

# Nev. considers incentives to attract teachers

By Riley Snyder and Michelle Rindels, AP

CARSON CITY – Gov. Brian Sandoval announced Friday that he wants to launch a teacher training scholarship program and a series of bonuses aimed at tackling Nevada's severe teacher shortage.

Lawmakers have expressed concerns that a workforce shortage will hamper some of the Republican governor's ambitious education reform initiatives, and groups including the Latino Leadership Council have recommended bonuses to combat high turnover and teacher inexperience in some of Nevada's toughest schools.

"Attracting and preparing educators for success in the classroom (is a) key component to changing Nevada's education system for the better," Sandoval said in a statement, saying the program was "an idea prompted by the ongoing struggle across Nevada to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in our public education system."

The measure was introduced as SB511, and was expected to be up for a hearing before the full Senate in coming days.

Sandoval is seeking \$5 million over the next two years to launch the Teach Nevada Scholarship. Funds would go to Nevada's public and private colleges and entities that provide alternative routes to licensure programs, and would help future teachers complete their degrees.

A second program would offer \$5,000 bonuses for 1,000 new teachers each year. The incentive program, which is expected to end after two years, aims to fill teaching positions in at-risk schools and make Nevada more competitive relative to

other states that are also struggling with shortages.

“We really decided that the best way to do this was to provide as much financial assistance as we could,” said state Superintendent Dale Erquiaga. “Five thousand dollars per individual per year is a substantial increase. That’ll get those salaries to almost California levels.”

Clark County School District alone is trying to hire about 2,600 new teachers for the upcoming school year. Nevada’s public colleges are only expected to graduate about 800 teacher candidates this year, while the Teach for America program is expected to provide fewer teachers than planned, and enrollment in teacher preparation programs in California – Nevada’s main supplier – is about half what it was five years ago.

Lawmakers expressed concerns that the teacher shortage and lack of a teacher pipeline could unravel the progress Sandoval hopes to make by investing millions in Zoom Schools for English language learners and Victory Schools for students in poverty. Many of those initiatives require additional teachers to provide intensive reading instruction or to staff kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs.

Joyce Haldeman, a lobbyist for Clark County School District, said she thinks incentives and scholarships are a step in the right direction.

“This is another piece of the puzzle that we think is part of a long-term solution,” she said.