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For Immediate Release - Senator Joyce Waddell's Fix the Class-Size Crisis

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Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 2:13 PM



From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 12, 2018

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Fix the Class-Size Crisis

Charlotte, NC – On Tuesday, Senator Joyce Waddell, along with Senator Jay Chaudhuri, Mark Jewell, president of the North Carolina Association of Educators, and other public school officials participated in a press conference to discuss the need to revise the class-size mandate law. The current law lowers the average class size in kindergarten to 18 students; first grade to 16 students; and second and third grade to 17 students by the 2018-2019 school year. If not changed, the law could cost Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) millions of dollars. In order to comply with the law, CMS would have to come up with approximately \$23 million dollars to hire 353 more K-3 teachers. CMS would likely cover the cost of hiring these additional teachers by shifting money from elsewhere or eliminating other teaching positions in art, music, and physical education. CMS could be forced to buy 200 classroom trailers to expand school capacity, pack more kids into fourth- and fifth-grade classes, and reassign teachers.

The Republican-led legislature adjourned for a special session on Wednesday but failed to address the class-size mandate. Senator Waddell co-sponsored Senate Bill 703, Tech Correct to Appropriations Act of 2017, to give school districts flexibility in implementing the smaller class sizes. The legislation is similar to the original version of House Bill 13, which would cap individual K-3 class sizes at 22 to 24 students, depending on grade level. The maximum average class sizes would range from 19 to 21 teachers.

“The class-size mandate is an issue that needs to be addressed immediately. I was disappointed that the issue was not taken up during Wednesday’s session. We cannot continue to neglect our children in the public school system. The current class-size mandate is a punishment for students and school districts. We need to properly fund our public schools, so children can receive a sound education in hopes of a bright future,” said Senator Joyce Waddell.

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