

FAULTY LESSON PLAN

BY ERIN EINHORN
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

MORE THAN 100 city teachers have been collecting full salaries for nearly two years to work as overpaid subs even though they haven't applied for work or attended a job fair, a new report finds.

"The big headline here is that if you don't look very hard for a job, you aren't likely to get one," said Timothy Daly, whose New Teacher Project is today releasing a controversial study on the impact of blockbuster changes made in 2005 to the city teachers contract.

"We've got some teachers on our hands that are costing our city a lot of money [while not teaching]," Daly said. "This is not a sustainable system. ... It has to change."

City pays millions to axed teachers who don't look for new jobs: report

He estimated that the city will have paid \$81 million by the end of the school year in salaries and benefits to teachers who haven't found a job since 2006, including those who have and have not applied for any.

Teachers union president Randi Weingarten blasted the study as "slanted and ill-considered and factually inaccurate," and quickly assembled four teachers who say they've aggressively looked for work but have faced age discrimination because their high salaries make them less desirable to schools.

"I followed all the rules, but there was no response from any school that I applied to," said social studies teacher Michael Miller, a 21-year veteran who lost his job in January 2007.

The union filed suit this month alleging age discrimination against teachers like Miller.

At issue are teachers who've lost their jobs because a school closed, a program was eliminated or student enrollment dropped.

Before the celebrated contract changes in 2005, teachers had "bumping" rights and could claim any job in any city school that was

occupied by a less senior teacher — a system principals called disruptive.

Now, unemployed teachers are sent to the Absent Teachers Reserve, or ATR pool, where they collect full salaries — as much as \$100,049 by next month — while working as subs until they find another job.

The New Teacher Project, a national nonprofit that has contracts with the city Education Department to recruit and train teachers, examined data on the nearly 2,742 teachers who entered the ATR pool in 2006, mostly in May or June of that year.

The vast majority of teachers have found jobs or returned to their old schools, but 235 of them — about 9% — were still in the ATR pool in December.

Daly said his data disputes We-

ingarten's claim that age discrimination was a factor.

He said 25% of teachers still out of work in December had taught for less than three years compared with 19% for those with 20 years or more on the job.

What was a factor, he said, was that nearly half of the long-term ATRs — 46% — did not apply for any jobs through the city's online system and most did not attend a job fair.

The city Education Department issued a statement endorsing a New Teacher Project recommendation that teachers stop collecting paychecks until they find a job.

Weingarten rejected the idea, saying the department should make more of an effort to help out-of-work teachers find jobs.

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Saying their 'I do's' on the Great White Way



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Shaun Bollinger plants a kiss on new bride Michelle Golightly after they were married last night at the premiere of the movie "Made of Honor" at Ziegfeld Theater. The couple was selected in nationwide contest. Mary Hart (top l.) of "Entertainment Tonight" performed the ceremony. Photo by Richard Corkery/Daily News

PCB levels high at S.I. school

BY BILL EGBERT
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

TODAY'S SCHEDULED City Council hearing on toxic window caulking in schools will reveal alarming lab results from another public school, officials say.

Tests found high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in an air filter taken from Staten Island's Public School 53 a year after windows with PCB caulking were removed from the school.

The findings raise questions about the Education Department's policy of declaring schools safe once windows are removed. The Council's Education, Environmental Protection and Oversight committees are set to grill city officials at a hearing triggered by a Daily News investigation.

The News found caulking at six public schools across the city contaminated with PCBs hun-

dreds of times the level the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency deems acceptable.

Subsequent tests by the city confirmed elevated PCB levels in soil and air and on surfaces at schools in Manhattan and the Bronx. After reading The News' investigation, Staten Island mom Patty Donegan had filters from an air purifier she ran in her asthmatic son's classroom at PS 53 tested for PCBs.

The outer and inner filters contained 994 and 225 micrograms of PCBs respectively, far in excess of the 50 micrograms considered acceptable by regulators. According to the lab that did the testing, the filters must now be "barreled and buried" as toxic waste.

Over the weekend, School Construction Authority crews spent 11 hours collecting air tests at PS 53, according to sources at the school. Results were unavailable yesterday.

153M can't uncrum classes

BY ERIN EINHORN
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DESPITE BEING flooded with \$153 million from Albany to reduce class size, nearly half the city's elementary and middle schools that took the money haven't complied.

That's according to a teachers union analysis of city data that zeroed in on 390 elementary and middle schools that received at least \$50,000 to lower class sizes under the state's Contracts for Excellence program.

Of those schools, 132 — 34% — actually have more students per teacher on average this year than last year. Another 15% had the same average class sizes.

State Education Commissioner Richard Mills said the state was

"monitoring New York City's use" of the funds. "We will take action as needed to ensure that the city's commitments are met," he said.

State officials say no city schools applied to use the money for something other than class size reduction.

Schools spokesman David Cantor called the union's findings "factually flawed," because schoolwide averages mask targeted class size reductions in key courses like math.

"If the UFT were truly committed to reducing class size," he said in a statement, "it would have its union representatives — some of whom teach only one class per day — teach a full load rather than conducting union business during school hours."

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