

# Why a Former Chicago Public School Teacher is Advocating Vouchers

It's unlikely that Marilyn Rhames ever thought she would be advocating for school choice and \*gasp\* vouchers. As a black, public school teacher from Chicago, such a position was not on her radar.

But her position changed as she saw the public schools from inside and realized they didn't offer the type of high-quality education she wanted for her daughter.

As she explains in a recent article for [EducationPost?](#), Rhames found the type of education she wanted for her daughter at a charter school. By the time her second daughter came along, however, the school leadership had changed, leaving Rhames' second daughter in an environment she wasn't comfortable with. After doing her research, Rhames did the unthinkable and placed her child in a private school:

*"I chose to enroll her into an independent classical school in a middle-class Black neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago. The school uses **Hirsch's Core Knowledge curriculum** and teaches the children about their prized African-American heritage, all while taking an old-school approach (i.e., spelling tests, classic novels with challenging vocabulary words, grammar lessons, Latin, geography, **Saxon math**, and long passages of prose and poetry that must be memorized and recited).*

*The content is undoubtedly much more rigorous, but with only 13 kids in her class she will no longer fall through the cracks."*

But while Rhames has finally found a school that fits her

daughter's needs, she and her husband are also finding it difficult to pay for tuition along with the other expenses their family of five incurs. Rhames declares:

*"I would gladly accept a couple of \$5,000 school vouchers right about now. Ten grand would go a long way toward the \$24,000 private school bill I can expect to see next school year. Forgive me, school reform comrades, for this act of treason. Siding with my child is an unalienable right.*

*The argument that vouchers will pull money out of the public education system is a joke, seeing that, even without a voucher program, CPS may end up closing schools three weeks early (costing me three weeks of pay) because the district is \$215 million short. Am I supposed to eat scraps just because they are served to me for 'free'? I'm actually paying for steak!"*

Rhames goes on to say that she would be happy to send her children to a public or charter school which her "hard-earned tax dollars" have paid for, but has discovered that doing so is not worth it when they don't prepare her children for future success. One of the main goals in providing public education has been to promote a fair, equitable, and socially just system for all American children.

But as Rhames' experience evidences, that fair and equitable system often is often anything but when it causes parents to "pay for steak" while their children receive "scraps" in return. Is it time we allowed parents to take their "hard-earned tax dollars" and put them in a place where they think their child will actually get to taste the steak of a high-quality education?

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