

## **“BACKPACK FULL OF CASH” DOCUMENTARY LAUNCHES FESTIVAL AND COMMUNITY SCREENING CAMPAIGN**

**Narrated by Academy Award-winning actor, Matt Damon, BACKPACK explores the real cost of privatizing America's public schools.**

**Filmmakers Sarah Mondale and Vera Aronow attend screenings nationwide  
Screener and interviews available now.**

Before the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the appointment of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, filmmakers Sarah Mondale and Vera Aronow couldn't have known that the new administration would dramatically shift the national debate about education to the very issues at the heart of their film: charter schools, vouchers and privatization. Now, this timely new documentary takes viewers into the world of market-based education “reform”.

BACKPACK FULL OF CASH follows the tumultuous 2013-14 school year in Philadelphia and other cities where public education – starved of resources and undermined by privatization – is at risk. The documentary also showcases a model for improving schools - a well-resourced public school system in Union City, New Jersey, where poor kids are getting a high quality education without charters or vouchers. BACKPACK FULL OF CASH makes the case for public education as a basic civil right.

The film features genuine heroes like the principals, teachers, activists, parents and most hearteningly, students who are fighting for their education. Former Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, writer David Kirp and policy expert Linda Darling Hammond are among the national thought leaders who provide analysis in the film.

Narrator **Matt Damon** explains, “I got involved in BACKPACK FULL OF CASH because I believe that every kid should have access to great public schools. I got a great education in public schools and my mom is an educator so I know just how hard teachers work every day.”

Director Sarah Mondale notes, “I come from a family of teachers. I know the value of what public education did for me. Public schools face big challenges, but I think with charters and vouchers, there’s a real danger of undermining the system.” Producer Vera Aronow adds: “We wanted to understand the impact of reforms on the public schools, and give the families and educators who are most affected a chance to tell their own stories.”

Mondale directed and co-produced the award-winning, four-part PBS series [\*SCHOOL: The Story of American Public Education\*](#) narrated by Meryl Streep, which was seen by an estimated six million viewers. BACKPACK is a follow up to the *SCHOOL* series, and a rebuttal to the widely seen 2010 documentary *Waiting for Superman*.

**Screenings of BACKPACK FULL OF CASH –**  
**Please see full list of screenings with schedules and ticket information at**  
**[www.backpackfullofcash.com](http://www.backpackfullofcash.com)**

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A FILM EXPLORING THE REAL COST OF PRIVATIZING  
AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# BACKPACK FULL OF CASH

NARRATED BY MATT DAMON

"A BEAUTIFUL FILM—TREMENDOUSLY MOVING! ...EVERYONE  
WHO VALUES DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION NEEDS TO SEE THIS."  
— JONATHAN KOZOL, ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND AUTHOR OF SAVAGE INEQUALITIES



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