Education

Blessea Is The Child, For Each Child Brings A Holiday Magic. May This Magic Be Yours Throughout The Holiday Season And The Entire New Year. Yvonne Atkinson

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

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One of the best-kept secrets in the Black community is how education vouchers will help thousands of low-income children.

Nearly everyone agrees that there is a crisis in education, especially in inner-city schools. Large numbers of poor children have a hard time staying in school. Those who do are distracted by a lack of discipline and other negative social forces. They find themselves trapped in a bureaucratic machine that is too sluggish to help them when their need is greatest — in the early years of their school careers.

The Federal Government has been giving \$3.5 billion each year to local school

districts for remedial instruction under Chapter 1 (formerly known as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Education Secretary William Bennett is now asking Congress to turn this money into vouchers. He wants to let parents choose the school they think can best serve the needs of their children, whether at public or private schools. The average voucher would be for \$600, ranging from \$240 to \$1200, depending on the school district involved.

One would think there would be an overwhelming cry of public support for the new bill. After all, parents would be able to buy back some of the opportunities for progress that have so far eluded them.

With their new economic power, parents would be

able to manage the Chapter 1 money. They could reward good schools and put financial pressure on the bad ones to meet the standards of the marketplace.

Parents make these kinds of decisions all the time - in buying food, shelter and clothing for their youngsters. Why not let them pick the teachers and the schools that will influence the minds of their children? Who has been speaking out on vouchers? Those who criticize the loudest happen to have a vested interest in preserving the status quo. Usually it's the teachers unions who don't want their members being "judged" by parents. The leaders appear anxious to maintain control and power, even at the expense of the children.

First, they argue that See STEP, Page 10



