



2026 football schedules set for FSU and FAMU

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Leon Schools cuts \$6.8 million

Virtual school, sports, art programs targeted

Alaijah Brown
Tallahassee Democrat | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

After months of skirting contentious conversations about closing schools, Leon County Schools Superintendent

Rocky Hanna announced Jan. 26 that Leon County Virtual School will cease operations by the end of the school year. Closing the school will save the district \$459,000 annually, Hanna said during the annual school board retreat. Hanna presented other cuts that he

says will save the district up to \$6.8 million, including reductions to staffing, arts and athletics spending, and literacy programs. Those reductions are effective July 1. “Hopefully by reducing our spending and the amount of things that we’re funding we can pay for our additional expenses and give salary increases,” Hanna told the Tallahassee Democrat.

Stakeholders question what programs and positions might be lost to make that possible. Here is a look at the full package of cuts Hanna offered:

- Money for literacy programs will decrease by \$215,000.
- Staffing will reduce by \$3.6 million,

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Annia Ibarra, a graduate student at Florida State University, demonstrates how Lego bricks can be used to build structures that can then be coded to move in various ways on Jan. 26. ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

‘Fiscal crisis by design’

How property tax cuts could hammer Leon County

Arianna Otero
Tallahassee Democrat
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Leon County is keeping a close eye on the legislative session this year as they could see a hole blown in their budget if eliminating property tax makes its way to the statewide ballot. Commissioners held their annual retreat just a day before the commission was set to meet for the first of twelve monthly meetings, where they will look to approve the actions taken

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Unregulated e-bike riding sparks Fla. concerns

James Call
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Sales of e-bikes, or those offering pedaling “assistance” with a 750-watt motor, have more than tripled to 1.1 million, according to the U.S. Department of Energy – but there are no rules or regulations for riding them in Florida. That could soon change. Legislation that advanced this

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‘Hands-on’ learning

FSU Technology Sandbox uses Lego to build creativity

Tarah Jean Tallahassee Democrat | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

From colorful, jumbo building blocks to mini braille bricks, Florida State University’s Technology Sandbox on campus is filled with a variety of Lego sets to encourage creativity. And while the interlocking plastic construction toy has been around for over 90 years, its nearly-century-long existence is not just child’s play – it’s also a learning tool, and FSU is using it to prepare its future educators along with other students who will step into a child-related careers. “We try to demonstrate that Lego bricks can be used as a multidisciplinary component,” FSU Assis-

tant Dean of Innovation and Instructional Technology Enhancement Dina Vyortkina told the Tallahassee Democrat as she sat in the tech-filled room. She works in the university’s Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, also known as Anne’s College. “Kids can create something using Lego to write a story about it, so language arts comes into play,” she added. “Or, it can be a historic event that they want to demonstrate, which can show how different Lego

See LEGO, Page 6A

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