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**Don't spend more on school vouchers** | Feb. 18, editorial

## Don't shut the door to school options

As every parent and teacher knows, one size does not fit all. That's why the future of public education lies in customizing learning. Our friends at the *Times* think that Tax Credit Scholarships for low-income students don't belong in the mix, but I hope one day they will see the light.

Magnet schools, fundamental schools, voluntary prekindergarten, charter schools, Tax Credit Scholarships, online schools, McKay Scholarships and dual enrollment are all part of this future and, according to a 2002 U.S. Supreme Court decision, so are religious schools, provided attendance is "genuinely" voluntary. This 2002 decision is why the Florida Supreme Court ignored religion when it ruled the Opportunity Scholarships unconstitutional in 2006.

As the *Times* points out, when a child leaves her assigned school to attend a scholarship school her funding leaves also. But that's true

of every departure, and the only way to prevent this is to abolish all forms of school choice and require that all children attend their assigned schools. Of course, we know this approach does not work for many children. Ultimately the public good is better served if we put meeting the needs of each child over protecting the market share of a school or school district.

The most effective way to improve public education is to empower educators to create diverse learning options and empower parents to match their children with the learning options that best meet their need. This does present a challenge for how to properly regulate and manage an increasingly diverse public education system. But just saying no to options for poor children strikes me as indefensible.

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