

# Brian SANDOVAL

FOR GOVERNOR

## RAISING THE BAR ON EDUCATION

### Improving the quality of education in Nevada through accountability, flexibility, and getting back to basics.

*The single greatest thing we can do for our young people is prepare them for success by providing them with a quality education. As Nevadans, we need to make a world class education for our kids more than a campaign slogan; we must make it a reality.*

*The education system in Nevada does not measure up and is not providing all our children with the world class education they deserve. With our graduation rates the lowest in the nation, it's time to get serious about reform and challenge the status quo. It's time to end teacher tenure and social promotion. It's time to give Nevada parents real choices when it comes to their children's education. And it's time to reward good teachers and good schools while holding poor teachers, administrators, and underachieving schools accountable.*

*It's time for a fundamental change from the ground up and the top down. We must fight for our kids with focused accountability, real consequences, expanded opportunities for choice, and more local control over funding.*

*We must promote merit-based, performance pay and end tenured pay. We must reward successful teachers and hold poor teachers accountable. We must promote parental involvement in the educational lives of our children and discipline in the classroom.*


*I know that if we don't fight for a better educational future now, our children won't have one. As a father, I know that what my kids learn today will determine their future tomorrow. I'm ready to fight for our kids with focused accountability, expanded opportunity, greater local control, and a willingness to roll up my sleeves and fight to insure that the precious dollars we spend end up in the classroom, not in the bureaucracy.*

*This is my commitment to every parent. You deserve nothing less.*



Brian Sandoval

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“It’s time to shake up the system and try a new approach.”



I have a detailed education plan that will result in Nevada students being better educated than they are today. My education plan will result in concrete, measurable improvements in how much our children learn.

Students will learn more.

- All Nevada children will enter middle school able to read.
- Students will be tracked for both proficiency and growth, so we have a more complete picture of each student.
- Social promotion will be abolished.
- Advanced Placement classes and enrollment will increase.
- Virtual and distance learning opportunities will expand.
- Students will have more time during the year to prepare for high-stakes tests.



The best teachers will be rewarded based on the achievement of their students, and great new teachers will begin to teach in Nevada.

- Teachers will be evaluated based on how much their students learn, not how long they've been in their job.
- Good teachers will be rewarded.
- Great teachers from other states and talented individuals from other fields will be attracted to become Nevada teachers, both because they can and because they will be rewarded for their high performance

Schools will be graded. Good schools will be rewarded, while failing schools will be fixed. Parents will have the freedom and information to send their child to a good school.

- Every school will receive its own letter grade. Schools that get A's or improve by two letter grades will get extra funds.
- Principals will be evaluated and paid based on the achievement of their students, not by how long they have been in their job.
- If a school fails two years in a row, the administrators will be replaced.
- Every child in a school graded "D" or "F" will receive transportation to a better school.
- Parents will have the information they need so they can make sound decisions about school performance before enrolling their student in a school.
- There will be more magnet and technological schools.
- A new Nevada Charter School Institute will charter new public schools that operate outside the constraints of the 17 local school districts.
- Local school boards will have more control over how state education dollars are spent in their districts.
- Modeled after a successful effort in Houston, non-educational services like cafeterias, facilities management, and human resources will be privatized, saving millions of dollars that can be better spent on educational purposes.

The plan will be paid for with existing revenues. More money will make it to the classroom and no taxes will be raised.

- Set aside a portion of the existing \$300 million room tax to reward high achieving and improving schools.
- Savings from privatization of food services and facilities management.
- More local flexibility with class size reduction dollars.

# THE SANDOVAL PLAN

Accountability. Choice. Local Decision Making.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

*Nevada's existing statewide accountability plan has proven ineffective in delivering real achievement gains and in communicating to stakeholders any real consequences for failure or success. Brian proposes to revamp the accountability plan. His model will go beyond current efforts by setting clear expectations and consequences that parents, school employees, and students can understand and address.*

### Grade Schools Like We Grade Students

*Set Aside a Portion of \$300 Million Room Tax to Reward High Achieving and Improving Schools*

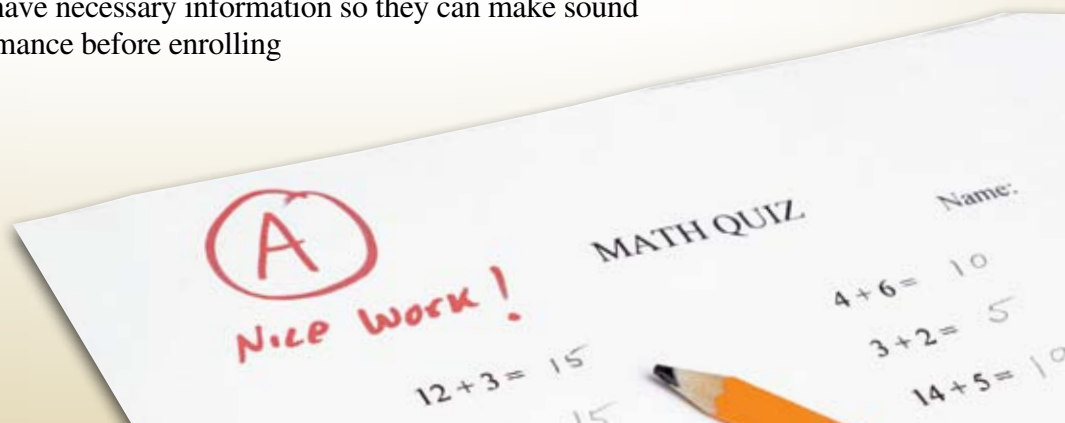
Brian believes parents have a right to know how their schools are performing. Therefore, Brian will implement a simple, effective school accountability process that does two things:

- Assigns a letter grade (A, B, C, D or F) to indicate school achievement; and
- Evaluates student growth as well as proficiency scores for a more complete picture.

In high schools, the grade will include graduation and remediation rate progress.

Brian's accountability model will include financial incentives for schools that earn an "A" grade and schools that move up two letter grades in any one year. Incentives will be paid directly to the school, to be allocated by a site-based committee of school personnel and parents, for instructional supplies or programs. Brian will set aside a portion of the current room tax that is slated to fund education in 2011 for the purposes of rewarding high achieving and improving schools. Underachieving school administrators and teachers will receive additional training and development assistance to help improve their schools.

To augment this plan, Brian will also work with the State Department of Education to improve the quality and timeliness of student assessments. Vendors should be required to shorten the turnaround time for grading so that tests are administered later in the year but results are available before summer. This will ensure students have more time during the year to prepare for high-stakes tests and parents have necessary information so they can make sound decisions about school performance before enrolling in that school again.



Finally, failing administrators will not be allowed to continue. If a school receives a failing grade, the school administration will be issued a warning. If a school receives failing grades in consecutive years, school administrators will be dismissed and replaced. Period. No more delays. No more excuses.

In Florida after accountability reforms were adopted, 70 percent of students performed at “basic” or better level on 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading test – a 17 percent increase. Before reform, 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were at the bottom nationally in reading and math. After reform, 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were above the national average in reading and math.

(Foundation for Excellence in Education Power Point presented to Team Sandoval, 03/12/10)

## **Bring Private Sector Thinking to School Staffing**

### *End Teacher Tenure, Set Aside Funds to Reward Good Teachers*

The current performance evaluation system for teachers and principals is out-of-date and rewards endurance over performance. With recent changes to Nevada law requiring the use of student achievement data in evaluations, we have an opportunity to modernize the entire system in ways that reward the best, inspire the average to improve, and dismiss those who are failing.

Under Brian’s plan, a majority of teacher and principal evaluations will be based on student achievement. Salary schedules based on time served and longevity stipends will no longer be allowed – by statutory change, we will bring an end to teacher tenure; these funds will instead be used to fund a pay-for-performance system.

Brian will look to set aside another portion of the existing room tax designated for teacher pay to fund the pay-for-performance (Merit Pay) system. Additional stipends that reward advanced degrees will be tied to current job assignment; if advanced degrees or special licenses are directly linked to the employee’s current job (such as special education, teaching English as a second language, math and science credentials) they merit a temporary reward; if they amount to resume-padding for financial gain, they do not. (National Board Certification, which studies have tied to enhanced teacher performance, will continue to be encouraged and rewarded.) Brian believes we should consider bonuses for teachers who fill “hard to staff” positions such as math, science, special education, and for teachers who agree to teach in hard to fill schools.

More than half of teachers believe it’s too difficult to weed out ineffective teachers who have tenure, and nearly half say they personally know such a teacher, according to a survey released Tuesday evening by the Education Sector, a non-partisan think tank

(Associated Press, 05/06/08; Education Sector, Waiting to Be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform, Duffett, Farkas, Rotherham, and Silva, 05/06/08)<sup>[6]</sup>

[6] [http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-05-06-teachers-tenure\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-05-06-teachers-tenure_N.htm); Education Sector, Waiting to Be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform, Duffett, Farkas, Rotherham, and Silva, 05/06/08

It's time to put an end to the cycle of under-performing teachers serving under-performing students. It's time to give our students the education they deserve. And it's time to reward the best and brightest our classrooms have to offer.

## **Get Nevada Reading Again**

### *End Social Promotion*

Accountability means ending social promotion and getting Nevada reading, writing, adding and subtracting again. Brian will support the statutory changes required to end the social promotion of our children.



Countless studies show that reading instruction in the primary grades (1-3) is the key to later student success. Simply put, in grades 1 through 3, students learn to read; after that they read to learn. Because early reading instruction is key to success, Brian will propose changes to state law that end "social promotion." At the third grade level, any student who is not proficient on the state's criterion-referenced reading test will be held back for focused reading instruction. This will have the effect of making every teacher a reading coach and enhancing the overall emphasis on literacy, which will yield results in subsequent years for all students.

What does this mean for our students? In a word, results. Florida's success with this program has demonstrated gains among students from all racial and ethnic subgroups, a goal Brian is committed to achieving in Nevada as well.

## **Improve School Leadership**

### *Reform Teacher Licensure Laws*

Increased accountability with real rewards and consequences must include a focus on the professional development of school leaders. Nevada provides millions of dollars each year to Regional Professional Development Programs focused on staff training. Brian will reorganize current state and local efforts to create a Statewide Principal Leadership Institute within the K-12 system; existing resources will be reallocated to ensure that each year 300 principals and aspiring principals receive specialized professional development.

At the same time, Brian will work to reform Nevada's teacher licensure laws to allow more professionals to enter the teaching field and ensure educators from other states can become licensed here more readily. Nevada will adopt additional alternative routes to licensure and join other states that have broken down the barriers to teacher reciprocity and recruitment.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE**

Every child in Nevada has the right to a quality education. Not some children. Not most children. Every child. Reforming our education system so that every child receives an excellent education is a priority for the families of Nevada – and it's time for it to become a priority for our state's leaders

*Nevada's somewhat slow adoption of reforms such as charter schools, empowerment, magnets, and career and technical education academies must be accelerated. Brian will propose a series of statutory changes to accelerate choice options for parents and will incentivize local school districts to go even further if parents and taxpayers support choice initiatives*

School choice has repeatedly been shown to increase the level of parents' satisfaction with their children's education. In August 2008, the U.S. Department of Education released an evaluation of parent and family involvement in school, with a particular emphasis on parental satisfaction. The report, based on a survey of parents after the 2006-2007 school year was completed, found considerably higher levels of satisfaction among parents with children in chosen public schools and private schools than among parents with children in assigned public schools.

(Heritage Foundation, Background on K-12 Education and School Choice Programs Around the Nation, 11/04/09)<sup>[2]</sup>

## Allow Parents to Exit Failing Schools

### *Parental Choice*

It is wrong to force parents to send children to schools that can't or won't teach. Opportunity means freeing parents and children who are trapped in failing schools.

For schools receiving a "D" or "F" under the state accountability plan, local districts will be required to offer transportation to another school, including schools operated by the district or charter schools located in the same county. To offset the cost of this transportation, districts with significant numbers of failing schools will be required to submit a budget plan that indicates how money will be transferred from central office administration to transportation for students exiting failing schools.

Students who are doing poorly in public schools are most likely to take advantage of school choice programs. Generally, students who succeed in school see no need to switch schools. Studies also demonstrate that parents—regardless of their income—make good choices when provided with school options.

(American Federation for Children, Myth vs Reality, accessed 05/05/10)<sup>[3]</sup>

In Florida, where students were eligible for vouchers if their public school failed to meet academic standards in successive years, academic gains were greatest in those schools faced with losing students to vouchers.

(All Children Matter Choice Booklet, 09/11/07)<sup>[1]</sup>

## Charter Schools

### *Revive Charter School Institute*

Brian will revive legislation killed by special interests in prior legislative sessions to create a Nevada Charter School Institute. The Institute's charge will be to issue charters for the operation of additional public schools that operate outside the constraints of the 17 local school districts. As efforts to streamline the State Board and clarify responsibilities of the Department of Education unfold, Brian will work to ensure the Charter School Institute remains subject to the state's accountability plan without being slowed by bureaucratic roadblocks.

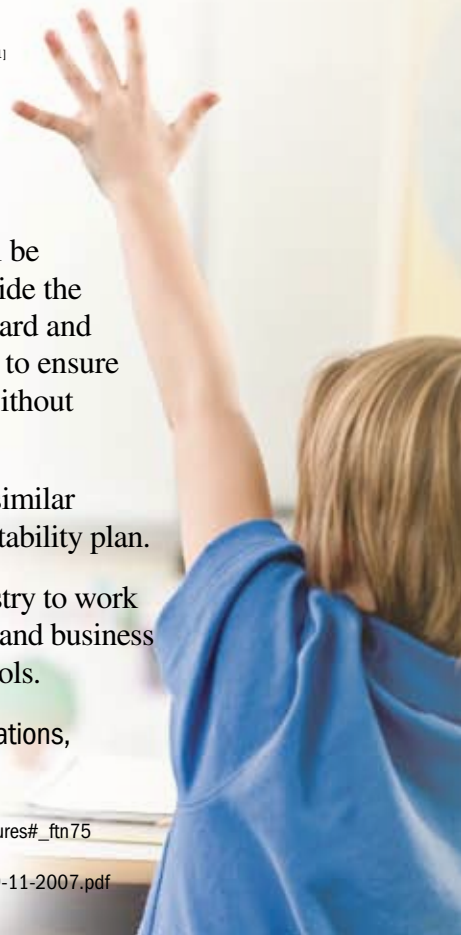
- Charter schools will be required to teach to the state's standards, conduct similar assessments, and ensure their schools comply with the letter grade accountability plan.
- As governor, Brian will direct the State Department of Business and Industry to work with the Charter School Institute to provide tax incentives to corporations and business entities licensed in this state to further foster the expansion of charter schools.

Public charter schools, while serving disproportionately large disadvantaged populations, are often among the top public school performers in big-city school districts.<sup>[2]</sup>

[2] [http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/11/School-Choice-in-America-2009-What-it-Means-for-Childrens-Futures#\\_ftn75](http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/11/School-Choice-in-America-2009-What-it-Means-for-Childrens-Futures#_ftn75)

[3] <http://www.federationforchildren.com/myths-vs-reality>

[1] All Children Matter Choice Booklet, 09/11/07; [http://www.allchildrenmatter.org/resources/ACM\\_Choice\\_booklet\\_final\\_9-11-2007.pdf](http://www.allchildrenmatter.org/resources/ACM_Choice_booklet_final_9-11-2007.pdf)



## Vouchers

### *Choice Should Include Private Schools*

Parents should be able to seek out the best possible education for their kids. Whether it is across the street, across town, public or private – our kids deserve every opportunity to succeed.

Independent scholars at the University of Arkansas reported this year that test scores in the Milwaukee Public Schools are up about six points as a result of that city's voucher program. This new research is consistent with findings in earlier studies.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Expand Empowerment and Themed School Options

### *Magnet, Career, and Technical Opportunities Must be Expanded*

What works best in one community may not work in another. Every community needs the resources to determine what is best for them. As governor, Brian will ensure that the state's existing empowerment statute remains a viable option for local school districts, working with local school boards to offer more site-based decision-making and further decentralize district control in some schools. He will work to expand magnet and career and technical opportunities as well. Brian's local decision making plan will provide the budget flexibility local school districts need for these programs.

Gilbert Elementary in Clark County is a shining example of how magnet schools can succeed right here in Nevada. It has been named a 2010 Magnet School of Excellence by the Magnet Schools of America.

(Magnet Schools of America website, accessed 05/05/10)

## Incentivize Rigor and College-Readiness

### *Create Tax Incentives for Businesses to Participate in Our Children's Education*

Opportunity means incentivizing college readiness by creating tax incentives for businesses. After all, no one benefits more from educated employees than their employers.

Advanced Placement and dual enrollment programs for high school students afford excellent opportunities for them to both prepare for and gain credits toward college. Brian will work to expand these programs by providing teacher incentives based on the number of students with passing AP scores; money for this program will be derived from giving local districts more authority over class size reduction funds, the redirection of room tax funds and savings from the privatization of services.

- Brian will also coordinate efforts with the Department of Business and Industry, the Department of Taxation and other government agencies to identify tax incentives for businesses who contribute to a scholarship fund for students seeking dual enrollment, and to add funds for teacher bonuses based on AP placement.



[2] All Children Matter 2007-2008 Election Report, "Giving Parents Choice & Giving Kids Hope"

[4] All Children Matter 2007-2008 Election Report, "Giving Parents Choice & Giving Kids Hope"

[5] [http://www.heartland.org/article/25880/School\\_Vouchers\\_Are\\_a\\_CostSaver\\_for\\_Taxpayers.html](http://www.heartland.org/article/25880/School_Vouchers_Are_a_CostSaver_for_Taxpayers.html)



## **LOCAL DECISION MAKING**

*The current Nevada system provides two major sources of revenue to school districts: (1) The Distributive School Account (DSA), and (2) The Class-size Reduction Program (CSR). Brian will work to make the millions of dollars in class-size reduction operate more like the DSA, with increased local control over these dollars*

### **Provide Block Grants to School Districts**

*Local Authority and Flexibility*

Using the existing funding formulas as allocated to the districts through the CSR program, Brian will add a level of local authority and flexibility. Districts will be given flexibility for use of these funds in class-size reduction beyond the primary grades. In addition, they will be able to submit plans to redirect portions of the CSR funds to other initiatives, including:

- Programs of school choice, including transportation costs.
- Programs to provide additional resources to improve student achievement at failing schools, including adding instructional minutes to the school day and other research-based initiatives.
- Programs for the exceptionally gifted, Advanced Placement courses and dual college enrollment programs.

### **Expand Virtual and Distance Learning Education**

*Promote Cooperation with School Districts and Effective Partnerships*

Brian's plan will expand virtual and distance learning education opportunities for children across our state. By enhancing opportunities for students to participate in higher level learning courses, Brian's plan will allow students who wish to seek new challenges the ability to do so. Utilizing state-of-the-art technologies and drawing on public-private partnerships, Brian's plan will increase the number of advanced educational opportunities for Nevada's children.





# PRIVATIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

## Privatize Food Services and Facilities Management

*Take Non-Education Decisions Away from Bureaucrats and Off the Plate of Educators*

The Houston Independent School District has proven that privatization can save millions that can be redirected to the classroom. It's time for Nevada to reach out to the private sector and take advantage of the same savings. We can take non-education decisions away from bureaucrats and off the plate of educators.

Modeling reforms implemented by the Houston Independent School District, Brian's plan proposes to privatize food services, facilities management and human resources/payroll. Nevada schools can realize significant savings and non-education tasks and decisions can be taken off the plates of educators, allowing them to focus on educating children. According to an article in the Houston Business Review, the Houston School District contracted with ServiceMaster to manage facilities and the District "...expects that starting in year two of the agreement, ServiceMaster can save the district up for \$8.3 million in gross annual savings in its facilities management operations."

In fact, in a presentation on Business Services, the management of district services "saved the district approximately \$34 million during the past five years..." and "tripled the volume of work orders completed, even as the number of employees has decreased by 36%."

Privatizing food services in the Houston School District "increased student participation by 55,535 total meals per day over the last six years" and "produced a \$15-million net operating turnaround in the food-service program over the last six years."

The program also "produced an increase in revenue of \$25 million in Title I and State Compensatory funds by increasing the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals by 16,661 students over the last six years."

Reforming human resource services in the Houston district "reduced the size of the Human Resources Department by 25 percent in one year, 2001-2002," and the Houston district "began the 2002-2003 school year with the lowest teacher vacancy rate in 15 years."

By looking to the private sector for solutions, Brian's plan will free up millions of dollars for classrooms without raising taxes. It's time we rethink how we deliver education in Nevada.