

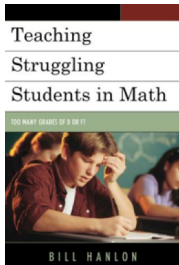
Nevada Public Education News



Diverting the Education Dollar - EdCheats

Bill Hanlon

Millions of dollars earmarked for education are not only not getting to the classrooms, they are not even making it to the local districts. The people responsible are cheating our students – ***EdCheats***.



So while many complain about public education in Nevada, we can see the dive to the bottom, 50th, since Sandoval took office. Under his administration, tax dollars earmarked for education have been diverted to his politically connected friends. And make no doubt, rewarding his cronies is being done purposefully. When confronted with this two years ago, then State School Superintendent Erquiaga’s response, who had zero qualifications for being a superintendent other than being a boyhood friend of the Governor, said “Get used to it”. Well, the kids sure are getting used to getting screwed from this administration.

In his first budget, funding earmarked by the Legislature for training teachers in the new math and ELA standards ended up being funneled to the employer of State Senator Horsford’s wife.

This past year, The New Teacher Project received a million dollars earmarked for science training to report on how to attract and retain teachers – leaving science teachers in Clark, Esmeralda, Lincoln, Mineral and Nye counties with no training on the “new” science standards. I guess the Governor and State Board of Education are not aware of this Google thing to access research.

This past year, State Senator Mike Roberson, who has placed himself in the forefront of education, ends up getting his law firm a lucrative contract with the district and his wife got a promotion from a school to central administration with a

hefty raise. Influence and cronyism certainly pays dollars under the Sandoval Administration.

This week we saw this same Senator Roberson awarding another friend a \$1.2 million dollar consulting contract for reorganizing the district – at a cost of \$350.00 per hour – without the district’s knowledge. Anyone without memory problems might remember he promised this reorganization would be cost neutral – you know – cost nothing. But a republican buddy gets a cool million.

We see many profiteering “non-profits” in Nevada stationed at the public trough getting their beaks wet as well. These include the Public Education Foundation, President Elaine Wynn’s Communities in Schools, State Board Member and Teach for America bigwig Victor Wakefield, and The New Teacher Project – Dottie Smith to name a few. All tied in politically. These profiteering non-profits say they want to **add value** to public education, but they seem to do that by **subtracting resources** going to schools. Then, they brag about how much of our tax dollars they raised. So rather than admit their fundraising efforts fail, they relabeled their assault of public education funding as public private partnerships.

Elaine Wynn, president of the NV State Board of Education, who has ruined her reputation in education in the state’s dive to the bottom, was knocked off her own casino/hotel board because they said her personal goals had superseded her responsibility to look out for the whole company. That seems to apply for education as well – she has lost her way making sure her friends get their share of funding meant to educate our students.

In fact, the NV State Board of Education might be the most conflicted board in the state. This last session we saw the board and it’s Vice President Allison Serafin and former boss with Teach for America pushing legislation for “harbormasters” for charter schools. After the bill passed, the Serafin abruptly resigned – why? She’s now the founder and CEO of another profiteering non-profit charter school harboring program – of course. Again, it’s about the money. Her program is behind the push for the Governor’s new Achievement District – all about money.

This is happening when four of five national ranking **organizations** have listed NV as 50th, and the 5th one placed us at 49th since he became Governor.

Congratulations goes to Sandoval, Roberson, Erquiaga, and Wynn for digging NV’s hole deeper and cheating students out of an education that can never be made up. The rankings of 50th speak for themselves. The students still face a teacher

shortage, a lot of new inexperienced teachers, teachers are still without the training, resources and students are enrolled in some of the largest classes in the nation.