

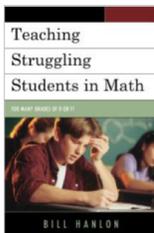
Nevada Public Education



No Consequences Result in Major Consequences

Bill Hanlon

I have some relatively basic expectations when our students go to school.



Unfortunately, those low-level expectations are being undermined by, I'm sure, well intended adults. By the state's dead last ranking, we can see those good intentions are not always working well for students.

For instance, I believe that students should feel safe at school, that parents and members of the community have every right to believe when our children go off to school in the morning, they are safe. I believe students should experience classroom environments that are safe, orderly and conducive to learning.

I believe that to increase student achievement, students who distract or disrupt classes should be removed so they are not negatively impacting other students' education. I believe that if an adult gives a student direction, there should be an expectation that students follow that direction. I also believe that when students refuse to follow simple rules of decorum, they should not be allowed to derail other students' education. I believe when a student refuses to conform within the school environment, that when they openly defy or call their teachers "motherfuckers" and other such names, they should be removed from school. Too many students believe they don't have to respond to adult supervision, when asked/directed to follow a direction, they refuse. This is nuts. And these are the easy issues that schools are tackling. But when they are not addressed grow into larger issues. One reasons for these issues is because the state has a disproportionate number of inexperienced teachers, because of poor state funding, who don't know how to manage overcrowded classrooms effectively and don't hold students accountable.

I'm pretty sure that if I went to a school of trustees meeting or state board of education meeting and called the board members "motherfuckers", I'd be removed

for disrupting the meeting. Why can't teachers have that same right when their classes are disrupted?

Building principals, especially high school principals, have been raising a red flag for the last couple of years indicating that decisions, out of their control, are creating unsafe environments at their schools. Three knifings have confirmed their concerns this school year alone. The number of serious incidents is up at schools.

While no one wants to take blame, there are a number of people from different groups causing these problems and putting our kids' safety at risk. These decisions come under the heading of "unintended consequences". These unintended consequences are resulting in students getting hurt. The people making these decisions that result in these problems refuse to recognize their contribution to this very sad commentary.

The Office of Civil Rights has jumped in indicating that a disproportionate number of minority students were being placed in in-house suspension, sent to behavioral schools, suspended or expelled, so principals' decisions are being challenged by not only the state, but the federal government as well.

The school district, feeling the pressure from the Office of Civil Rights, are not allowing principals to keep troublemakers, criminals; who are threatening, vandalizing, stealing, verbally assaulting or physically harming others off their campuses.

Central administrators at the school district are also seen as part of the problem, they like to give students multiple chances and deny principals the right to keep these criminals off their campuses.

While the news media picks up on the assaults on students, they are not reporting the assaults on the schools' staff with the same intensity. School police have been attacked, principals have been punched in the face, and other staff members assaulted. Sometimes these students are prosecuted, sent to places like Juvenile Detention Center, Spring Mountain or Caliente, then return to their home school where they did bodily harm. What does that do for the authority of the staff at that school?

These principals, rightly, do not want these criminals back at their schools. Is the Governor's goal of increasing the graduation rate by keeping these criminals in school to build his own resume worth the risk of your children getting hurt or killed at school?

These people creating unsafe conditions at schools need to open their doors to these criminals. Let the Office of Civil Rights open their own school for the unmanageable, the criminals, they want placed beside students who are trying to get a good education, and let them staff it with the state and district central office people who think they know everything.

These conditions are not acceptable for our young ones. The lack of consequences for disrupting classes, ignoring authority, verbally or physically assaulting school employees, and diminishing educational opportunities for other students has grown to have major consequences that put the very safety of our most vulnerable at risk.

Principals should not only have the right to keep your child safe by removing troublemakers from their schools, they should have the responsibility and authority to remove those who disrupt the education of others and/or places the safety of others in jeopardy.

Bill Hanlon, is a noted speaker, an author, educator, consultant and coach for schools, former Director of the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program, and is a national presenter for organizations such as AASA, ASCD, ALAS, NMSA, NASSP, NSBA, and NCTM. He was the coordinator of Clark County School District's Math/Science Institute and was also responsible for K-12 math audits. He served as vice president of the Nevada State Board of Education, Regional Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and as a member of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) States Partnership Board. He also hosted a television series, "Algebra, *you can do it!*" on PBS Las Vegas.

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