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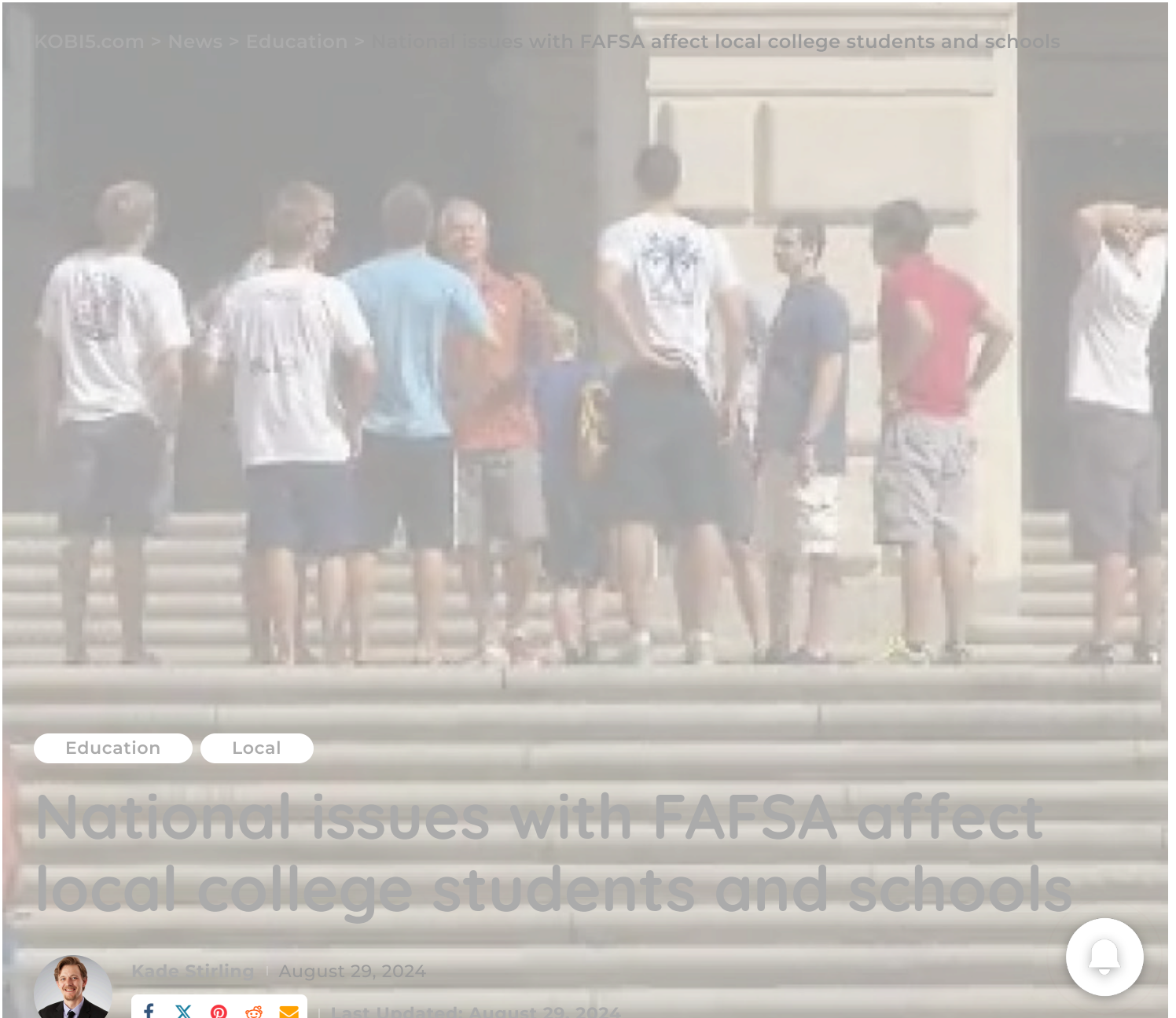


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Education

Local

National issues with FAFSA affect local college students and schools



Kade Stirling | August 29, 2024



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MEDFORD, Ore. – Nationally, a tumultuous roll-out for updates to the application for federal student aid have led to colleges seeing smaller freshman class sizes.

Here locally RCC nursing students saw delayed financial aid disbursements and SOU has seen a drop in enrollment.

Last week NBC 5 news brought you the [story](#) of several rogue community college students, who say they were facing hardships after financial aid disbursements were delayed by several weeks.

“We’re incredibly stressed,” Sara Vaughn, a nursing student at RCC told



us last week. "We're trying to pool funds and take turns car-pooling."

More than a month late, nursing students say they've now received their money, but issues surrounding the FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid, have been plaguing college students nationwide for months now.

"The 24-25 FAFSA is just really different from the past 40 years of FAFSA's." Frankie Everett, Director of Financial Aid for RCC told us. "It's kinda like flying a plane while you're building it."

Every college student, new or returning, must submit the FAFSA in order to be eligible for federal grant's and loans.

In most cases, it's used to determine financial aid provided by colleges as well.



Students not only use financial aid to pay for the tuition and the books, but it's also to supplement living to buy groceries, and to buy gas, so we can then go to class and learn and try and better ourselves.



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As required by Congress the Department of Education released a major overhaul of FAFSA for the 2024-25 academic year, and the implementation has had many bumps in the road.

To start with, it wasn't available until 3 months later than usual, went off-line for several hours the first day it was up in January, and since, has been riddled with problems and glitches.

Many of which, Frankie Everett has experienced first-hand.



The government collects all that information and then we're finding little error messages and reject codes that are causing issues with disbursing aid. Schools across the country are reporting those to the department of education and they're fixing them as they go.

She says because RCC's academic year starts in summer, they got a head start on the work to correct the issues for students.



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There are several schools across the county that just this week started classes and they're just now discovering these things that we've been dealing with for the past month.



While issues persist with this version of FAFSA, next year's version is only months away from being released and financial aid workers are hoping the federal government slows the next roll-out.



Many of us in the financial aid community are asking them to please hold off and make sure the product is functional before releasing it so we don't have all of the glitches and issues that are affecting students.

Promising a simpler application experience in the future the Department of Education has pushed back the launch date for the 2025-26 FAFSA by two months to December 1, giving them more time to test the new online form.

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