

Letters to the Editor

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Principalship Should Cap a Career

To the Editor:

The problems with under-qualified “fetal principals” dealings with teachers go well beyond a “confrontational stance.” Rather than foster leadership, the “Leadership Academy” that trains them counsels new principals to demonstrate their power by intimidating teachers at their new school by targeting a respected, senior teacher for removal. Three years of poor ratings can destroy the career of even a tenured teacher, no matter how many previous years of high ratings. (Removal of senior teachers accomplishes a secondary goal of the Department of Education these days, to reduce salaries overall.)

These new principals also prize loyalty over competence in selecting their assistant principals, lowering the quality of leadership still further. Mayor Bloomberg may get 100 “experts” to sign a letter of support for his failed educational reforms, many of whom profit handsomely from them, but parents and teachers know better. In fact, instead of blaming teachers for his problems, Mr. Bloomberg might consider mining the combined wisdom of parents and teachers to create schools that are worthy of our most precious resource, our children.

The wisest teachers in our school communities are well known -- those who have earned respect of parents and peers -- and are the ones who ought to be promoted for principal training. Being “principal teacher” should cap a successful career, not start one.

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