NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Teachers: Suspension policy a flop

By CARL CAMPANILE
Education Reporter

The Board of Education's new policy to deal with rowdy students has been a flop, the teachers union charges in a recent survey.

The United Federation of Teachers poll claims that 33 school districts have yet to set up centers for suspended students — a figure disputed by Schools Chancellor Harold Levy's office.

A new state law requires that suspended students be given instruction in an alternative setting rather than being sent home. Educators call the special rooms "in-house" suspension centers.

The same law is supposed to make it easier for teachers to temporarily remove "disruptive" students.

The poll of teachers in 622 schools found that less than half were even discussing a plan to comply with the new law.

"Neither the central Board of Education nor any of the high-school superintendents have made any provision for settings in which such 'alternative instruction' could take place," UFT representative Leo Casey wrote in a Nov. 16 memo to union officials, a copy of which was obtained by The Post.

"They are returning to their home school students who have received a superintendent's suspension for such infractions as fighting — the very day after the students were suspended."

But Levy spokeswoman Margie Feinberg said a survey by the chancellor's office found "there is a suspension center in every school district." The union representing principals and supervisors also said the new programs have been implemented.

"Every school has some place for disruptive students," said Ernie Logan, vice president of the Council of Supervisors and Administrators.

A loophole may be responsible for the conflicting surveys. The law allows for the transfer of rowdy kids to another teacher's class for an hour or two.

A UFT senior staffer said there's still a lot of confusion over the new edict.

"In some schools, principals are telling staff there will be no more suspensions," the staffer said.

Levy reported that suspensions are down 80 percent this year. Officials attribute the drop to better behavior, but UFT President Randi Weingarten said the numbers are down because the educrats aren't suspending bad students.

One District 10 Bronx teacher described the situation as horrifying. "Violent and disruptive students are not only remaining in the classroom, they are realizing the schools are unable to suspend them and are creating even more chaos," the teacher said.

NEW YORK POST, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2001

CITY_21MC100_011833609

NYC-WTC_000415424