



ROSSMOOR NEWS

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Republican Perspective

By Irene Baroni

How to Make \$524.19 per Day

I've examined too many theories about why public education in California is failing, and I can't help thinking that someone should ask the people on the front lines. Effective teachers know. Those teachers are on the battlefield. What's frightening is that the majority of them aren't aware that they're suffering because they're blinded by their desire to be "do gooders" and somehow leave their smudge on the world. The valuable ones are attacked by their fellow teachers, the parents, administrators and janitors. They are the lowest organisms in the public education food chain.

George W. Bush is the sole person who might empathize with the complaint that it's "the teacher's fault," while everything that is failing in this country nonetheless remains "George Bush's fault" after six years of President Obama fundamentally changing America. Hope and change have been the underlying principles of public education, but even that has been destroyed by progressives, liberals and statists who have convinced most teachers to bow to them and agree they're underpaid; that all children have equal abilities and outcomes; that tenure is "a right"; that sex education is the school's responsibility; that the children of illegals are entitled to more money and resources than the children of American citizens who are forced to fund this debacle; that it's in the best interest of children to teach about homosexuality in kindergarten; and that all people are offended by the word "Christian."

Let's slaughter one sacred education cow today, shall we? Teachers are underpaid. I'm limiting my discussion to elementary schools because an admirable teacher once said, "Write what you know." I worked with some first-rate teachers and it was exhilarating to learn from them. In contrast, I worked with teachers whose principals were certifiably dead when they granted them tenure. Also, the number of papers elementary teachers correct on their own time is not an indication of their brilliance. In most cases, it's a mammoth indicator that the teacher cannot manage the classroom efficiently and might not be the sharpest pencil in the desk. After all, who is in charge of assignments and when tests are given? Would competent individuals voluntarily schedule the whole shebang on the same day and bury themselves with work?

My salary was \$97,500 in 2009. First-year teachers made \$55,000. In the public system, it doesn't matter whether you are teaching the little children or the 12th graders, the salary steps are the same. Everyone is equal. High school teachers have many classes per day and well over 30 students in their classes. First and second grade? Twenty children, plus the ability to schedule assignments, sing songs, read stories or take nature walks on a pretty day.

When I was weary of abusive parents, or progressive teachers who believed that the term "Christmas vacation" upset non-Christian children, I'd calculate my hourly wage. Bow down to their doctrine of dedication and selflessness? Be willing to work for no salary? It's expected of teachers because it shows their humanity. Not me! I took that \$97,500 and divided it by 186. That's the magic number. Teachers work 186 days per school calendar year and very little of that time is actual teaching.

The state dictates how many hours of instructional time each child in each grade must receive in each subject. That's what has defined the school year. Why those particular numbers? I don't know, but it was good for me. My salary was \$524.19 for a 6 hour day. That was \$81 per hour for me. However, that figure doesn't take into account a 40-minute paid lunch break, a 45-minute paid preparation time, two paid 15-minute recesses, taking the kids outside for PE, assemblies, formal testing, the PTAs Music for Minors program, etc. Frequently, I saw my class less than 3 hours per day, no more than 45 minutes at a time. That's sad for children; for America.

Obviously, I don't think teachers are underpaid, but I know that the small percent with true talent are abused by an archaic system that graduates students with no skills with which to enter the work force. The few inspiring teachers we have are mistreated by parents who believe that teaching their children to think and speak is child abuse. They are battered by a district and state that believes that children with learning problems should be taught the same curriculum in the same classroom with the gifted because giving children what they truly need is prejudicial; it's neither politically correct nor a model for equality. Equal salary - equal children. Even Marxism is based on "each according to his need!" So, damaging teachers just hang out with their tenure.

The state mandates that the children must be supervised at all times, and the worst abuse a teacher tolerates is that public education is set up so that they can't use the bathroom when needed. For \$524.19 per day, I held it.