



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 26, 2009

Teachers Paid to do Nothing

Because their union contract makes it extremely difficult to fire them, the teachers have been banished by the school system to its “rubber rooms” — off-campus office space where they wait months, even years, for their disciplinary hearings.

The 700 or so teachers can practice yoga, work on their novels, paint portraits of their colleagues — pretty much anything but school work. They have summer vacation just like their classroom colleagues and enjoy weekends and holidays through the school year.



And NYC isn't the only municipality that pays teachers to do nothing, as others, such as Los Angeles and Philadelphia, have their rubber rooms as well. Shucks, if I had known “nothing” was in such demand, I would have investigated it as a major.

In all fairness, not all the do-nothing teachers are sexual predators, psychological loose cannons and incompetents. Some have been, ironically, “put away” in the rubber room after blowing the whistle on a corrupt superior or refusing to kowtow to the latest politically-correct education paradigm. Matthews tells us of one such case, writing, “‘The principal wants you out, you’re gone,’ said Michael Thomas, a high school math teacher who has been in a reassignment center for 14 months after accusing an assistant principal of tinkering with test results.”

I can add a personal anecdote to this, as I know of a NYC schoolteacher who ran afoul of superiors because he wouldn't embrace the ineffective politically correct teaching methods in favor with his school's administration. And while he wasn't offered the do-nothing option — this was in the 1990s when such a thing was less common — his superiors took pains to get rid of him despite the fact that his more traditional teaching methods yielded results unrivaled in his South Bronx school.

But whether the charges are justifiable or not, this story reflects a thoroughly ossified educational system. Good teachers who aren't amenable to Orwellian indoctrination, libertine sex education, and permissiveness are either cowed into submission or discarded; bad teachers are difficult to fire; and the children learn little while the taxpayers lose a lot. Despite this, we are still told that we don't spend enough on education.

Oh, I will share one more, quasi-personal, anecdote. The year I graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, 1984, an anonymous phone call and letter to the NYC Board of Education [revealed](#) that one of Bronx Science's physics teachers, Peter Melzer, was a leader of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), the notorious organization of pedophiles. He also was an editor of its newsletter, the *Bulletin*, which published pieces on topics such as how to seduce young boys.

We didn't know about Melzer's extra-curricular activities at the time, as the information was kept



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confidential and the case dropped for “lack of evidence.” It was re-opened in 1992, and the story hit the media the next year. Not surprisingly, however, there was a protracted hearing process and a lawsuit, and it wasn’t until the year 2000 that Melzer could finally be dismissed. And what of the seven-year interim period? He was performing desk duty — although there is no word on whether it was a do-nothing job. There is also no word on how much of his taxpayer-provided salary found its way into NAMBLA’s coffers.



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