



## Rahm Emanuel's Proposal Requires Approved Post-grad Plan or No Diploma

*The discipline of colleges and universities is in general contrived, not for the benefit of the students, but for the interest, or more properly speaking, for the ease of the masters. Its object is, in all cases, to maintain the authority of the master, and whether he neglects or performs his duty, to oblige the students in all cases to behave to him as if he performed it with the greatest diligence and ability. It seems to presume perfect wisdom and virtue in the one order, and the greatest weakness and folly in the other. Where the masters, however, really perform their duty, there are no examples, I believe, that the greater part of the students ever neglect theirs. No discipline is ever requisite to force attendance upon lectures which are really worth the attending, as is well known wherever any such lectures are given.*



Adam Smith (1776)

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel recently proposed a new education policy for the Windy City that would require high-school students to present proof of post-graduation plans before being allowed to receive a diploma.

Specifically, in order to don the cap and gown, seniors would have to demonstrate that they have either been accepted to a job apprenticeship, been accepted at college (not just applied), enrolled in some sort of "gap year" service program, or enlisted in the military.

"We are going to help kids have a plan, because they're going to need it to succeed," Emanuel said, as quoted in the *Washington Post*. "You cannot have kids think that 12th grade is done."

"I know what's not good for kids is allowing them to go into a job market and the rest of their lives with a high school diploma when everything tells you that they need more than that," Emanuel added.

The plan was approved by the city's board of education and will be in effect beginning with the class of 2020.

There are, of course, several problems with such a scheme.

First, the plan denies diplomas to those who've earned them. This, in turn, perpetuates the poverty that plagues so many of those enrolled in public schools.

Data published by the Chicago Public School system reveal that more than 80 percent of students in the



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Second City are “economically disadvantaged.”

If you think it’s a shame that people with PhDs can’t get a job, try getting hired without a high-school diploma!

Admittedly, there are jobs available to high-school dropouts (which will be the de facto designation of those who don’t comply with Rahm’s requirements), the average annual wage of which is, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, about \$20,200.

The average annual wage of jobs requiring at least a high-school diploma is, according to the same Census Bureau data, about \$28,000.

Given the party’s pledge to “guarantee that all Americans have the opportunity to succeed and that all working families can enjoy economic security,” one wonders why the rock-ribbed Democrat Rahm Emanuel would author a plan that would lock so many less-advantaged into generational poverty.

Finally, the plan ignores that percentage of public school students who cannot afford college and cannot find a job.

Some observers don’t consider this a weakness, as it will tend to increase enlistment in the armed forces — armed forces whose global presence only expands year after year, presidential administration after presidential administration.

Perhaps this is the ultimate aim of the plan; perhaps Emanuel genuinely wants to help students succeed.

One thing is certain: If faced with the prospect of being denied a diploma if they cannot comply with the mayor’s policy, thousands of less-fortunate Chicagoans will be funneled into the ranks of the military.

Beyond the incentive of receiving a high-school diploma, for students who face a bleak future — one without college or career — the U.S. Army has spent millions running commercials on television and on YouTube promising new recruits “up to \$40,000” as soon as they “earn [their] place on the Army team.”

Chicago Public Schools reported last year that there were nearly 400,000 students enrolled in the system from kindergarten through 12th grade. If even a modest percentage of those students find their feet firmly placed on the path toward military service, then it will be easier for future presidents and Congresses to deploy American troops in new places from pole to pole.

The obvious effects of the new Chicago Public Schools plan make it equally obvious that for thousands of kids, poverty or the military will be “a destination in and of itself,” and not the “milestone on the path to success” as claimed by the mayor.

Photo of Rahm Emanuel: [Screenshot City of Chicago Office of the Mayor](#)



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