

Over 8,400 in S.A. get vouchers

Most recipients from low-income families

By Lawrence Mower
AUSTIN BUREAU

The state has released the first in-depth look at the more than 85,000 students participating in Texas' voucher program, shedding light on who will benefit from the state's new \$1 billion initiative.

The report, which was required by the Legislature, provides high-level demographic data on recipients and where they live. But it leaves some questions about the program unanswered, and some data required by law wasn't released.

Newly appointed Comptroller Don Huffines said in a statement that "the *Vouchers continues on A7*



Gov. Greg Abbott greets students from San Antonio Christian School in February 2025 after giving a speech to promote school vouchers.

Northside's 2,200-plus students most in area

By Lindsey Byman
STAFF WRITER

At least 8,405 students who live in San Antonio school districts will use the state's new voucher program, according to data released Monday by the Texas comptroller, who oversees the initiative.

These students are among the 85,434 statewide to receive some of the \$1 billion from the Texas Education Freedom Accounts, a program that gives families public funds for private education costs including tuition at private schools, learning supplies and therapy.

More than 2,200 students in Northside Independent School District will use a voucher, making it one of the top *Districts continues on A7*

Vote holds Fauci in contempt



Sen. Rand Paul, center, talking with Sen. Richard Blumenthal, had pressed for a contempt finding against Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Senate panel's action could lead to investigation by Justice Department

By Eric Tucker
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A Senate committee voted along party lines Thursday to hold Dr. Anthony Fauci in contempt of Congress over his refusal to answer questions at a hearing on his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, setting up a referral to the Justice Department for potential investigation over whether the country's longtime top infectious disease official properly exercised his constitutional rights.

The vote approving the contempt resolution came a week after Fauci invoked his Fifth



Fauci leaves after testifying last week before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Amendment right against self-incrimination more than 100 times when he appeared before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, an episode that raised fresh legal questions about the ability of Congress to compel testimony from a previously pardoned witness.

Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, the committee chairman who pressed for the contempt finding, said constitutional protection did not apply because Fauci last year received a pardon from Democratic President Joe Biden and thus did not have to worry about the threat of *Fauci continues on A8*

Tensions boil over as arena panel debated

By Molly Smith
STAFF WRITER

City Council members' frustration with Mayor Gina Ortiz Jones — and one another — was apparent Thursday during a debate over the creation of an advisory committee to get San Antonians' opinions of the planned downtown sports and entertainment district.

Thursday was the first council meeting since council's July recess, and less than a week after Jones released a memo saying San Antonio voters should decide whether the city contributes to what would be the district's crown jewel: a \$1.3 billion arena for the Spurs.

A majority of the 10-member council opposes the idea, which was apparent during a spat between Jones and Council Member Phyllis Viagran over whether a draft financing plan outlining the city's contribution had been "executed."

The council approved the plan a year ago in a 7-4 vote, with Jones in opposition.

The nonbinding plan lays out how much of the arena's construction costs the city, county and Spurs organization will pay. The city has agreed to put up \$489 million, the county \$311 million and Spurs Sports & Entertainment \$500 million.

The plan also outlines agreements that still have to be negotiated and finalized by a council vote, such as lease and non-relocation agreements with the Spurs *Council continues on A8*



James Talarico's campaign called the voter fraud allegations "a lame attempt by Ken Paxton to deflect from his own hypocrisy."

Talarico used parents' address to vote in five elections, report says

By Jarrod Wardwell
STAFF WRITER

State Rep. James Talarico, the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate in Texas, used his parents' address to vote in five elections after buying his own home, according to a report the Texas Tribune and ProPublica published on Wednesday.

Talarico listed his parents' address on his voter registration in November 2021. Despite buying a home the following June, he failed to update his voting records until September 2024, the report says. Talarico himself has accused his Republican opponent Texas Attorney General

Ken Paxton of voter fraud in light of an earlier report by the Tribune and ProPublica, stating he may have also voted with an address at which he did not live.

Talarico's voting practices may have violated state law, according to the recent report. His spokesperson directed blame at Paxton in light of the coverage on Wednesday. Paxton had cited a report by the conservative magazine The Federalist to accuse Talarico of voter fraud linked to his mother's address last week.

"This is a lame attempt by Ken Paxton to deflect from his own hypocrisy and career of corruption," JT Ennis, Talarico campaign spokesperson, said in a

statement to Hearst Newspapers after the report broke.

The campaign declined to comment on whether Talarico used his parents' address to vote while living elsewhere.

"Given Ken Paxton's history of weaponizing his office to conduct baseless witch hunts — and the credible threats made by right-wing actors trying to track down the whereabouts of James and his family — our campaign will not enable this any further," *Talarico continues on A7*

