



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on January 30, 2012

## NYC Teacher Banned from Classroom, Still Paid \$100K a Year, Won't Retire

Disgraced New York City teacher Alan Rosenfeld has been banished from the classroom for more than a decade, yet still receives an annual salary of \$100,049 along with a bulky package of benefits, including health insurance, a generous pension, and vacation and sick pay. Deemed a danger to students, the 66-year-old teacher was accused in 2001 of making vulgar comments and inappropriately gawking at eighth-grade female students in a Queens public school.



A millionaire businessman, attorney, and licensed real estate broker, Rosenfeld administers a \$10-million real estate portfolio. While expelled from the classroom, he keeps busy managing his law practice and handling his numerous investment properties.

Rosenfeld had the opportunity to retire at age 62 but, as a friend told the [New York Post](#), to Rosenfeld “it’s an F-U” to the school system,” as his \$85,400 pension swells by \$1,700 every year he stays — without him taking a step into the classroom. Moreover, he will be paid for 100 unused sick days when he finally decides to retire. “He’s happy about it, and very proud that he beat the system,” the friend added. “This is a great show-up-but-don’t-do-anything job.”

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Instead of sending Rosenfeld back to the classroom, the Department of Education (DOE) stationed him in one of New York’s infamous “rubber rooms,” where disgraced teachers in sexual harassment and a slew of other misconduct cases were kept. As the [Huffington Post](#) reported in June 2009, hundreds of New York City public school teachers charged with insubordination and even sexual misconduct were being “paid their full salaries to sit around all day playing Scrabble, surfing the Internet or just staring at the wall, if that’s what they [wanted] to do.” These rubber rooms, formally referred to as reassignment centers, plagued New York taxpayers until they were disbanded in 2010 and teachers in the rooms were reassigned administrative duties such as filing, photocopying, and answering phone calls. When asked what sort of work he did in these offices, Rosenfeld airily replied, “Oh, I Xeroxed something the other day.”

Rosenfeld has been joined in similar work by six other colleagues — worth about \$650,000 a year in combined salaries — who continue reaping lavish salaries and benefits and cannot be fired, under a union-run system that is anchored with unbounded protections for tenured teachers.

In June of 2009, these “rubber rooms” harbored approximately 700 teachers, who spent their days performing a variety of leisure activities, including practicing yoga, writing novels, and painting



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pictures of fellow colleagues — just about anything but school work. “You just basically sit there for eight hours,” asserted Orlando Ramos, who spent several months in a reassignment center. “I saw several near-fights. ‘This is my seat.’ ‘I’ve been sitting here for six months.’ That sort of thing.”

Judith Cohen, an art teacher who was stationed in a rubber room for three years, disclosed that she passed the time by painting watercolors of her colleagues. “The day just seemed to crawl by until I started painting,” Cohen said, adding that other teachers read books, played games, or slept.

The DOE estimated that these teachers earned full salaries of at least \$70,000, or about \$65 million a year for New York taxpayers. The department contended that burdensome union contracts required this method to protect students without violating union regulations. “It is extremely difficult to fire a tenured teacher because of the protections afforded to them in their contract,” DOE spokeswoman Ann Forte said, as the contract states that these teachers must keep performing their jobs in some fashion. Some teachers benefited from two, three, or even five or six years in a rubber room.

Because New York does not impose any mandated retirement age requirements, “rubber-room granddaddy” Roland Pierre has “made a mockery of the system,” [reported](#) the *Post*, as he just retired at age 76 last year, a whole 14 years after he was pulled from a Brooklyn school and never returned to the classroom. Pierre was charged in 1997 with a criminal offense — molesting a sixth-grade girl; but the charges were eventually dropped. He received more than \$97,000 a year for the remainder of his tenure.

“It’s a tremendous waste of money,” asserted Marcus Winters, an expert on teacher evaluation at the Manhattan Institute. “While we don’t want to remove people just because they’ve been accused, we also want the school system to cut ties with teachers it’s not going to put in the classroom.” However, Winters affirmed, “If these people are actually dangerous, it’s better to waste the money than to put them back with kids.”

The problem is the government-bureaucratized public education system, which is monopolized by indulgent labor unions, has protected some of the worst teachers in the country, even those charged with sexually harrassing students. As the thoughtful pro-education reform documentary [Waiting for “Superman”](#) noted, one out of every 57 physicians loses his license to practice medicine and one out of every 97 attorneys loses his license to practice law. But under New York’s public school system, which seemingly shields any and every teacher under its wing, only 88 out of some 80,000 city school teachers were [laid off](#) for unacceptable performances.

*Photo: New York’s Department of Education headquarters, in the former Tweed Courthouse.*



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