

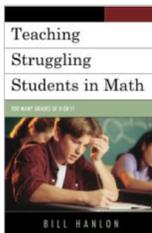
Nevada Public Education



Throwing Warm Bodies at the Problem is Not a Solution Either

Bill Hanlon

There is a national teacher shortage, Nevada's shortage is greater than other parts of the country because of our unfavorable working conditions. Believe me, having over 40 students in classes like algebra and geometry and not providing enough resources or supplies is not the best way to recruit the state or nation's top candidates.



While many argue that you can't solve the Nevada's educational problem by throwing money at it, it must be realized we can't solve the problem by throwing warm bodies at it either. Funds must be prioritized so that students' experiences learning math, English, science, social studies, and computers is enhanced. They have to have well qualified teachers with the content knowledge, instructional and assessment strategies and resources that support that content.

In math, we are ranked last for a number of reasons. Besides the shortage, the state exacerbates the problem by continually diverting professional development funding to ensure our students have qualified teachers to their resume building projects. Just last year the state came up with another program that subtracted funds from schools meant for professional development for their new "administrative partnership" program. So, principals who had budgeted funds for PD in math had to give that back to the state so they could hire out-of-state consultant firms. Yeah, another one of their reforms that subtracts from the classroom.

The state's solution to the teacher shortage, they tell people that they are providing programs to train people in math who have a math background. Sounds great, doesn't it. Who are these people? I'm sure they are nice, but when someone tells me that a person with a business degree has a math background, I know that has to be a joke. The highest-level math class often required of business majors is often a watered-down version of a class of the lowest-level class required of a math major. And you wonder why our students perform poorly in math?

The NV DOE is only interested in how they look, not our students. Besides subtracting funds from schools and diverting other funds, they seem to be failing to comply with NV statutes that were put in place to provide minimum qualifications. NRS 391.039 requires the State Board of Education on an annual basis to evaluate all these alternative teacher training programs and to examine the performance evaluation of those persons in aggregate form and post that information on their website. In other words, what are we doing for our students? Their 2017

“compliance” seems to be no more than a list of programs, the number of teachers marked satisfactory, unsatisfactory and not evaluated.

The leadership of the State Board and Department of Education likes to talk about all the programs they have rolled out, they have a very impressive list. But the data speaks for itself. All their “reforms” have changed our trajectory from the fastest improving district in the nation to dead last. That’s bad enough for our state’s reputation, but it is the students they are cheating.

Like these alternative route programs, they claim they are providing qualified teachers for our students. They are not, they are throwing warm bodies at a problem and saying they have done their part. Expecting the school districts to provide professional development to these new teachers with the money they just diverted from the schools for their new partnership program. A simple budgeting lesson is in order for the state; *you can only spend a dollar once*. The state has caused many problems by diverting funds from the classroom and then blaming the school districts for the problems they created.

Where’s the evaluation of these programs required in statute? Are any of those alternative route programs working or do you want to blame the districts for that too?

And when you add this to the state’s “teacher evaluation” (NEPF) program, another bad joke, it’s a wonder the students are performing at the level they are.

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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