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ACADIANA SCHOOLS BRACE FOR DEEP CUTS AS CONGRESS SLASHES EDUCATION FUNDING

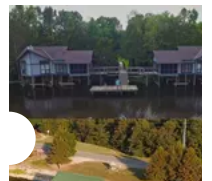
Joe Cunningham | Published: July 3, 2025

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Highlights

- The One Big Beautiful Bill Act threatens federal funding for Acadiana school districts, already grappling with a \$7 billion freeze in education grants
- Title I funding cuts would hit Lafayette, St. Martin, Vermilion, and Acadia parishes hard, as many schools serve high-poverty student populations
- After-school programs serving 22,000 Louisiana students statewide could disappear, potentially closing three Boys & Girls Clubs sites in the Acadiana region
- Federal voucher tax credits would pull additional funding from public schools while expanding private school access for some families
- Teacher training programs and literacy coaches are helping struggling readers face elimination just as schools prepare for fall classes



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Acadiana Schools Brace for Federal Funding Cuts Under 'One Big Beautiful Bill'

Local districts could lose millions in Title I funding while new voucher programs redirect taxpayer dollars to private schools

LAFAYETTE, La. (KPEL News) - Acadiana school districts are preparing for substantial cuts to federal education funding as Congress advances the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The legislation would eliminate billions from programs supporting low-income students, teacher training, and after-school care.

According to the Learning Policy Institute, Louisiana stands to lose more than \$109 million in federal K-12 education funding should the legislation pass. This money directly supports thousands of students across Lafayette, St. Martin, Vermilion, Acadia, Iberia, and St. Landry parishes.



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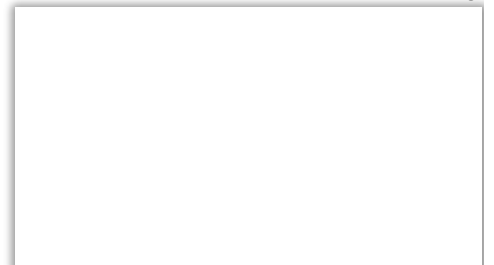
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The proposed cuts arrive as Louisiana schools already struggle with the Trump administration's decision to withhold nearly \$7 billion in education grants. In recent reports, these funds were scheduled for distribution to states on July 1. The funding freeze has forced superintendents to revise budgets and consider program cuts weeks before the new school year.

Title I Funding Cuts Would Hit High-Poverty Schools

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act's greatest impact on Acadiana schools would come through reductions to Title I funding. This federal program provides supplemental resources to schools serving large numbers of low-income students. According to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, the legislation includes substantial cuts to education spending that would affect Title I schools most severely.

Lafayette Parish operates dozens of schools that qualify for Title I funding based on high percentages of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. These schools use federal dollars to employ reading specialists, math interventionists, and fund extended learning programs that help close achievement gaps for students from low-income families.



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"This puts every district in a really difficult spot," St. Tammany Parish Superintendent Frank Jabbia told [The Advocate](#) regarding the current funding freeze. "It really caught us all off guard."

Rural parishes in the Acadiana region face steeper challenges. St. Martin, Vermilion, and Acadia parishes operate smaller school systems with limited local tax bases. These districts depend more heavily on federal support to maintain basic services.

After-School Programs Could Disappear

Families would feel immediate effects from the elimination of after-school and summer learning programs funded through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. [According to education advocates](#), about 22,000 Louisiana students currently attend programs funded by these grants. The programs provide homework help, recreational activities, and affordable childcare for working families.

The cuts could force the closure of after-school programs at three Baton Rouge area schools operated by Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Louisiana, which serves about 500 students. Angel Nelson, president and CEO of the organization, told [The Advocate](#) that families pay just \$25 per year for services that include homework help, sports, art activities, and dinner.

"Now we're not going to be able to give kids a safe place to learn and grow," Nelson said. "It's going to be devastating."

Similar programs operate throughout Acadiana, providing essential support for working families in Lafayette, Iberia, and other parishes. The loss of federal funding would leave many parents searching for affordable childcare options while eliminating academic support that helps students improve their learning.

Teacher Training and Support Programs Face Elimination

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act would eliminate Title II funding completely. This action would remove the primary federal program that supports teacher professional development and training. [Education analysts](#) believe the House version of the bill cuts \$2.19 billion from the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program.



Acadiana schools would lose funding for instruction. Districts would also lose subjects like math and science,

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Ivann Aleksic, Unsplash

Louisiana education officials have reduced teacher vacancies from 2,520 two years ago to around 1,100 currently. Most remaining openings exist in high school-level subjects like chemistry, physics, and foreign languages. The elimination of federal training support could reverse progress in recruiting and retaining qualified educators.

The cuts also affect special education services. Federal IDEA funding helps pay for literacy coaches and intervention specialists who support students with disabilities. Rural districts in Acadiana that struggle to attract specialized personnel would face particular difficulties maintaining these services.

Higher Education Changes Affect Local Students

Students at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, LSU Eunice, and other regional institutions would encounter new restrictions under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's higher education provisions. [According to education policy experts](#), the legislation would limit annual financial aid and eliminate subsidized loans that do not accrue interest while students are enrolled.

The bill would cap undergraduate borrowing at \$50,000 over a student's lifetime and eliminate Grad PLUS loans for graduate students. Students pursuing teaching degrees at UL Lafayette or other education programs could find it harder to afford the extended preparation required for educator certification.

Community colleges like South Louisiana Community College, which provides workforce training aligned with regional industries, could see reduced enrollment as students face new borrowing limits and stricter Pell Grant requirements.

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School Voucher Expansion Raises Funding Questions



While cutting traditional education funding, the state's credit voucher program similar to the one in Louisiana uses revenues available for public education to fund scholarships.

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Louisiana already operates several voucher programs, including the Louisiana Scholarship Program and a newer education savings account program. The federal legislation could expand these options while reducing the overall funding available to public schools through state formulas.

Education advocates express concern that voucher expansion, combined with federal funding cuts, could create a two-tiered system. Families with means could access private schools through vouchers, while public schools serving the most vulnerable students lose resources.

Medicaid Cuts Threaten School Health Services

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act includes \$863 billion in Medicaid cuts over ten years that could affect school-based health services throughout Acadiana. [According to health policy analysts](#), schools rely on Medicaid reimbursements to fund nursing staff, mental health services, and specialized support for students with disabilities.

Many Acadiana schools serve rural communities where students may not have easy access to healthcare outside of school. The loss of Medicaid funding could force districts to eliminate school nurses or reduce health services just as students return from summer break.

Special education services would experience particular strain. Schools use Medicaid funds to help pay for speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other specialized interventions required under federal disability law.

Local Response and Budget Planning

Acadiana superintendents are working to assess the potential impact of federal funding cuts while addressing the immediate crisis of withheld grant money. School boards across the region have



special meetings to discuss budget

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Louisiana Superintendent of Education Cade Brumley has supported the Trump administration's review of federal education programs. He said the "temporary review" would ensure tax dollars positively impact Louisiana students. However, local education leaders express frustration with the lack of clarity about when frozen funds might be released.

Some districts are exploring consolidation of programs or partnerships with neighboring systems to maintain services despite reduced funding. Others are reaching out to local businesses and community organizations to help fill gaps left by federal cuts.

Timeline and What Comes Next

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act passed the House in May and **according to recent reports** passed the Senate on July 1 in a narrow 51-50 vote. The legislation now returns to the House for final approval before reaching President Trump's desk.

Should the bill become law, many of the education cuts would take effect for the 2025-26 school year. Some changes to higher education programs could begin sooner. The immediate impact of the current funding freeze continues to affect summer programs and fall planning.



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Education advocacy groups are encouraging parents and community members to contact their representatives about the importance of federal education funding. The Louisiana Association of School Superintendents and other organizations are working to provide lawmakers with data about the impact of proposed cuts.

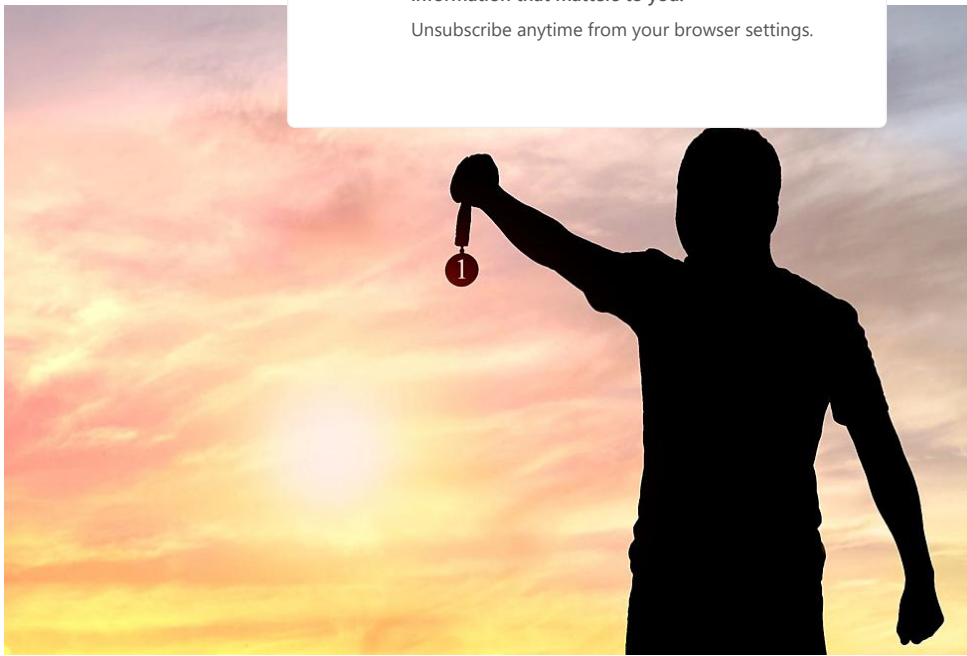
MOST FEARED WEATHER EVENTS IN LOUISIANA

An unscientific poll revealed that south Louisiana residents are most fearful of these weather events



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Honorable Mentions

I'm compelled to include the following in this list, simply because these answers to the question "What weather event or natural disaster scares you most?" were so clever.

- A mother's wrath
- Jim Cantore
- The government

There are always a few in the bunch. And that's what makes us smile!



7 - Sinkhole

In 2012, a sinkhole in Bayou Corne
domes underground began collaps
away. A few people in the unoffici

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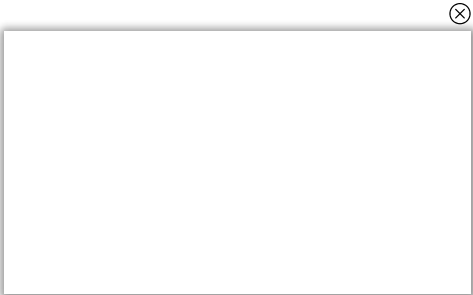
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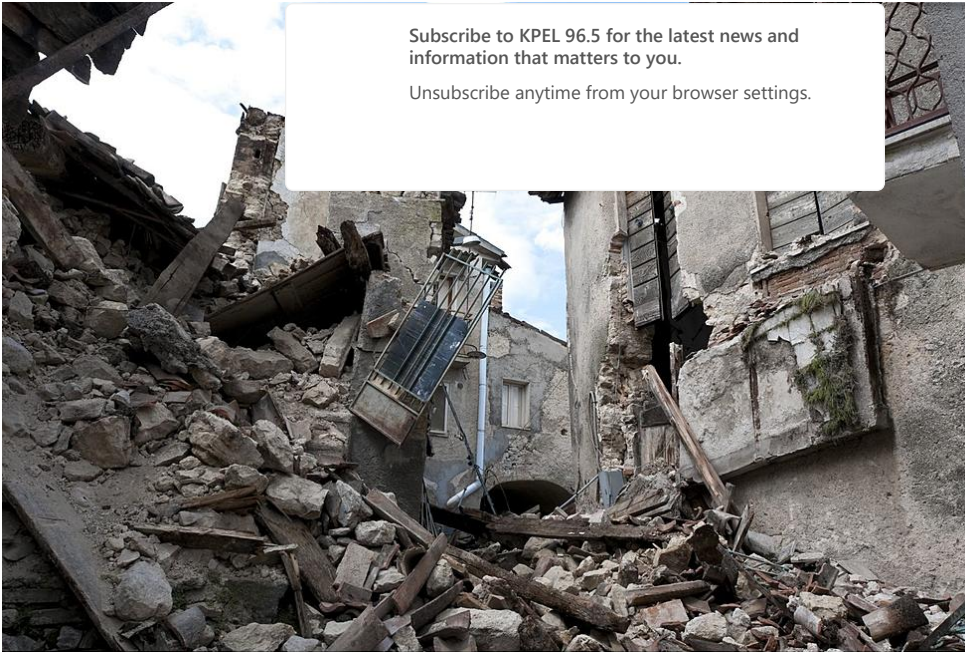


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6 - Lightning

Astraphobics fear lightning, and a couple of those folks make our list. They aren't alone. **Lightning** is one of the things most feared by humans in general! South Louisianans know that lightning means a storm is a bad one, even if there's no rain.





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5 - Earthquake

The photo depicts the aftermath of an earthquake. It's understandable that folks are terrified of them. Can you imagine the very ground under your feet becoming unstable, and the ceiling and walls falling? And there's nothing you can do to stop it and nowhere you can hide from it? Pretty scary!



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4 - Tsunami

Fortunately, south Louisianans haven't dealt with a true tsunami. However, local meteorologists have often described the storm surge expected from a hurricane as "a wall of water." A tsunami, by [NOAA's definition](#), is a wave "caused by earthquakes or volcanic eruptions under the sea." Regardless, they are terrifying!



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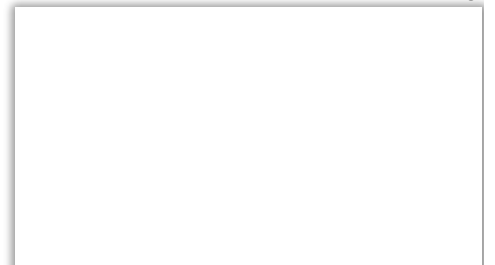
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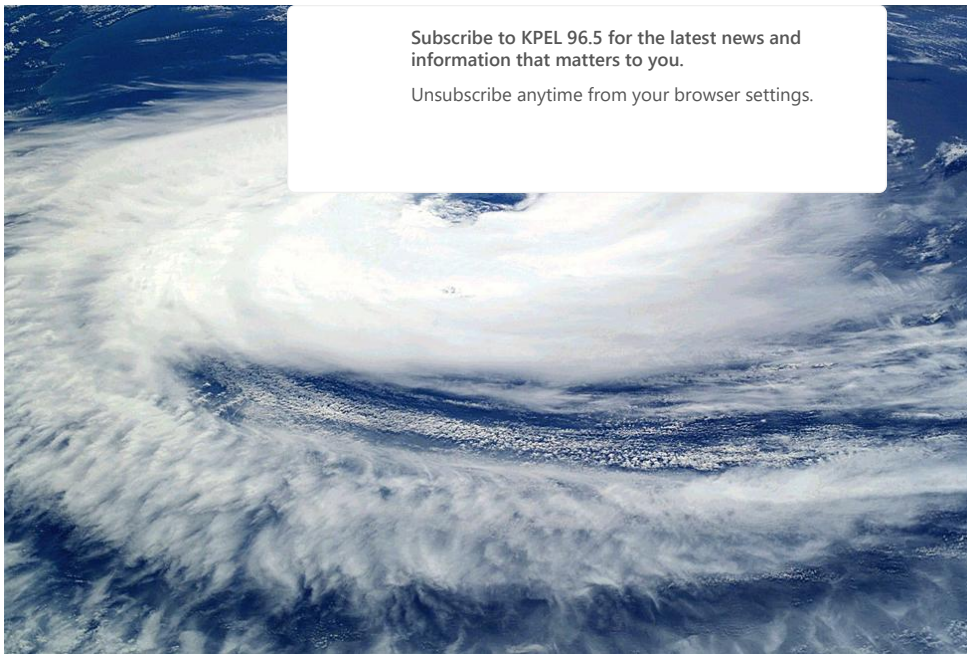


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3 - Wildfire

Until recently, we in south Louisiana were blissfully unaware of how devastating wildfires are. The extreme drought we experienced in 2023 taught us that these weather-related events extend far past California. Several large-scale fires broke out in the summer, and the largest of these spread smoke across the southern quarter of the state. Fire eats everything in its path, and we are thankful for the first responders who were able to contain it.





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2 - Hurricane

South Louisiana folks are no strangers to hurricanes, which might explain their fear. Living through a storm and dealing with the aftermath brings a feeling of dread to everyone who has experienced both. From the howling wind and driving rain to the lack of electricity and blue-tarped roofs, none of us are fans. They terrify others. What's more, watching one make its crawl toward its destination is like being stalked by a turtle.



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1 - Tornado

A whopping 70% of the people in south Louisiana who responded feared a tornado more than any other event. Lilapsophobia is a fear of tornadoes and hurricanes. Nearly all of them shared that the unpredictable nature of tornadoes scares them the most. Unfortunately, we don't have tornado sirens here. Thank goodness for weather alerts.



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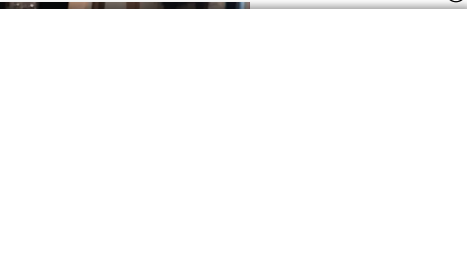
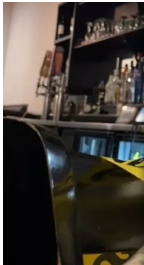


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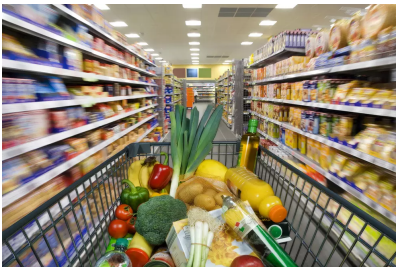


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