



Someone know the way to Long Island?

Aerobatic pilot Sean Tucker takes the scenic route as he flies his biplane, the Oracle, over the Statue of Liberty on Tuesday. Tucker will take part in the Bethpage Air Show on Long Island this weekend.



MARCUS SANTOS/DAILY NEWS

Ribbed, fired for pregnancy: asst. principal

THE PRINCIPAL of a Brooklyn high school mocked an assistant principal as “pregnant and forgetful” before unfairly forcing the mother-to-be out of her job, a lawsuit charges.

Simone Clark, who used to work as an assistant principal at World Academy for Total Community Health High School in Brownsville, alleges in papers filed Tuesday in Manhattan Supreme Court that Principal Claudette Christie targeted her after she became pregnant in October 2015.

Christie told Clark, 41, twice that she was “fat,” the papers charge. In January 2016, Christie allegedly told another teacher that Clark was “pregnant and forgetful.”

In another instance, Christie, 56, followed Clark “in a waddling manner.”

The papers indicate Clark was fired Jan. 23 for poor performance.

She had earned \$105,242 per year. **Stephen Rex Brown**

TRUTH & JUSTICE

Teach cites ‘Central Park 5’ politics in appeal of firing

BY VICTORIA BEKIEMPIIS
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

SCHOOL administrators canned an English teacher who taught students about the Central Park Five because they had an inappropriate “political objection” to these lessons, her lawyer insisted Tuesday.

The High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry in Manhattan instructed Jeena Lee-Walker to be more “balanced” in lessons about the racially charged case — claiming her coursework could spur little “riots” among students, the teacher said in a lawsuit filed in Manhattan Federal Court. The Central Park Five were black and Latino teens who were convicted of the notorious 1989 rape of a jogger that they didn’t commit. They were cleared after spending up to 13 years behind bars.

Lee-Walker initially complied but later pushed back — prompting a series of poor evaluations



JEFFERSON SIEGEL/DAILY NEWS

Jeena Lee-Walker (left) is appealing tossed lawsuit over her firing for refusing to change ‘Central Park Five’ lesson at Manhattan high school (above).

and, ultimately, her termination some 18 months later from the Upper West Side school, according to a civil suit she filed in January 2016.

But a judge threw out Lee-Walker’s lawsuit last November, reasoning that her classroom speech didn’t have First Amendment protections.

The city Law Department heralded the ruling — saying at the

time that the “claims in this suit had no merit.”

Lee-Walker’s lawyer, Stephen Bergstein, was in federal appeals court Tuesday to fight that dismissal.

Bergstein called the treatment of Lee-Walker, 38, a wrongful “political objection to her classroom instruction.”

He also argued teachers are supposed to engage with their stu-

dents beyond mere “reading, writing and arithmetic” — and shouldn’t be stymied by their bosses for doing their job.

“You can’t allow vice principals to stick their head in and say, ‘I don’t like what you said, it disagrees with my political views, you’re fired,’” Bergstein said.

The city’s lawyer countered in his rebuttal that administrators were acting well within their duties in guiding Lee-Walker’s lesson — not stomping on her First Amendment rights.

The city has maintained that public schools can legally limit classroom speech to hit educational goals under several U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

“They were just saying, ‘You have to teach both sides of it’ — that’s all that’s alleged,” said Jonathan Popolow, of the city Law Department. “There’s no genuine dispute that there are legitimate pedagogical concerns.”

vbekiempis@nydailynews.com