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Klein furious over 'dunce' teacher

BY KATHLEEN LUCADAMO and JOE WILLIAMS
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Schools Chancellor Joel Klein slammed the Bronx teacher yesterday who allegedly paid an ex-homeless man to take his state certification exam - calling the scam "deplorable."

"Everyone should be what I am - outraged about it," Klein said. "The fact that somebody doesn't meet that minimal qualification, as this teacher seemed incapable of doing, is a pretty good indication that we wouldn't want them teaching our students."

Wayne Brightly, a teacher at one of the city's worst schools, Middle School 42, repeatedly failed to pass the state exam, authorities said. Desperate to save his job last July, Brightly, 38, allegedly paid a formerly homeless man, Rubin Leitner, a measly \$2 to take the test for him.

Brightly obtained bogus state and school ID cards so that Leitner, who looks nothing like him, could take his test in his place, authorities said.

Leitner, who has the developmental disorder Asperger's syndrome, passed the state exam - and did so well that officials grew suspicious, authorities said.

Leitner, 58, told the Daily News that Brightly, whom he met through the Brooklyn College alumni office, pressured him into taking the exam and threatened him.

Klein called for changes to the teachers contract to make it easier for the city to fire teachers who are charged with a crime.

But teachers union President Randi Weingarten defended the contract, saying the city has "failed to put into place the proper safeguards" to make sure teachers are certified.

Brightly has a temporary license to work in the city schools and is protected by the teachers pact. His license expires this summer, meaning the city will not have to continue paying his \$59,000-a-year salary beyond that point, Klein said.

Brightly has been removed from the Baychester school, where no students or faculty would defend him yesterday. "That's crazy," said seventh-grader Imani Andrews. "The homeless man needs to be the teacher."

With Sondra Wolfer

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