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## FEA keeps defying logic

Albert Einstein might understand why the Florida Education Association keeps hounding the state over a scholarship program.

Albert Einstein's well circulated definition of insanity is doing the same thing over again and expecting different results. The folks who run Florida's largest labor union are smart, talented, thoughtful and certainly not crazy. So, why do they persist in trying to prove Einstein was correct?

The Florida Education Association, which represents 140,000 teachers around the state, recently announced it was appealing a recent court ruling that upheld the state's Tax Credit Scholarship program.

The 15-year-old program allows students from families whose household income is 185 percent of the federal poverty level — or about \$45,000 a year for a family of four — to attend a private school, religious or secular, of their choice. This school year, about 90,000 children will participate, including almost 2,800 from Polk County.

The program hinges on people and companies that donate to the scholarship fund in order to receive a tax break equal to their contribution.

The FEA, however, maintains it is unconstitutional. The union calls the scholarships "vouchers," and maintains it illegally funds religious

schools and deprives much-needed resources from public schools.

Both a trial court and an appellate court have rejected those arguments. Each time, judges upheld the program because the union and its allies, like the NAACP and League of Women Voters, cannot show any direct harm. Moreover, judges have decided that the program passes legal muster because lawmakers do not target funding to any specific schools because the money never enters the treasury.

In announcing its appeal on Sept. 14, the FEA slammed the "tax credit voucher scheme" as an attempt by lawmakers "to pay for the education of children in largely unregulated private schools, diverting funds that otherwise would support the system of free public schools required by the Florida Constitution."

As we noted in this space last month, the union's point is laughable. Public school funding under Gov. Rick Scott has not diminished but in fact has reached record levels. The courts have recognized that, as well as the fact that no state money supports these parents and children, whom the union apparently wants to penalize. We hope the Supreme Court follows the lower courts and dismisses the union's logic, which only a genius like Einstein could understand.