

Teachers' Choices and Ours

The New York Sun

September 13, 2004 Monday

Copyright 2004 The New York Sun, Two SL, LLC All Rights Reserved

Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 351 words

Byline: EDWIN R. THOMPSON Manhattan

Body

Opposition to vouchers by the American Federation of Teachers "because public funding of private or religious education transfers precious tax dollars from public schools," begs comment ["Teachers' Choices - and Ours," Editorial, September 10, 2004]. The fundamental contradiction here is that as pupils leave public schools the money is no longer required by the system.

The non sequitur "religious education" requires illumination. Many, if not most, parents who abandon failing public schools in favor of parochial schools stipulate that their children are not to receive religious training. Parochial schools provide a secular education better than public schools do and at a steep discount.

To suggest a hypothetical scenario, if New York City were to offer, say, \$6,000 vouchers, the following would occur:

- * Parents would effectively have their rights restored by regaining the economic ability to educate their children as they see fit.
- * Children would be better educated.
- * Taxpayers would potentially save more than \$6,000 for every child that exits the system, while a preexisting subsidy to parents is cut in half.
- * The private sector would gain \$6,000 in new business and an industry would flourish, bringing with it all the innovation that free enterprise can offer. And it hires teachers.

This issue is a moral one. Education is arguably the most socialized field in the United States. The morality of socialism is altruism, in this case the view that we (read: taxpayers) do not exist for our own sake, but must be sacrificed to any comer with a child.

Vouchers serve as a vehicle for partially restoring taxpayers' property rights as well as parent's right to determine how their children are educated.

Furthermore, socialism doesn't work, e.g., witness the substandard performance of the New York City school system. Partially privatizing the system will reverse the present trend of pay more, get less.

The AFT et al. will squeal, of course. But their dishonest, self-serving protestations must be ignored. It's long past time these people understand that those "precious tax dollars" belong to

me.

Load-Date: September 13, 2004