

Cramped, leaky school with ‘beautiful spirit’ needs remodel, staff says

BY VALARIE HONEYCUTT SPEARS
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A 59-year-old, unsafe building that leaks when it rains does not support the “beautiful spirit of learning” at Lansdowne Elementary, school leaders said Monday to a district committee that prioritizes future projects.

Nine staffers, including Principal Jennifer Fish, and a parent told members of the Fayette Public School board’s Local Planning Committee that Lansdowne Elementary School needed to be renovated, if not given a new building.

The school board’s Local Planning Committee develops and oversees the District Facility Plan, which prioritizes school construction and renovation.

A \$1.4 million new roof, additional insulation and a \$576,314 kitchen expansion at Lansdowne Elementary is on the draft 2025 District Facility Plan

that is under review by the Kentucky Department of Education. It would have to be approved by the Fayette school board.

Teachers and others who advocated Monday for a total school renovation or new building say the updates proposed on the draft plan won’t be enough. They said renovations in 2000 and prior to that did not address small classrooms and a lack of space throughout the building.

There are 575 students in the school, which includes pre-K through fifth grade. Eighty percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

“It is a beautiful spirit of learning inside our building. Unfortunately, the structure is not,” assistant principal Ann Ingram said.

“When it rains, it pours. We have leaks throughout the building. Trash cans underneath the ceiling tiles. We have mold, mildew, plumbing problems. It is our responsibility to

advocate for our students. We desperately need a renovation. They deserve the best.”

Teacher Shaleigha Richard also said the school was in need of renovation or a remodel project.

“We are overcrowded,” Richard said.

Music teacher Callie Manor said families are showing up to support students participating in the arts. But the school cannot provide adequate seating, adequate parking and performance areas for their children, she said.

Manor said other Fayette County students enjoy updated facilities, and Lansdowne students deserve the same.

There is no outdoor covered walkway at Lansdowne, and kids start their day soaking wet and cold when it’s rainy, parent Vanessa Napier said.

“My main concern is safety,” Fish said about the school built in 1966. “It’s disheartening that schools built well after Lansdowne have already had full renovations or are getting new buildings.”

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Kentucky doctor admits providing non-approved drug to weight-loss patients

BY BILL ESTEP
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A Kentucky doctor faces up to three years in prison after admitting he sold patients a non-approved weight-loss drug.

Matthew Tyler Lewis, 44, pleaded guilty Monday to a federal charge of receiving a misbranded drug and offering it for sale with the intent to defraud or mislead, according to the court record.

Lewis is the owner of Lewis Family Care in Ashland.

According to his plea, he bought semaglutide from businesses in California and Georgia that were not approved to distribute the drug for use in humans, and the product they provided had not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Semaglutide is the in-

gredient in the brand-name drugs Ozempic and Rybelsus, which are used in diabetes treatment but have also helped patients lose weight, and Wegovy, which has become popular as a drug to treat obesity.

Labels on the vials of semaglutide Lewis received said it was intended for research and not for use in humans, according to his plea.

The labels did not include adequate directions for administering the drug, didn’t contain a proper expiration date and failed to list the active and inactive ingredients.

The plea agreement said Lewis took steps to hide the sources of the drug, labeling his payments to one supplier as “meal prep,” for instance.

Lewis kept paper files on his weight-loss patients, while keeping electronic files his other patients, according to the plea.

The clinic earned \$294,044 from semaglutide injections between May 21, 2023 and Feb. 29, 2024, according to court documents.

Lewis agreed to pay that amount to the government as part of his plea.

“Prescription drugs are highly regulated in this country in order to keep patients safe, acting U.S. Attorney Paul McCaffrey said in a news release. “At a time of increased public interest in weight-loss drugs like Wegovy, Lewis chose profit margins over patient safety when he purchased non-FDA approved semaglutide and administered it to his patients.”

Chief U.S. District Judge David L. Bunning scheduled Lewis to be sentenced in August.

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TARIFF

industries such as cars and lumber.

Trump said in remarks to reporters Monday that pharmaceutical tariffs would come in the “not too distant future.”

“We don’t make our own drugs anymore,” Trump said. “The drug companies are in Ireland, and they’re in lots of other places, China.”

While some drugs are made at least in part in the United States, America’s reliance on China for medicines has generated

alarm for years, with both Republicans and Democrats identifying it as a national security vulnerability.

Many drugs are not produced without at least one stage of the manufacturing process happening in China. Even India’s giant generic drug sector is deeply dependent on China, because Indian manufacturers typically obtain their raw materials from Chinese plants.

Imposing disruptive levies on lifesaving medi-

cations creates risks for Trump that were not a major concern with some of his other tariff targets, such as steel and aluminum, in which Americans generally aren’t directly exposed to increased prices.

He could face a harsh backlash if pharmaceutical tariffs lead to significant drug price increases or shortages for patients. The number of drug shortages reached a record high last year. Americans fill several billion prescriptions a year, on top of purchasing over-the-counter products such as cough syrup and Tylenol.

If pharmaceutical tariffs

cause an increase in any drug prices, Democrats could jump on the issue for the midterm elections next year and try to undercut Trump’s popularity among working-class voters.

Democrats have already seized on the issue. In a letter sent to Trump officials last week, a group of lawmakers led by Reps. Doris Matsui of California and Brad Schneider of Illinois wrote that “reckless tariffs” on medicines threatened to harm Americans.

Kush Desai, a spokesperson for the White House, said in a statement Monday that “President

Trump has long been clear about the importance of reshoring manufacturing that is critical to our country’s national and economic security.”

Along with cars and electronics, pharmaceuticals are one of the categories of goods that the United States imports the most, measured by value.

Tariffs on drugs would add tens of billions of dollars of import costs for a powerful industry that relies on a complex global supply chain. Production of most medications consumed in the United States happens in more than one part of the world, with plants in different

countries handling different stages of the process.

Expensive patented medications, such as popular weight-loss drug Wegovy, are more likely to be made in Europe or the United States.

China and India do most of the production of cheaper generic drugs, which account for the vast majority of U.S. prescriptions. For example, plants in those countries make nearly all of the world’s supply of the active ingredients in the painkiller ibuprofen and the antibiotic ciprofloxacin, according to Clarivate, an industry data provider.

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