

For Immediate Release



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Date 2022-11-29 07:58



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, November 28, 2022
Volume 49

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Greetings:

The end of Thanksgiving signals the year is coming to a close. With 2023 approaching fast, we are awaiting the closure of the biennium. Mid-January the new session will start and a new biennium will begin. I am looking forward to representing my constituents in District 40 this upcoming session.

Joyce Waddell

Principal Licensure

The State Board of Education split Thursday over changes it wants the General Assembly to make on requirements for becoming a North Carolina principal. In a 6-3 vote, the state board asked lawmakers to expand who can get a principal's license to include all licensed educators who have at least four years of work experience. This would include support services personnel such as school counselors, media coordinators and social workers.

Currently, state law says principals must have at least four years of classroom teaching experience.

If the change is adopted, DPI would need to develop the process for evaluating the portfolios and suggest a new licensure test.

The board majority said keeping an exam option would elevate the standards for becoming a principal. But the board minority and the State Superintendent said that a portfolio is just as — if not more — rigorous than a pen-and-paper exam.

Teacher Salaries

A controversial new plan could raise pay for North Carolina teachers, but there are questions about whether state lawmakers will foot the potential bill. The Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC) could soon finalize a new model for licensing and paying teachers based on their performance, as opposed to their years of education experience. The plan would then go to the State Board of Education for its approval. Ultimately, it is up to the General Assembly whether to support the changes, including the additional pay for teachers.

North Carolina teachers start at a statewide base salary of \$37,000. They get annual state raises for their first 15 years, then less frequent raises after that. The scale tops out at \$54,000, but school districts and the state often supplement the base pay.

The model calls for expert teachers to get a 1% annual raise as well as receive \$5,000 or \$10,000 more a year if they take on additional leadership roles.

I believe we need to hear from teachers concerning all changes. It is important that those who are experienced have an opportunity to evaluate these proposed changes.

Child Care

Childcare providers are asking state lawmakers for more funding and looser rules to help them keep their doors open. They say they are caught between rising costs and decreasing funding. North Carolina's has been losing child care capacity for years. There are fewer child care providers in that state compared to 2018, but the population continues to grow. State and federal dollars for COVID relief have helped to slow the drain, despite the pandemic, but that extra funding will dry up in the coming year. With the cost of doing business rising faster than ever, industry leaders on Tuesday asked lawmakers for help.

An associate of the NC Licensed Child Care Association says the lack of child care is already a big problem in this state, especially in rural areas, where it is affecting parents' ability to hold jobs. The largest barrier right now in this state to expanding licensed quality childcare in our state for all the families who need it is a childcare workforce crisis.

Some are asking lawmakers to ease some of the requirements for college education for some early education teachers, because there simply are not enough qualified workers available to fill those jobs.

Since 2020, federal and state COVID funds have helped raise the pay for child care staff. Those raises have not kept pace with rising inflation, and that money is scheduled to dry up next year. Lawmakers have been asked to consider extending the extra funding before it runs out and hiring gets even harder. It has been predicted that if child cares are allowed to fall off the financial cliff next year, more parents will have to leave the workforce, adding to the problem of North Carolina's already-tight labor market.

This year is almost done, 2022 has been filled with continued concerns about COVID, Influenza, and the Monkey Pox. Like never before we must be careful and stay safe.

Vaccines are one good way to ward off most illnesses. Please consider getting vaccinated if you have not already.

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