same breath, rushes to endorse the latest reform plan, a tacit admission that our schools are falling short. Let me be especially clear here: many, if not most, of our teachers are dedicated educators who are motivated by a love of learning and of children. Many, if not most, are disturbed by the same education fads that distress parents. Like parents, these teachers are ill-served by education leaders who are constantly reinventing the wheel and interfering with what works in real classrooms.

In fact, the education policy debate of the last few years has been dominated by the *illusion* of reform. With every fiber of their being, the leadership of the nation's massive teachers' unions, the National Education Association (2.2 million members) and the American Federation of Teachers (900,000), have opposed nearly every change in the way our schools are financed and operated.

Bogus education reform schemes come and go. Many of them have impressive-sounding names and a stellar line-up of sponsors. Desperate for signs of improvement that will give their children hope, parents are sold various reform packages under such brand names as Outcome-Based Education, Goals 2000, character education, mandatory voluntarism, New American Schools and restructuring. These schemes have different details, but they have at least two omissions in common: they leave the basic method of funding public education untouched, and they leave parents at the margin of education decision-making.

The Family Research Council (FRC) is keenly aware of the concerns expressed by America's families about education, and we are dedicated to reversing these omissions. We want parents to control their education dollars. We believe that the same hands that rock the cradle, smooth the fevered brow, set the table, and clothe the child should direct the funds that educate the child. The centerpiece of our campaign for education reform is massive tax relief for families with children, coupled with genuine parental choice policies that enable parents to select the school their children will attend.

Today, more than ever before, I am optimistic about our chances for success. School choice plans are gaining momentum and making headway. A new study by Harvard's Paul Peterson and Jay P. Greene at the University of Houston shows that the City of Milwaukee's parental choice plan has resulted in real academic gains for the children enrolled in the program. In August, state courts in Ohio upheld the constitutionality of a school choice program that includes religious schools. Tax credits for families with children will now be a centerpiece of this year's election debate.

Most importantly, I'm encouraged that, in the true spirit of America, parents are not waiting for politicians to respond to their needs. They are moving in pioneering numbers to options like homeschooling, classical education and parent-based education, which are not so much novelties as rediscoveries of the art of family-centered teaching and learning. At the center of all of this is spiritual renewal, the faith that moves mountains.

With all of the forces at work in today's education debate, FRC has developed the *Moms' and Dads' School Survival Guide*. This 64-page booklet is packed with resources to help you through the coming school year. Between its covers you'll find:

- A glossary of education jargon—what do the fancy terms *really* mean?
- Feature articles on major topics like Outcome-Based Education, the religious rights of students, and parental rights in today's schools.
- Addresses and phone numbers of key resources for homeschooling and classical education.
- A reference section containing everything from newsletter sources to web sites dealing with education issues.

Our *Survival Guide* is designed to put a wealth of helpful information at your fingertips. It's yours for a donation of any amount—please use the enclosed reply card to order your copy today.

I had intended this letter to deal solely with education issues, but drug abuse and educational failure feed off one another. There is no way to dismiss the disturbing statistics: in the war against teenage drug abuse, America is in full retreat. A new federal survey shows that teen drug use has risen 105 percent since 1992. The sharp increases span every form of illegal drug. Use of LSD and other hallucinogens is up 183 percent; cocaine use, 166 percent (from 1994 to 1995 alone); marijuana, 105 percent. One of every 10 teenagers has used an illegal drug in the past month.

The tragedy here is that these numbers come after a decade of progress. By 1992, teen drug use had been driven to its lowest point in decades. The reason for that progress was and is easy to understand. Our nation's policy was direct—and repeated over and over again in every forum where young people gather. It said: "Drug abuse is wrong, dangerous, and stupid." But then, following a change in the Oval Office, we changed course.

The flow of anti-drug messages from our nation's capital dried up. The Clinton administration cut the office of National Drug Control Policy some 83 percent. MTV, and even the networks, began to produce material that winked at the drug threat, or openly declared the war on drugs a failure. Leaders in Congress turned their attention to other issues. Treatment funds were reduced, and "civil libertarians" ratcheted up their pressure on highly effective social agencies like Teen Challenge that use faith-based messages to help teenagers and young adults kick the habit.

Let me say something here about the liberal versus conservative debate about the treatment versus law enforcement approaches to drug abuse. In fact, let me say one word about it—it is a *fallacy*. Both approaches are needed. Drug abusers need treatment if they are to re-enter society as productive citizens. But the truth is that even the best treatment programs are only partially successful. Preventing the abuser from taking that first hit, snort, or injection is crucial.

Who would propose that we eliminate hospital emergency rooms to treat automobile accident victims? No one, of course. Then again, who would argue that we eliminate speed limits, safety belts, guard rails, and the like because, after all, we have emergency rooms? But that's precisely what advocates of drug legalization argue! Remember when then-Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders suggested that problems like crime would be reduced if America legalized drug use, saying it was time to study this option and rely on treatment rather than law enforcement?

Elders, thankfully, is gone, but the legacy of permissiveness she represented is reflected in what is happening now to our youth. Last month, my senior adviser for drug issues, retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Bob Maginnis, met with General Barry McCaffrey, President Clinton's drug czar. Gen. McCaffrey is a dedicated man, but he has his work cut out for him. FRC offered the general our heartfelt support and suggested various ways to recapture the initiative. New efforts to control the flow of drugs through Mexico and out of Colombia are especially needed.