

*****SPAM*** For Immediate Release**

From Sen. Joyce Waddell <joyce.waddell@ncleg.net>
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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greetings:

This week at the General Assembly many bills were passed, 2 of which were - HB 366 Regulatory Reform Act of 2021 a bill that covers wastewater systems, manufactured home installation, insurance cancellation and other regulations for NC; and HB 404 which provides immunity for 911 dispatchers.

I will continue to keep you updated on the weekly business of the NC General Assembly. I want my constituents to be aware of legislative events and bills that affect Mecklenburg County. My office is always available to assist, please do not hesitate to contact.

Sincerely,
Joyce Waddell

Mask Mandate

On Friday, updated federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines recommended masking in schools for individuals who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19. That means

that people who are fully vaccinated would not need to wear masks in schools according to CDC guidelines. No elementary school students — children under 12 — have received COVID-19 vaccinations yet. We are waiting for a new recommendation for masks in schools.

North Carolina guidelines still require masks in schools, but that could change. The Governor's staff is reviewing the new CDC guidelines and will be making recommendations for schools soon. But he said he doesn't have a timeline for issuing that new guideline. State health officials are working with the State Board of Education and talking with educators about the return to school in the fall at the stop at the NC high school. Some N.C. school districts are already tackling the mask issue, not waiting for the state to act.

School Immunizations

State health officials are urging parents to get their kids immunized before the start of the upcoming school year, and not just for COVID-19. Officials with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services say the number of doctor visits for teen and preteen children dropped last year because of the pandemic. That's one reason they say the state is lagging behind in childhood immunizations. That includes shots for such vaccine-preventable diseases as tetanus, diphtheria, measles, and HPV.

According to an NCDHHS press release, as of the end of June, only about 25 percent of youth between 12 and 17 have had at least one COVID-19 shot even though they're eligible for it. "This vaccine is very safe and effective and can be given at the same time as vaccines required for school," said State Health Director and NCDHHS Chief Medical Officer. Officials are urging parents to talk to their child's pediatrician or health care provider about which vaccines are due by the start of the school year.

Teachers' Jobs

According to the NC Department of Public Instruction's teacher pay schedule, a first-year teacher makes around \$42,000. Some county schools offers a local supplement for teachers depending on experience levels. For teachers in their first year, it's 8.5% of their base salary. That means a first-year teacher in those county schools makes just under \$42,000. The state offers an annual pay raise of \$1,000 for the first 14 years an educator with a bachelor's degree teaches in North

Carolina. When educators enter Year 15, they plateau at \$50,000 until their 25th year of teaching, when they can make a base salary of \$52,000.

The expected annual spending for a single renter in certain cities is about \$49,000, according to a local county economic development organization — which means it would take a BCS teacher 10 years in the profession to make enough to meet those cities' cost of living.

During a recent press conference an Association of Educators member said the greatest victims of underpaid teachers are students. “I am a good teacher, but if I didn't have to work a second job, I could be a great teacher,” she said. During the press conference, NCAE members expressed their discontentment with the state legislature's lag on producing a fiscal 2021-22 budget. While the new fiscal year started July 1, the legislature still hasn't adopted an official budget. The state Senate approved a budget proposal on June 24 respectively. Now, the budget goes back to the House, where representatives and the Governor will discuss, tweak and draft the budget for complete approval.

Senator Waddell supported increases in teacher's pay by the passage of SB 105.

The summer months are the time school is out, families get together, go on vacation, and have family reunions. With all summer activities that take place in close proximity, please mask up to protect yourself and your family.

Please encourage your school-age children to continue to sharpen their reading skills by reading during the summer months. Reading will help them be prepared for the upcoming school year.

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