

Roberta Pikser

My testimony is about age discrimination by the Office of Adult and Continuing Education, which is a program of the New York City Department of Education.

Rose-Marie Mills took over the Superintendency under the Bloomberg administration, but has continued her policies under the de Blasio administration: She has systematically eliminated, or driven out, those who have any institutional memory of how the agency used to function, serving the needs of our adult students rather than what she claims are the dictates of data. In the school year 2016-2017, the year in which I was fired, supposedly for being incompetent after over 16 years of satisfactory service, 20 teachers out of approximately 150, or nearly 19% of our teachers, all over the age of 40, most over the age of 50, were rated Unsatisfactory, in several cases, for those of us without tenure, leading to our dismissal. At the rest of the Department of Education, the rate of equivalent non-satisfactory ratings was approximately 1%.

Discrimination has not been limited to Unsatisfactory ratings. New teachers, with little or no experience in teaching adults, are favored with six hour days and five day weeks. The older, tenured teachers, who cannot be easily fired, have been forced to take split shift schedules, involving 12 hour days and six day weeks, and/or are submitted to constant harassment. Most of them, unable to take the exhaustion or the pressure have left. Several teachers have been forced to take non-union jobs at charter schools.

The newer teachers are afraid for their jobs because they are untenured and are therefore not as willing to fight back against Administration's injustices.

This age discrimination is also an attack on workers.