

Week in review

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Fayette County Public School officials discuss budget, staffing cuts during a press conference April 28, 2026 in Lexington, KY.

Fayette schools reveal \$11M savings from 120 job cuts

Fayette County Public Schools officials revealed May 26 that eliminating 120 positions will save an estimated \$11 million in the fiscal year 2027 budget. The savings reflect total compensation packages, including base salaries, health insurance, FICA, and retirement contributions. The cuts include 49 hourly and 71 salaried roles, with 16 administrator positions among those eliminated. Additional reductions in staff work days are expected to yield a further \$1.9 million in savings. Employees have expressed concern that the cuts will harm students and academics, though district officials dispute that claim.

The district, whose contingency fund sits at the state-mandated minimum of 2%, is also negotiating a short-term \$110 million loan to meet payroll obligations. Officials confirmed \$1 million has been allocated for legal expenses and that a new audit firm is being sought via a Request for Proposal.

Reported by Valarie Honeycutt Spears, published May 26

Downtown Lexington's Lockbox restaurant closes doors

Lockbox, the fine-dining restaurant inside 21c Mu-

seum Hotel at 167 Main St. in downtown Lexington, has officially closed after a decade of service. The hotel announced the closure on social media on May 20, with the last day of service being May 15. The team behind Mileta, an Italian-ish restaurant in Fayette Mall, announced in April they will open a new concept in the Lockbox space. Lockbox was known for upscale Southern-style dishes made with locally sourced ingredients and a wide selection of premium bourbons and cocktails. The hotel, housed in the historic First National Bank building, was sold in October to Thoroughbred Hospitality Group for \$14 mil-

lion.

Reported by Janet Patton and Brian Simms, published May 21

Former jail administrator pleads guilty to theft charges

A former Eastern Kentucky jail administrator is facing probation after pleading guilty to amended charges tied to stealing taxpayer money. Timothy Kilburn, 64, pleaded guilty April 28 to three misdemeanor counts of official misconduct and abuse of public trust involving \$10,000 or more but less than \$100,000, authorities say. He was originally indicted on felony theft charges. Kilburn served as administrator of the Kentucky River Regional Jail in Perry County from 2005 until he was fired in 2015. He agreed to pay \$30,000 in restitution and to testify against co-defendant Elisha Caudill, who is also accused of theft and related offenses. Prosecutors agreed to recommend probation. Both sentencing are scheduled for June 25.

Reported by Taylor Six, published May 21

UK unveils \$60M agricultural sciences building on campus

The University of Kentucky has unveiled a new \$60 million agricultural sciences facility set to open for classes this fall. The 66,000-square-foot Martin-Gatton Agricultural Sciences building, located at Cooper Drive and Ni-

colasville Road, features classrooms, study spaces, and a café, with a food vendor yet to be selected. Its glass-heavy exterior includes small dots called fritzes to prevent bird collisions, an idea suggested by a student. The building will support programs including the new Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program, agricultural biotechnology, and equine studies. Funded largely by a \$100 million gift from the Bill Gatton Foundation in 2023, the facility also paves the way for UK Health-Care's Albert B. Chandler Hospital expansion, which will require demolishing existing agricultural buildings nearby.

Reported by Jesse Fraga, published May 25

UK plans to cut meal plan costs by 5% this fall

The University of Kentucky has announced plans to reduce student meal plan costs by 5% compared to pricing previously presented to the UK Board of Trustees in December 2025. The reduction was made possible through a partnership with Compass Group, which will oversee UK's dining, maintenance, grounds, custodial, and patient services. UK President Eli Capilouto stated that food and dining quality will not be affected by the cost reduction. Compass Group also plans to expand chef-inspired menu options and increase food variety to create more welcoming dining experiences across campus. The new pricing will be present-

ed to trustees at their June 29-30 meetings, open to the public at the Gatton Student Center. Compass Group is set to begin dining and concession services on July 1, though a final contract has not yet been signed.

Reported by Jesse Fraga, published May 22

36 people rescued after being trapped by high water

Thirty-six people, including four minors and two toddlers, were rescued after being stranded by high water in the Rock Lick area of Jackson County, Kentucky. Sand Gap Fire Department crews were dispatched following reports of the group being trapped, with the call going out around 9:30 p.m. May 23 and the rescue effort concluding at 3:50 a.m. May 24 — a roughly seven-hour operation. Responders navigated extremely rough terrain, using side-by-side vehicles before continuing on foot for approximately a mile and a half to reach the stranded individuals. Officials confirmed everyone was safe and accounted for. Authorities noted the incident highlights the dangers of rising water and rapidly changing weather, urging residents to monitor forecasts and water levels closely.

Reported by Valarie Honeycutt Spears, published May 25



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Mungwalu General Hospital Medical Director Richard Lokodu speaks to Reuters as aid agencies intensify efforts to contain an Ebola outbreak caused by the Bundibugyo virus in Mongbwalu, Djuju Territory of Ituri province, Democratic Republic of Congo, on May 23.

Ebola patients flee in attacks on Congo health facilities

Ebola patients fled health facilities in Congo after attacks by angry mobs, hampering response efforts to the outbreak that has killed 220 people. At least three attacks occurred in north-eastern Ituri province, including two at Mongbwalu General Referral Hospital that allowed more than two dozen patients to escape. Dr. Richard Lokodu said that attackers wanted bodies of Ebola victims released for burial, despite the high infection risk. One confirmed Ebola patient remains at large in the community after fleeing the

May 23 attack. The World Health Organization declared the rare Bundibugyo strain outbreak a public health emergency, with more than 900 suspected cases including 101 confirmed. The attacks echo violence during the 2018-2020 outbreak that killed over 25 health workers, driven by community denial and suspicion about the disease response.

Reported by Reuters, published May 25

Russia threatens strikes on Kyiv defense sites

Russia announced May

25 it would launch "systematic strikes" on military targets and decision-making centers in Kyiv, urging foreigners to leave the Ukrainian capital. The threat came after one of Russia's heaviest bombardments of the city since the war began, which killed two people and injured 91 on May 24. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the strikes were "in response to continuing terrorist attacks by the Kyiv regime" against Russian civilians. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybaha urged allies not to give in to "Russian blackmail,"

while the EU mission head said the bloc was "not going anywhere." Moscow fired an Oreshnik hypersonic missile near Kyiv, marking its third use of the nuclear-capable weapon in more than four years of war. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said around 300 sites across Kyiv were damaged in weekend strikes.

Reported by Reuters, published May 25

US Justice Department seeks to lift injunction on ballroom project

The Justice Department asked a federal court to lift an injunction blocking President Donald Trump's ballroom project, citing a May 23 shooting outside the White House as evidence of urgent security needs. In a five-page filing, the DOJ said the incident underscores the critical need for "top level, state of the art security at the White House, including the ballroom," calling it vital for national security. The department also requested dismissal of the lawsuit challenging the project. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, which filed the lawsuit, previously refused to drop it after a foiled attack at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in April. The gunman who fired at a White House checkpoint in the May 23 incident was shot by officers and died after being taken to the hospital.

Reported by Reuters, published May 25

Israel bombards Lebanon with strikes

Israel conducted more than 120 air strikes on Lebanon May 26 in one of the heaviest bombing days in weeks, Lebanese security sources said, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his military was deepening operations in the country. The strikes further strained an April 16 ceasefire meant to halt fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. Lebanon's health ministry initially reported 31 people killed and 40 wounded, including 14 deaths in Burj al-Shamali. Israeli forces expanded ground operations beyond their declared security zone in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah responded by targeting Israeli forces with explosive drones, rockets and artillery. Since March 2, Lebanon's health ministry says 3,213 people have been killed and 9,737 wounded in the Israeli offensive as of May 26.

Reported by Reuters, published May 26

Iran says new US strikes violated ceasefire

Iran accused the United States of violating a seven-week ceasefire after U.S. forces conducted defensive strikes in southern Iran's Hormozgan province on May 26. The strikes targeted boats attempting to lay mines and missile launch sites, according to U.S. officials. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said negotiations for a deal to halt the conflict could "take a few

days" and emphasized the Strait of Hormuz must remain open. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they downed a U.S. drone and reserved the right to retaliate. The war began Feb. 28 with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran, causing oil supply disruptions and pushing up prices of oil, fuel, fertilizer and food. Indirect talks in Doha have made progress on a memorandum of understanding that could end the war and reopen shipping through the strait.

Reported by Reuters, published May 26

US visa holders must leave country to apply for green cards

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced May 22 that people temporarily in the United States who want to apply for a green card must first return to their home country, except in extraordinary circumstances. The new requirement could make obtaining permanent residency more difficult and may lead to family separations and longer wait times. USCIS spokesperson Zach Kahler said the policy allows the immigration system to function as intended instead of incentivizing loopholes. The change alters longstanding practice of allowing non-citizens to adjust status within the United States. About 1.4 million green cards were granted in 2024, with nearly 1 million applied for by people already residing in the U.S.

Reported by UPI, published May 22

These roundups were produced using AI tools, which summarized stories reported and written by McClatchy and partner journalists. It was edited by journalists in our News division.