

Nevada Public Education



~ Read by 3rd Grade ~ Doomed by Sandoval's Own Hand

Bill Hanlon

Legislation impacting one of Sandoval's hollow educational reforms has been doomed by his own hand – with the help of the Democrat leadership a decade ago.



When Sandoval took office, the “new” ELA and mathematics standards were beginning to be implemented around the country. The Legislature rightly thought it was appropriate to fund professional development in those areas as well. You might recall, the Clark County School District (CCSD) was facing then, as it is now, a teacher shortage. The district was having trouble hiring 1500-2000 teachers per year.

A good number of the district's prospects were rejecting employment for better offers elsewhere which made matters worse. The district was, in effect, putting warm bodies in the classroom to teach our kids.

Enter Sandoval, exactly when you need to make sure that teachers have the training, especially with over 1500 teachers being hired each year, not to mention the new changes in both sets of academic standards for experienced teachers, Sandoval and the Democrat Senate Majority Leader cut a deal. The price – your kids' education.

After closing the budgets on Friday evening before the Monday sine die, a deal was made. The funding the Legislature appropriated for teacher training was diverted to one of the those programs that is supposed to raise funds for schools – which also just happened to employ the senator's wife. So, a special meeting was held on Saturday night and two hearings on Sunday to consummate the deal. And, unfortunately, many legislators on both sides of the aisle who knew this was wrong wanted the session to end and go home and/or didn't want to buck the majority leader just supported the measure.

End result, teachers in southern Nevada didn't get the training that was needed to implement the new ELA and math standards and the newly hired, underqualified teachers were left pretty much hanging – which certainly didn't help their students.

Two years later, you might recall Sandoval opined about the poor performance of Nevada students on the new tests and wanted to hold teachers and principals accountable. It would have been better for our students if he had purchased a mirror to identify the real problem.

For those of you who don't know, back before Sandoval took office, CCSD was recognized nationally as the fastest improving district in the nation. Sandoval's hollow reforms changed that trajectory.

Now, here we are, addressing what should have been addressed a decade ago – Read by Grade 3. That is, ensuring our students have experienced, qualified teachers, who have instructional and assessment strategies, resources which support those, and know how to manage a classroom with the largest class sizes in the country to ensure our students can succeed.

How a state, a state that to this day clearly doesn't even guarantee a warm body because of the shortage of both teachers and substitutes, wants to hold students accountable when they won't even guarantee those held back qualified teachers is beyond me.

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 on 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.

[Follow Bill on twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook](#)

[Buy Bill's latest book;](#)

[Building Success on Success, Teaching Struggling Students in Math](#)

[Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield](#)