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Ideas that stick from Fordham's Education Gadfly team

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POSTED ON AUGUST 13, 2009 AT 9:28 AM BY MIKE PETRILLI

A truce in the voucher wars?

There's encouraging news out of Hillsborough County, Florida this morning, the home of Tampa and the eighth largest school district in the country. The headline from the *St. Pete Times* says it all: "[Hillsborough schools and teachers' union join hands with Florida voucher advocates to train private school teachers.](#)"

On a normal day, oil and water just don't mix.

Public schools and teachers' unions don't say nice things about those who support school vouchers, sending kids to private schools with public money. Most of the time, such folks just don't get along.

But Wednesday wasn't a normal day.

In a move that experts are calling nearly unprecedented, the Hillsborough County schools and teachers' union have joined forces with a nonprofit Florida voucher group to help train private school teachers.

Granted, it's not *totally* unprecedented for public school districts to provide professional development to private school teachers; it happens through the federal Title I program all the time. Still, here's some welcome rhetoric from a local teachers union president:

"Bottom line is these are our children, they are disadvantaged children, and they often return to our public schools," said Jean Clements, president of the Hillsborough Classroom Teachers' Association. "I want them to get the best possible education, wherever they get it."

Kudos to [Step up for Students](#), Florida's (and the nation's) largest tax credit program, which initiated this effort and is proving that the private school choice issue doesn't have to be white hot. If you want to learn more, come to Fordham's panel next week ("[With Charter Schools Ascendant, Is There Still a Future for Vouchers?](#)"), where John Kirtley, the chairman of Step up for Students, will be one of the speakers.

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