

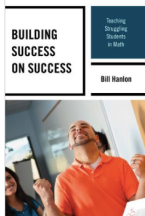
Nevada Public Education



The consequences of no-consequences

Bill Hanlon

No Consequence Policies – Have Consequences



In Jara's State of the District Address, he clearly suggested the problems in Clark County were here before he arrived. That's a fact. But, he is just as clearly not accepting the fact he has exacerbated the problems with his "no consequences" policies. Specifically, the No F and Restorative Discipline policies. Those two policies are driving down achievement and driving up school safety issues.

Having said that, few might remember that three superintendents ago, under Walt Rulffes, the Clark County School District was recognized nationally as the fastest improving district in the nation. Rulffes concentrated on the classroom.

Under Rulffes, when he became concerned about achievement, you might remember the district initiated semester exams in academic areas so he knew where are students were in terms of learning - achievement. Those exams, based on our own curriculum, drove professional development. Not buying some program. He required professional development based on what teachers taught, how they taught it, resources that support those strategies and testing what was taught. That "*what works is work*" mentality led the district to become the fastest improving in the nation. It's worth mentioning trustees, like Larry Mason and Terry Janison, also attended the professional development to clearly know and understand what was being required. When Rulffes retired, the semester exams and professional development slowly disappeared – so did student achievement.

The students in Clark County began to suffer when he retired. Under Jones, Skorkowski and now Jara. These three superintendents took the spotlight off the classroom and academics and placed it on themselves - building their personal own resumes and networking capabilities. Their ideas were always to buy a program or buy into the latest fad and sell it to groups like chambers of commerce as what they are doing to improve education. You can hear this firsthand, when Jara speaks, he just loves talking about his "listening" tour. Clearly these three did not understand that programs are only as good as the teachers using them. In fact, these three superintendents didn't understand the difference between the "training" on a new program they purchased, as Jara has done, and the "professional development" based on the content teachers teach. Clearly different.

Your sons and daughter can't learn when the same delinquents continually disrupt instruction. Students, teachers and staff don't feel safe in schools because these troublemakers know there are no serious consequences for their bad behavior. But, Jara feels safe, he has a guard on the first floor so people can't get to him and he has a board unwilling to ask questions and hold him accountable. And troublemakers feel safe too, they know there are no real consequences for bad behavior while Jara is superintendent. The school board does not tolerate people interrupting their meetings, they have a police officer there, shouldn't teachers and students have the same right?

We need to provide a simple choice to these young people and their parents who pose a threat or disrupt education. They should have to choose between one of 5 options: 1) Conform to school rules to attend schools in CCSD, OR 2) Apply to a charter school that accepts bad behavior, 3) Apply to a private school that accepts bad behavior, 4) Apply to an on-line school that accepts disruptions or 5) Home school.

Just how many staff members have to beat up before we get rid of these no consequence policies?

Our students and staff deserve no less than to feel as safe in school as Jara does in his protective office. And our students deserve to have teachers that know the content they are teaching, know how to teach that content, have resources that support instruction and achievement and have assessments that accurately measure what is being taught in our classrooms.

RJ

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.

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