

## **Privatization to blame for failing schools**

Columnist Philip Derrow's assessment, 'The American K-12 education system has been failing its students for far too long,' ignores what's happening to this system, especially in Florida ('Ramaswamy is right: We should care about grades,' Jan. 7). The 'failure' Derrow decries lies with policymakers who desire to privatize all education options and entirely dismantle traditional public schools.

Taxpayer dollars once earmarked for the 'system' are now sucked up by vouchers primarily for religious schools centered on Bible teachings, not STEM, and for homeschoolers who enjoy wide-screen TVs and Disney World tickets thanks to voucher dollars.

The 'system' is compromised by Florida's poor average teacher pay (50th in national ranking), which results in thousands of teacher vacancies and large-scale utilization of substitute or even uncertified individuals covering classes.

Derrow claims, 'Our American culture has venerated mediocrity over excellence,' but Florida legislators and Department of Education officials value education that gives highest regard to false ideas over truth, banning discussion of such topics as the threat of global warming.

Students cannot successfully problem-solve when problems are whitewashed. Derrow suggests shifting school focus from sports and prom queens to academics. Good idea. Let's focus on that rather than throwing our traditional public schools under the bus.

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