

Suwannee Democrat

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OUR VIEW: The schooling of Rick Scott

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Live Oak — Gov. Rick Scott’s decision to keep Michelle Rhee on as an informal advisor was a good one, in our view.

Rhee made waves in Washington, D.C. when as chancellor of public schools there she fired 241 teachers for incompetence but offered 20 percent pay raises to those who made the grade. As a result, D.C. schools, some of the worst in the nation, began to improve for the first time in memory.

In response, folks there promptly voted D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty out of office. Rhee, left with no backing, resigned.

We’re glad to have you here, Ms. Rhee, if only on an occasional basis.

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Scott’s voucher proposal has raised some eyebrows as well.

The Governor’s plan is this: Offer every Florida student -- not just those at failing schools -- public funds to attend a private institution of their choice.

Teachers unions fear a public school exodus, and they could be right.

But first Scott will have to contend with the courts.

In 2006 the Florida Supreme Court struck down Jeb Bush’s voucher program on grounds that it violated the state constitution’s guarantee of a “uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools.”

Scott’s proposal, which reaches much further than Bush’s, would appear doomed.

That’s the opinion of one high-profile voucher advocate, at least.

The *St. Petersburg Times* recently cited an email to that effect circulated by Andrew Coulson, director of the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom. In light of the 2006 ruling, wrote Coulson, “there does not seem to be any way for the Court [to] uphold any sort of voucher program in Florida even if it wanted to.”

Let’s just wait and see.

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We know at least some local students who had quite an educational experience this week.

The Sound of Suwannee marching band and representatives of the Florida Sheriffs Boys Ranch marched in Scott's inaugural parade Tuesday in Tallahassee.

It was a day they'll likely never forget.

Good job, all.