

**\*\*\*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:**

*We did not have any scheduled meetings last week at the General Assembly. Although session has not started, we still have interim committee meetings that meet periodically. Even though there are no scheduled meetings at the General Assembly, I am actively attending community meetings throughout my constituency.*

*Joyce Waddell*

**Education Funds**

North Carolina education leaders are mulling requests to lawmakers for millions more dollars during the short Legislative session expected next month. They have outlined requests for more funding for a school psychologist internship program, rising diesel costs for school buses, impacts of inflation, eight new school turnaround staff members and an employee overseeing American Indian education.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and State Board of Education will finalize a request before the board's May meeting. In a preliminary proposal presented this week, department officials said they want \$4.5 million to start a school psychologist internship program. Interns would work at North Carolina schools while completing their university degrees and, ideally, stay on as employees of those schools once their internships conclude. The internship program could help improve the pipeline of school psychologists in the state by attracting school psychology students at universities in other states to come to North Carolina. Even with funding, schools have struggled to hire school psychologists.

State leaders are also floating:

- \$5.6 million more for school buses, largely in light of rising diesel prices. These dollars are subject to change before a request would be made.
- \$3 million for cost-of-living adjustments for teachers and state-sector employees related to inflation
- 13 more DPI employees, most of them focused on school turnaround
- Make tuition reimbursement for teacher assistants working toward teaching degrees recurring funding. This has been recurring funding but was changed to non-recurring under the new state budget.

It has been stated that North Carolina should eventually find more local ways of increasing the school psychologist pipeline, specifically through educator preparation programs.

DPI has also floated asking lawmakers to give schools the ability to convert school psychologist positions to other mental health professionals if they cannot hire a school psychologist. The state has allocated \$34 million to 114 school districts for school psychologists. In terms of positions, that's yielded 420 school psychologists funded for 106 school systems, though it is not clear that 420 people are working in those positions.

All 115 school districts are required to employ at least one school psychologist by the next school year, and the new state budget will cover their costs.

I have been a part of the educational system for many years and have served in many capacities, I believe in making sure our school systems have the resources to provide the students a good education.

## ***Senator Waddell participates at the NC Association of County Commissioners Meeting***



*The director of NCACC discusses how legislative funding will be used for Mecklenburg County.*



## ***CMS School Board Meeting***



*Senator Waddell observed the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System board meeting as they voted to dismiss the Superintendent.*

## **College Applications**

Students looking to attend UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State University or any other UNC System school won't have to submit SAT or ACT scores with their applications through Fall 2024. The UNC System Board of Governors voted Thursday to extend a waiver for SAT/ACT test score requirements for admission.

That makes UNC schools, for now, test-optional. The waiver has been in place since the start of the pandemic, when standardized test availability was limited. The reasoning behind keeping the waiver now is to stay competitive with peer institutions that have either adopted this type of policy or dropped standardized testing requirements. The waiver also acknowledges high school students whose classroom experiences have been negatively affected by the pandemic.

The extension of this waiver passed with apprehension from some board members. Board members and parents want to make sure that if students score well on the ACT or SAT that they could still have that be considered in their application. Students can submit standardized test scores when they apply to a UNC System college, but they do not have to.

### ***Senator Waddell Participates in Housing Project Ground Breaking Event***





*Sen. Waddell assists with a ground breaking event for Sugaree Place, a Housing Project sponsored by Mayfield Baptist Church.*

## **Teachers Program**

School districts in a North Carolina pilot program are leaving untapped hundreds of thousands of dollars for an initiative designed to help teacher assistants become teachers. The Teacher Assistants to Teachers Tuition Reimbursement Pilot Program (TAs to Teachers) started in the 2016-17 fiscal year and is open to 38 districts as of 2019. The program helps teacher assistants who want to become teachers with the costs of their education in pursuit of their teacher licensure. The number of districts able to participate expanded each year from 2017 to 2019. Since 2018-19, funding for the program has been \$875,815 per year, but the amount actually being distributed in aggregate is far less. In total, 45 teacher assistants have been licensed as teachers during the operation of the program.

The program is not unlimited. Districts that are part of the program can choose up to five teacher assistants, and those teacher assistants can get up to \$4,600 each academic year for four years to use towards tuition for an educator preparation program. Prior to the 2018-19 budget, the max award was \$4,500. Five districts have had no teacher assistants participating in the program since they joined in the second year (2017-18) of the program.



### ***African American Festival***

*Senator Waddell presents Dianna Davis a state proclamation for the 9th annual African American Festival held in Charlotte.*





## 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 \$\_\_\_\_\_**

*We are a few weeks from the primary election. Voting is an important part of our civic duty. Please find your designated poll.*

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