



Education

July 2, 2004

## Finding fraud

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Those who were demanding "accountability" in the voucher programs should be satisfied. Events this week proved that the current system works well and the legislative overkill that failed to gain acceptance in the Legislature was unnecessary.

Seven employees of a private school in Polk County are accused of defrauding two of the voucher programs and the free school lunch program.

Their arrests following an audit were proof of the accountability. Had it not been there, the suspects would not have been caught.

As with all of the minor problems in the voucher programs, which anti-choice forces have tried to elevate to scandals, the amounts taken were minor in comparison to the billions spent in the public schools.

The loss was \$53,343 in McKay scholarship money, and \$1,400 in tax credit scholarship money.

Although the lunch program lost even more than the tax credit scholarship programs, the anti-choice crowd isn't demanding an end to that loosely run program.

The requirements of the Florida Association of Scholarship Funding Organizations for tax credit scholarships include requiring income documentation for all families every year, disbursing scholarship payments five times a year, and requiring schools to verify attendance.

School choice is helping thousands of poor and disabled children get an education. It saves taxpayers millions of dollars. It works.

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