

# THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

LIFE. PRINTED DAILY.

*Published Saturday, August 15, 2009*

## TRIBUNE EDITORIAL

# A voucher breakthrough?

It's a stunning development. The local teacher's union, passionately opposed to vouchers, is partnering with a group that promotes their use.

In a program to train teachers at private schools that serve students with vouchers, the Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association is joining with the school district and Step Up for Students, a nonprofit that oversees the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship effort. Step-Up is paying \$100,000 for the special classes.

Union leaders say they recognized the poor children who re-

ceive the scholarships need the best teachers possible.

We hope that mature perspective will help union leaders see that vouchers pose no threat to public schools.

The Tax Credit Scholarship offers tax credits to businesses that contribute to a scholarship fund, which is used to allow Florida's poorest students to go to private schools. The vouchers are usually requested by parents of students having trouble in public schools.

The maximum scholarship is \$3,950, about 56 percent of the roughly \$7,000 the state pays per

public school student.

The Tax Credit Scholarship actually eases the burden on public schools — and taxpayers — by taking students who would otherwise require public school resources. While some early voucher proponents did seem to have an anti-public school bias, the scholarships now simply provide poor students some options.

The teacher's union here is doing what good teachers always do: It is focusing on the welfare of students. It's an encouraging step and one we hope will end up easing the union's irrational fear of vouchers.