and expulsion policies, bringing them more in line with traditional schools. “AB 1360 provides equal opportunity for our students by ensuring they have fair access to learning opportunities in all publicly funded California schools,” said Assembly Member Bonta. “Our young people must not be disadvantaged or pushed out of learning environments through unfair admissions policies or disciplinary rules. AB 1360 puts our children first.”

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The impact on California’s students has raised many red flags for community supporters around the state, causing heightened attention, concern and action to ensure social justice, equity and consistent application of policies for all students regardless of ZIP code.

“The Alliance for Boys and Men of Color is co-sponsoring AB 1360 because we are committed to ensuring all schools have nondiscriminatory admissions policies and procedural protections for students in place guaranteed by the right to due process that are clear and consistent,” said Jordan Thierry, Senior Associate, Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. “This legislation will help ensure decisions related to admissions or disciplinary actions are not arbitrary, but rather based on established guidelines aligned with state and federal law.”

Support for these bills is widespread. In fact, the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, at the helm of the district where there are many recent cases in which the FBI is investigating fraud and fiscal mismanagement at charter operations like at Celerity Educational Group, adopted a resolution April 18 in support of this legislation that would provide much relief for the students in LAUSD schools.

During the 2016 statewide campaign and, once again, in the school board election in Los Angeles, corporate billionaires with a coordinated agenda to privatize public schools are spending millions of dollars to elect candidates whose agenda is aligned to theirs.

Recent news headlines and academic studies have documented the waste, fraud and abuse by privately managed charter schools that have cost taxpayers millions while hurting students. A new report from national nonprofit In the Public Interest finds that much of this public investment, hundreds of millions of dollars, has been misspent on schools that do not fulfill the intent of state charter school policy and undermine the financial viability of California’s public school districts.

In a report released earlier this month, Spending Blind: The Failure of Policy Planning in California’s Charter School Facility Funding, In the Public Interest reveals that a substantial portion of the more than $2.5 billion in tax dollars or taxpayer subsidized financing spent on California charter school facilities in the past 15 years has been misspent on: schools that underperformed nearby traditional public schools; schools built in districts that already had enough classroom space; schools that were found to have discriminatory enrollment policies; and, in the worst cases, schools that engaged in unethical or corrupt practices.

An ACLU report, “Unequal Access,” found that more than 20 percent of California’s charter schools deny access to students with disabilities, English learners, or students who have lower grades and test scores. The NAACP recently called for a ban on privately managed charters.

Charter school scandals continue to make headlines, while another report shows that an expansion of privately run charter schools would cost the Los Angeles Unified School District more than $500 million this year alone.

And important to note, research by In The Public Interest shows Californians overwhelmingly favor proposals to reform charter schools—proposals that include strengthening charter school accountability and transparency, improving teacher training and qualifications, preventing fraud, returning money to taxpayers when charter schools close, and ensuring that neighborhood public schools are not adversely affected.
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Executive Director & CTA Staff Contact
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epetters@cta.org

The following sites had a Representative or Alternate at the April Rep Council:

- Nogales HS
- Rowland HS
- Santana HS
- Giano MS
- Alvarado MS
- Ybarra K8
- Oswalt K8
- Blandford
- Killian
- Rowland El
- Hurley
- Northam
- Villaorta
- Hollingworth

Calendar of Events

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<td>May 1</td>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Statewide Day of Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>3:30 PM</td>
<td>ARE Board of Directors</td>
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<td>May 9</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>RUSD Board of Education Meeting</td>
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<td>May 15</td>
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<td>ARE Starbucks Coffee Social (Fairway &amp; Colima Location)</td>
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<td>May 18</td>
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