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JCPS sues over limits on power

New law transfers authority from the board to the superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools

Kathryn Muchnick
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Jefferson County Board of Education is suing over a new law that significantly reduces its power and transfers authority to the superintendent.

Senate Bill 1, which went into effect July 15, gives the superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools authority over daily operations while requiring the board to focus on long-term strategies. In practice, that means Superintendent Brian Yearwood will have power to award larger contracts, set salary

schedules and alter the organizational structure of the district, according to a set of board policy edits that were scheduled to go before the full board on July 21. Parts of the legislation, the board contends in its July 15 filing in Jefferson Circuit Court, “would substantially restrict or outright strip the powers and authority of members of the [board] that are otherwise provided to every other school board in Kentucky ... and would create special powers and

privileges for the superintendent of the Jefferson County Public Schools that are otherwise denied to every other district superintendent in Kentucky.” The board argues that language of the bill — which gives the superintendent authority over administrative duties not explicitly granted to the board — could have immense ramifications as “nearly every significant school district

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Brandon McLain, chief pharmacy officer of Baptist Health's automated central pharmacy, says the health care giant has become a leader in the industry, having influence outside of Kentucky. PHOTOS BY SCOTT UTTERBACK/COURIER JOURNAL

‘WE’RE THE FIRST IN THE COUNTRY’

How Baptist Health is changing the pharmacy system with its automation

Olivia Evans Louisville Courier Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

In La Grange, tucked away from busy suburban streets in an unsuspecting building sits Baptist Health’s most technologically advanced facility. • Inside the massive warehouse-like Baptist Health Central Pharmacy Services Center, is a highly-automated operation that uses robots, alongside employees, to manage, fill, package and ship thousands of prescription drugs to hospitals, clinics and community pharmacies across the Baptist Health system in Kentucky and directly to patients’ homes. • The roughly 100,000-square-foot-facility serves as a central distribution hub and processing facility that uses automation to cut down on the tasks pharmacists typically perform, including sorting and bottling medications, to allow staff to not only spend more time with patients, but for medications to get to those in need quicker, allowing for faster treatment time.

Since Baptist Health Central Pharmacy Services Center, 1051 New Moody Lane, La Grange, opened in June 2024, it has been able to serve patients in all 120 Kentucky counties and nine states, according to Brandon McLain, chief pharmacy officer of Baptist Health. In 2025, the first full year the facility was running, it filled 400,000 prescriptions. For 2026, it’s projected to fill 460,000 prescriptions, McLain shared.



Baptist Health Central Pharmacy Services Center, located in La Grange, uses state of the art robotics and logistics to distribute thousands of medications in Kentucky and Southern Indiana.

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Jury sends message to ghost gun dealer

\$100M verdict imposed in wrongful death trial

Stephanie Kuzdym
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Kentucky jury sent a message to a ghost gun company that ghosted its own trial — never responding to a lawsuit, never appearing in court and never defending itself — by ordering it to pay more than \$100 million in damages. That total is believed to be the highest damage amount ever awarded by a jury against a gun dealer, according to lawyers in the case. Last fall, months before the wrongful death lawsuit went to trial, Jefferson County Circuit judge Brian Edwards granted a default judgment. He found the ghost gun company, Husky Armory LLC, and its parent company Up North Media — both owned by ghost gun enthusiast Cody Yurk — legally liable for the 2023 death of a Louisville teen named Henry Willis. Less than a week after receiving a ghost gun kit in the mail from Husky Armory, Willis was found in the garage near his father’s workbench, dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. He had told his parents he was building a transistor radio.

His mom, Laura Herp, filed suit against Husky Armory in Jefferson County for the wrongful death of her oldest son. Then she heard silence. Husky Armory never filed a single document to defend itself in the suit. On July 15, just two weeks shy of the third anniversary of Willis’ death, the Jefferson County jury ordered the ghost gun company to pay \$100 million in punitive damages — \$25 million more than the family’s attorneys had hoped for, as well as \$4.2 million in compensatory damages. Upon the judge reading the damages, a gasp filled the court room. Husky Armory did not respond to a request for comment from The Courier Journal. Since it never responded to the legal proceedings in Kentucky, it’s unclear how the company will be ordered to pay. Husky Armory is not — and never has been — a federally-licensed firearms dealer, based on the Courier

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