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Belaire High eyes later start time



STAFF PHOTOS BY JAVIER GALLEGOS

Students make their way toward the exit after the final bell at Belaire Magnet High School on Tuesday. The school may change its start time to better align with student learning, following a pilot program with two other public high schools in the district.

50 BR schools to have changed schedules by fall 2028

BY CHARLES LUSSIER Staff writer

Belaire Magnet High School may soon become the third Baton Rouge public high school to shift its start times to better align with when children learn, based on research on their sleep patterns.

Some faculty and parents, however, are raising concerns that the new start times so far are falling short of promises and are having unintended downsides.

Belaire, home to almost 600 students, would follow in the footsteps of Capitol High and Glen Oaks High. Those schools, along with four feeder schools, dramatically altered their daily schedules in August, with middle and high school students beginning classes much later than they have in the past.

Results from the first semester of this six-school



Students look at the front board while learning a lesson in Shauntelle Moses' social studies class at Belaire Magnet High School on Tuesday.

pilot program were mixed, according to a recent report from a consultant hired by the East Baton Rouge Parish school system. But that has not dimmed the enthusiasm of Superintendent LaMont Cole, who plans to change start times across the entire

district by fall 2028. The next step is to add Belaire and its five feeder schools.

"We have a ton of quantitative data from around the country that tell us that later start times are best for kids, but we still want to hear from people with boots

on the ground to understand how we can do this better," Cole said.

The latest schedule would go into effect in 12 schools this coming August. He says the new schedule reflects what's been learned so far from the pilot.

Middle and high schools would start the day 80 minutes later than the normal district start time, at 8:30 a.m., while elementary schools would start 40 minutes earlier, at 7:45 a.m. They would end their days at 3:40 p.m. and 2:55 p.m., respectively.

The 12 schools include the six in the pilot and five that feed into Belaire High. Those schools would adjust the schedule they implemented seven months ago, starting and ending their days a few minutes earlier than they do now.

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State's Medicaid rolls are dropping

Providers say patients are going to suffer

BY SOPHIE KASAKOVE Staff writer

For months, around half of the 147 beds at one of New Orleans' largest addiction treatment facilities have sat empty.

It's not because there's no demand. In fact, the waitlist for the Odyssey House Louisiana's Broadmoor building runs dozens of names long.

It's because the facility cannot treat the growing number of people arriving at its doors without health insurance.

It's a problem health care facilities are confronting across the state, as roughly half a million Louisianians have lost coverage through Medicaid since 2023. More are continuing to fall off the rolls each month, as the Louisiana Department of Health has ramped up eligibility checks ahead of federal requirements that will take effect across the country next year.

Treatment providers and advocates say the changes have barred low-income people from receiving needed health care and are threatening the bottom line of health centers that rely on Medicaid payments.

"It is having real-time effects and is a reason why people are not able to access the health care they need," said Raegan Carter, director of health policy at the Louisiana Primary Care Association, which represents Odyssey House and dozens of other community health centers across the state. "If our uninsured numbers increase, if we begin to serve even more uninsured patients ... we may end up closing health centers."

Louisiana Health Secretary Bruce Greenstein, who took over the department in April, has said the

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STAFF PHOTO BY SOPHIA GERMER

A sign on a door reminds Medicaid members to stay covered at Odyssey House Louisiana in New Orleans on Thursday.

New nonstop flights to Destin and Fort Walton Beach are expected to bring more tourists to the popular beach vacation spots on the Florida Panhandle.

ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO BY PHELAN M. EBENHACK



'We have been discovered'

Fort Walton Beach is ready for tourism surge as more flights are added

BY MARTHA SANCHEZ Staff writer

The shores of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, have long been a drive-in destination, a place where packed family cars arrive on summer break, just across the bay from bustling Destin. But a new class of

tourists is arriving.

Five nonstop flights from cities around the country will start landing at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport this spring and summer. And now that Allegiant Air built a new \$11 million concourse a few years ago, many tourists are flying in.

New hotels are rising. Restaurants are hiring.

"We have been discovered," said Carolyn Ketchel, who represents the area on the

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