

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

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greetings:

The General Assembly is gearing up for Short Session and although we are not in active session now, committee meetings are still being held. To learn more about the upcoming events and activities for the General Assembly [click here](#).

Joyce Waddell

Settlement Money

The first payments from a \$26 billion, multi-state opioid lawsuit settlement are set to arrive in the states later this spring, and in North Carolina, there are disagreements over which groups are most qualified to receive the money. Over the course of 18 years, North Carolina will receive \$750 million of the opioid settlement funds from the agreement reached with drug companies for their alleged roles in fueling the opioid epidemic. Most of the money will be sent to

North Carolina's county governments to help people and communities impacted by the overdose crisis.

The NC Attorney General's Office and the state health department created very specific guidelines for how each county can use its share of the money. Nonetheless, there is growing tension around what interventions and treatments should be funded, and some approaches are backed by more scientific evidence for treating opioid addiction than others.

It has been well-documented that medication to treat opioid use disorder — such as methadone and buprenorphine — greatly reduces the risk of overdose death. At a time when overdose deaths have reached record numbers, addiction medicine experts are pressing for treatment programs to embrace the FDA-approved drugs for opioid use disorder that have come to be considered the “gold standard.” In fact, there is so much consensus in the medical community about the effectiveness of these medications that the President called for universal access to them by 2025.



Senator Waddell and Mr. King discuss the many medical services provided by athletic trainers at the facilities of the Carolina Panthers Football Team.

Senator Waddell was lead on a tour by Mr. Kevin King, the head athletic trainer at the Carolina Panthers Athletic Department to discuss upcoming legislation regarding the merger of some licensing boards.





Teacher Pay

North Carolina education leaders on Wednesday defended a proposal to pay teachers based on their perceived effectiveness instead of their years of experience. Teachers across the state have raised questions about a draft teacher licensure model that would replace the seniority-based compensation system with one that ties raises to the performance of educators.

One of the ways that teacher effectiveness can be measured in the draft model is using a formula, known as SAS EVAAS, for assessing student growth on state exams. But the State Superintendent said it would be wrong to call the new model a merit pay system. “This is not a model that ties teacher compensation to test scores,” the superintendent said at Wednesday’s State Board of Education meeting. “While EVAAS could be one way to move up in the model — move up the ladder, so to speak — it is one way. There are multiple ways for teachers to move up.”

The Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC) hopes to finalize the “Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals” model by the end of the summer. The superintendent said the plan, which would require the approval of the General Assembly, is two to three years away from potential implementation.

Currently, North Carolina teachers start at a state base salary of \$35,460. They get annual state raises for their first 15 years, then less frequent raises after that. The scale tops out at \$52,680, but school districts often supplement the state’s pay. Under the new model, there would be seven levels ranging from \$30,000 for aspiring teachers who have not yet received a bachelor’s degree up to the highest level where the minimum salary is \$73,000.

Instead of advancing up with each year of experience, teachers would move up based on whether they are considered to be effective. The director of Educator Recruitment and Support at the state Department of Public Instruction, said this new model aligns compensation with helping student learning and helping educators become great teachers. The hope is that NC DPI makes the structure of schools more conducive to both student and teacher learning and growth.

These are proposed changes and many discussions will be taking place and I will keep you informed.

Offender Voting

A North Carolina appeals court has temporarily blocked the enforcement of last week's ruling by trial judges that declared people convicted of felonies can vote while serving their probation or parole. The Court of Appeals on Tuesday issued a stay of the ruling, which struck down a 1973 state law that lays out when voting rights are automatically restored to felony offenders.

Two of three judges ruling on a lawsuit filed by former offenders and civil rights groups concluded that the 49-year-old law violates the state constitution and is discriminatory against Black residents.

The voter registration deadline is April 22 for people who want to vote by mail-in absentee ballot or on the primary election day. Others can register and vote during early in-person voting, which is scheduled April 28 to May 14. The 1973 law applies to people convicted of felonies regardless of whether they serve time as part of their punishment. The trial judges agreed with evidence presented at trial that linked the law to Reconstruction-era efforts to prevent Black people from voting.

Mecklenburg County Primary Voting Schedule

04/22/22 Voter Registration Deadline

04/27/22 Voter Registration Deadline - Exception for missing or unclear postmarked forms and deadline for hard copies of forms submitted electronically

04/28/22 Absentee One Stop Voting Begins

05/10/22 Last day to request an absentee ballot by mail - CIV

05/14/22 Absentee One-stop Voting Ends

05/17/22 Primary Election

05/27/22 Protest Deadline (re tabulation or counting votes)

For additional information **click here** to be linked to the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections.

Senator Waddell is working tirelessly for Senate District 40, but she cannot do this alone. Can she count on your help to continue working for the district?

[CLICK HERE TO](#)

**DONATE \$25; \$50; \$100; \$250
OTHER AMOUNT \$_____**

Happy Easter Monday! I hope your Easter holiday was restful and full of family. The pollen seems to be waning, but not gone yet. Enjoy the rest of this week and do not forget COVID is still lurking around, so continue to be safe.

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