

Nevada Public Education

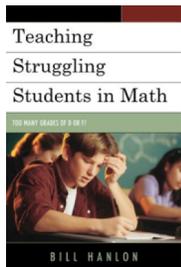


Profiteering Non-Profits ~

Millions Diverted from Schools in the South

Bill Hanlon

This Governor never talks about the classroom experiences that he has stolen from Clark County children since the beginning of his administration. He talks “big” ideas that robbed kids of a good education, an education that can never be made up by the students in school during his administration.



The fact is, he took aim at the Clark County School District, and he put clowns around him with almost no experience in education, looked beyond the needs of students, and looked to their own political or moneyed futures.

Let's be very clear, the Clark County School District was identified nationally as the fastest improving school district in the nation – in the nation - ten years ago.

What happened might be an appropriate question? M-O-N-E-Y! The last pair of Governors; Gibbons – Sandoval, both with a smiling face told you they cared about education, then drained and diverted the funding for their own special interests.

While that culture change was taking place, the south was introduced to a new breed of profiteers; professionals whose only job was to attending meetings, both local and state, to build goodwill by hoodwinking caring members of the community to convince them that the fastest improving school district in the nation was bad, that somehow they should receive the public education dollars instead of the schools. It worked.

Many of these people represented what we would expect to be good for the community – non-profits. But these non-profits were a different breed, were in it for themselves, their networking buddies, and their organizations. As we can now see, they were

certainly not in it to improve the classroom experiences of our kids – a ranking of 50th in the nation since they arrived proves that.

In my opinion, there are two types of non-profits in education; non-profits that add value and actually provides assistance for students and the “*profiteering*” non-profits that say they add value, but they are actually reducing resources (money) from the education budget by taking tax dollars to supplement their own programs and reward their friends.

Elaine Wynn’s Communities in Schools (CIS) can’t raise enough private money to fund her program, yet they can pay their national director a salary of \$400,000 per year. Why are the taxpayers being asked to supplement those excessive salaries? And CIS has a number of employees making \$200-300,00 per year. Yeah, that’s helping kids.

You might recall, she just rewarded Dale Erquiaga, the former state superintendent, with the Governor’s blessing, one of the architects who drove NV’s educational rank to 50th in the nation with that position. Congratulations CIS! You got a winner! If you support CIS, then put your own money into it, don’t go behind the taxpayers back to support your friends.

If you listen to the Governor, he implies Victor Wakefield’s Teach for America (TFA) teachers are better than the average teacher. Victor is also a member of the conflicted SBE. Like almost everything else the Governor assumes in education, he’s wrong. TFA teachers, like other first year teachers, are hardworking first year teachers who are trying to learn the curriculum, don’t have strategies to teach that curriculum, and don’t have resources that support their students in the classroom. The research clearly states they are “**not**” as good as experienced teachers. And, because they only stick around for a year or two, additional funds have to be spent on this revolving door policy.

Like Communities in Schools, they are also at the public trough subtracting resources from students’ classroom experiences. Yet TFA can pay their national director almost \$400,000 per year plus all their state and local staffers. TFA has been receiving funding from the city, school district and the conflicted State Board of Education – these guys are nothing more than pros at attending meetings trying to have their own programs funded. If you support TFA, put your own money into it. Taxpayers should not be on the hook for these excessive salaries.

The New Teacher Project (TNTP), received \$1million from the most conflicted board in the state, Elaine Wynn’s State Board of Education (SBE). Now this is really true, the SBE actually gave TNTP \$1million to find ways of attracting and retaining teachers. My God, doesn’t anyone on the SBE know of this thing called google. But, the gal was

tied in with the former failed superintendent and SBE, she was rewarded just like Dale. And yes, so while TNTF is at the public trough, they can also fund their director at \$400,000.00 per year level.

If you believe in these *profiteering non-profits*, send your own money!

Now, we have a new *profiteering* non-profit – Opportunity 180. Who is the founder and CEO? Hold on now, yes, it's the former vice president of the conflicted NV State Board of Education, Allison Serafin. She, with the SBE, lobbied the Legislature with Sandoval's support to establish the new "Achievement District". Did I mention the program received \$10 million from us dumb taxpayers. And who did Allison hire as a superintendent of the ASD, Jana Wilcox-Lavin, a person that has absolutely no experience in education. Still waiting on the 990 form to find Allison's salary. Again, if you support that program, put your own money into it, don't be taking money out the state budget that diminishes students opportunities for success in the classroom.

Do you see a pattern here? I can continue with this list of "*EdCheats*" involved in these *profiteering* non-profits that are subtracting resources while claiming to add value. But, I need go back to my main point.

The Clark County School District was identified nationally as the fastest improving school district in the nation ten years ago. Since the Gibbons-Sandoval administrations, funding for Clark County has been drained by these governors. As parents and grandparents, we want to talk about our students' experiences learning in the classroom – not read a resume builder for the governor.

The diversion of funding is clear. In Sandoval's first budget working with the failed State Superintendent Erquiaga, funding set aside by the Legislature for providing professional development in Clark County for teachers in the new math and ELA common core standards was diverted to a foundation. Then the Governor complained about test results when teachers did not have the knowledge or resources to teach those standards that were a direct result of his actions.

The next budgets saw Clark County (CCSD) receiving approximately 50% of funding for professional development while the size of the population is 75%. In other words, the north got more funding proportionately.

At the end of the last session, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) were being implemented across the country, Clark County's share – ZERO. But northern NV school districts got funded to train their teachers.

Now, because of the investment made by Sandoval in the “Achievement District”, he’s trying to convince an unwilling public that the schools’ performance demands they be taken over by private charter schools. Well Governor, look in the mirror, you’re the one that cut budgets, you and the conflicted SBE were the ones that have screwed up the exams two out of two years that you are using as evidence to take over these schools, you were the ones that diverted professional development training. It is, in fact, your performance that has shortchanged students in Clark County.

And to further my point, the schools identified as qualifying for activation into the “Achievement District” up north, were suddenly taken off the list. Again, the Governor and Elaine Wynn’s conflicted State Board of Education is taking aim at CCSD.

And who did Allison hire as charter companies, yep, people experiencing difficulty in CA. Good job!

In TN, a charter company has pulled out of their “Achievement District” because of under enrollment in two schools – parents won’t send their kids. And, let’s be very clear, NO where, have these achievement districts been successful for student in raising student achievement – only the adults are benefitting like our *profiteering* non-profits.

Heck, this Governor was so ignorant, he didn’t know there was a teacher shortage in CCSD until 8 days left in the last Legislature. So, after Democrats cut parts of his budget, he ran a proposal through for incentive pay for first year teachers – that resulted in first year teachers earning more than second and third year teachers – a real morale booster.

If your students are in classes like algebra with 38-42 students, or if your child’s teacher’s inexperience is causing them difficulty, you might feel like complaining to and blaming the local school district, but it’s the Governor, Elaine Wynn’s conflicted State Board of Education and these *EDCheats* that have drained and diverted the money from the south. Before they came, CCSD was the fastest improving school district in the nation.

These non-profits seem to be one big happy family taking the taxpayers for a ride. Their friendships and networking seems more important than your children’s experiences in the classroom learning to read, write, science and math.