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For Immediate Release-Senator Joyce Waddell's- " School Grades"

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 14, 2018

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School Grades

Charlotte, NC- North Carolina’s number of low performing schools and districts have declined according to the State Board of Education’s annual report released Wednesday, September 5th. In 2017-2018 amongst North Carolina’s 2,537 public schools, approximately 22 percent received a grade of D or F. North Carolina schools, including charter schools, received letter grades since 2013-14 when the General Assembly passed legislation requiring yearly performance measurements.

The grading system has been criticized for bias and victimization of low-income students and communities. For instance, 69 percent of the schools received a D or F where more than 81 percent of students come from low-income families. Moreover, only 1.7 percent of schools received a D or F in schools with poverty rates less than 20 percent.

State officials argue that these grades only show that schools are underfunded, teachers over-worked and underpaid. State Superintendent Mark Johnson had expressed concerns about schools’ overall results where “... We seem to be in a situation where some years we go up, some years we go down. When we look at the past years, for the past even decade you just see that we are in a plateau.”

During the 2017-2018 session, Senator Waddell was a primary sponsor of Senate Bill 149 (Modify School Performance Grades), which pushed changes to the calculation of school grades. This included strategies to more effectively evaluate school performance and growth rates for academic achievement for the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to implement on a statewide basis. The bill did not get through committee and was not brought to the Senate floor for debate.

The State Board of Education asserts that this year’s results are not comparable to previous years. In part, to changes in the state’s accountability measurements required under the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act, factoring student’s ethnicity, learning disabilities, poverty and language acquisition. Growth results and graduation rates for the 2017-18 school year are not proportionate to past assessments of performance.

For

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