



# THE ACADIANA ADVOCATE

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**2026  
LEGISLATURE**  
HIGHER EDUCATION

## Universities in La. may seek new accreditor

Change pushed amid scrutiny  
of higher ed bureaucracy

BY HALEY MILLER  
Staff writer

As higher education bureaucracy comes under scrutiny nationally, Louisiana's public universities might soon be allowed to seek alternatives to the accreditor that has evaluated institutions in the state for over a century.

The potential change comes as some conservative leaders like President Donald Trump and Gov. Jeff Landry criticize excess spending in higher education and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Some administrators say, however, that the problems with accreditation lie less with DEI and more with the inefficiency of a geography-based system.

Senate Bill 304 would permit public universities to break with their longstanding accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, or SACS. The bill follows the recommendations of a task force Landry created last year to review accreditation in the

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## Resignations affect Johnson's agenda in House

BY MARK BALLARD  
Staff writer

WASHINGTON — Two members of Congress resigned Tuesday, creating more headaches for U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise as they started to move a sheaf of "must-pass" legislation through a Congress.

Right off the bat, Johnson, R-Benton, and Scalise, R-Jefferson, want to reauthorize government surveillance power in a bill with which a group of Republicans have serious problems. That authorization expires April 20.

Also expected to pop up this week or next are

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Johnson

2. Thirty-six deficiencies in internal control were disclosed during the audit of the financial statements. Twenty-seven deficiencies were considered to be material weaknesses and nine deficiencies were considered to be significant deficiencies.
3. Thirty-four instances of noncompliance that were material to the financial statements of the School Board, which would be required to be reported in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, were disclosed during the audit.
4. The audit of the financial statements disclosed four material weaknesses in internal control over major federal award programs.

### LAFAYETTE PARISH

# School system, auditor clash over findings

Auditor flags 77 issues,  
questions records

District objects to virtually  
all of the issues raised

BY ASHLEY WHITE  
Staff writer

An independent auditor for the Lafayette Parish school system listed 77 findings after testing the district's financial internal controls and compliance, 31 of which it said were material weaknesses.



"We have submitted responses and objections that include corrective actions, many of which are already in place."

FRANCIS TOUCHET JR., Lafayette Parish school superintendent

included that the district felt it had been included to cast the system in an "unfavorable light" and twice argued that the finding highlighted the auditor's "apparent lack of objectivity."

Kolder, Slaven and Co., which was hired and paid by the school system to conduct the district's 2024-25 audit, also said in its report that it was "unable to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion" because of "concerns about the reliability of the accounting records and financial reporting provided by management."

The district objected to virtually all of the findings. In most cases, the district argued that a finding was not from the 2024-25 audit period. In at least three instances, the school system's response to a finding



STAFF PHOTO BY BRAD BOWIE

The Lafayette Parish school system objected to virtually all of the findings of an audit for 2024-25.

► **Key findings of the Lafayette school system audit.** PAGE 4A

Superintendent Francis Touchet Jr. said in a statement that some of the findings should have been consolidated and other issues should have been raised earlier by the auditor, who has worked with the district for more than 30 years.

"We have submitted responses and

objections that include corrective actions, many of which are already in place," he said in a statement. "We are now focused on moving forward and have engaged a well-respected firm to review the audit and ensure any valid issues are fully addressed."

Some of the findings also related to the timeliness of submitting the

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# Amazon to buy Covington-based Globalstar for \$11.6 billion

Tech giant would be  
better able to  
compete with Starlink

BY STEPHANIE RIEGEL  
and JERRY DICOLO  
Staff writers

Amazon is acquiring Louisiana satellite communications company Globalstar in a nearly \$12 billion deal that will allow the e-commerce giant to expand its space-based mobile phone services.

In a news release Tuesday, Amazon said it planned to use Globalstar's satellite network and technology as part of Amazon Leo, a project that will enable smartphone users to connect directly to a network of thousands of satellites for voice and data service. Amazon also announced a deal with Apple to bring the service to iPhones starting in 2028. Globalstar currently powers the emergency SOS feature on Apple's iPhones.

Globalstar shareholders will receive \$90 a share or comparable

Amazon shares for a total purchase price of around \$11.6 billion. In the past month, the company's stock price has increased nearly 35%. The deal is expected to close in 2027, pending regulatory approval.

It's not clear how the deal will impact Globalstar's nearly 400 employees worldwide or its headquarters in Covington, where roughly half of the workforce is based. Globalstar Chair Jay Monroe, who bought the company in

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Globalstar officials and visitors tour the company's satellite control center in Covington in 2025.

STAFF FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

WEATHER

**HIGH 83  
LOW 66**

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