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1/9/07  
**Tax Dollars Paying for Private Education**

If passed this session, your tax dollars could pay for others children to attend private schools. School vouchers is one of the hot button topics facing Texas lawmakers this session.

Proponents of the voucher program are pushing two bills; one to help disadvantaged students and the other to improve the education of those with autism. But some in Lubbock tells us there's more to the bill than meets the eye.

Some proponents of school vouchers say it will help students get a step up. However, the Superintendent of Lubbock Independent School District says, that's not the case.

"Just a fabricate of some people wanting to recreate that elitists school system that we used to have in the US. So they're going to go after anything just to get in the front doors," Wayne Havens, LISD Superintendent.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation tells NewsChannel 11 the first bill would allow students in low performing public schools use tax money to attend a private school. That spokesperson is in favor of the bill, says students education is what's important, not the setting: be it public or private.

Another voucher bill expected to be up for debate would provide Autistic children with tax dollars to attended the best serving public or private school. But the All Saint's Episcopal School Headmaster says not all private schools have the funding to serve students with disabilities.

"Not every private school is equipped to deal with Autism," Dr. Mike Bennett, headmaster of All Saint's Episcopal School.

A special education teacher says it could compromise the needs of the children.

"This has nothing to do with special education children. It has only to do with getting vouchers and the needs of the special children are not being closely look at," James Harris, LISD special education teacher.

And some private schools are concerned the money could cause regulations in their programs.

"We enjoy having chapel every morning and at All Saints. It's the start of our day. And we're not going to give that up. We wouldn't participate in a voucher system before we'd give that up," said Dr. Bennett.

A number hasn't been assigned to this voucher program yet. But we do know L.I.S.D. gets about \$2,600 per student from the state each year and that's money they could stand to lose, should the voucher program pass.

We'll continue to follow this issue and more as the legislative session continues.

**Tax Dollars Paying for Private Education**



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**Caddick Named Speaker of Texas House**  
Representative Jim Pitts late today dropped out of the Texas House speaker's race, leaving Tom Craddick as leader of the chamber.

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