

HS principal could be saving thousands thanks to shady relationship

By: Mary Kay Linge and Susan Edelman

A controversial principal's cozy relationship with a city vendor could be saving her thousands on car insurance.

Oneatha Swinton, interim acting principal of Port Richmond HS, lives and works on Staten Island, but has registered her Lexus SUV at an East Stroudsburg, PA, address, documents obtained by The Post show. The car bears Pennsylvania license plates.

The Pennsylvania address is the home of Tanya John, an educational vendor who has been hired by Swinton, The Post has learned.

John, CEO of Feetz LLC, did work for the Secondary School for Law in Brooklyn, where Swinton was principal until last year. After joining Port Richmond last spring, Swinton announced plans to hire Feetz again, insiders said.

Feetz's website boasts an endorsement by Swinton praising John's expertise, saying "Teamwork really does make the Dreamwork!"

By using John's address, Swinton can save up to \$4,000 a year in car insurance, which costs less in rural East Stroudsburg than in NYC, rate calculators show. What she pays could not be learned.

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In the Keystone State, rate evasion is a first-degree misdemeanor punishable by up to \$5,000 for the first offense. The state has busted at least 22 NYC rate thieves in the last three years, said Tom Donahue, president of the Pennsylvania Insurance Fraud Prevention Authority.

Last July, a task force charged a Brooklyn man who obtained an auto policy claiming he lived in East Stroudsburg — evading \$4,654 in premium costs, Donahue said.

Reached by The Post at a school meeting, Swinton said, "Oh no!" and referred all questions to the Department of Education. A spokesman said Swinton "has residency" in Pennsylvania, but would not explain why she lists the vendor's address as her own.

Government property records show that Swinton owns a home on Woodstock Avenue on Staten Island and that John owns the East Stroudsburg, PA, home. The Post has seen

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Coalition Against Insurance Fraud

Swinton and her Lexus at the Woodstock Avenue home.

By law, a vehicle must be registered to a primary residence.

When asked about the possible insurance rate evasion, the city's Special Commissioner of Investigation would only confirm that Swinton is under scrutiny.

John left the DOE as a principal in 2008. Her business, The Feetz Experience, has collected \$1.1 million from the DOE since 2012, last year taking in \$170,000 from 16 city schools. Principals hire Feetz to run "character development" programs, take kids on retreats and college visits, and tutor them.

John has landed gigs at the Bronx high school where she herself was principal, and another where her husband, Kirk John, works as a dean.

Tanya John did not return messages. Kirk John hung up on a reporter.

Swinton, a Port Richmond graduate, has generated many complaints in her first weeks as principal.

Without consulting staff or parents, against DOE rules, Swinton cut ties with a CUNY honors program, records show. She imposed lax grading and promotion policies that staffers fear will leave graduates unprepared. She hired teachers without classes to assign them, they said.