

For Immediate Release



From Sen. Joyce Waddell <joyce.waddell@ncleg.net>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <joyce.waddell@ncleg.net>
Date 2023-08-08 06:15



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, August 07, 2023
Chapter V
Volume 32

CONTACT: Sen. Joyce Waddell
(919) 733-5650
Joyce.Waddell@ncleg.net
<https://joycewaddell4nc.com/>



Greetings:

At the General Assembly *For the Week*

Although session has not convened for the past few weeks, my legislative office has continued to be open. If you have any issues or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact. The Governor's appointed committees are continuing to meet throughout the state.

Joyce Waddell

Parental Leave

A recent state law will provide paid parental leave to North Carolina school employees for the first time ever this upcoming school year.

The State Board of Education voted Thursday on rules that clarify how employees can take the new leave. The paid leave is for up to eight weeks for someone who gives birth and four weeks for other qualifying events. Part-time employees can take just as many weeks off, on a prorated basis so that they are paid their standard part-time salary, not including overtime.

Employees can also take a longer parental leave using other accrued time off, up to the 12 weeks federally protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act. A new parent can take the leave once on a rolling 12-month basis, and if both parents are school employees, they can take their leave at the same time.

State lawmakers provided for the new leave in a recent law that restricts abortions after 12 weeks. The state will provide \$10 million to fund substitute teachers. Charter schools can choose to offer the leave, and if they do, they will receive a portion of the state funding to hire substitutes.

A provision in the 2021 state budget ended that requirement, so long as a teacher provides a reason for their personal day. If a teacher does not provide a reason, they are required to cover the full cost of hiring their substitute, if one is hired.

I believe all employees can benefit from this legislation.

Hidden Valley Neighborhood Night Out



Senator Waddell shares legislative updates at the Hidden Valley Neighborhood Night Out event.

School Enrollment

A historic expansion of North Carolina's school voucher program could come at the same time that enrollment in private schools is rising at near-record levels. New statewide figures released this week show that enrollment in private schools grew by 11,457 students during the 2022-23 school year.

Advocates of traditional public schools are trying to dissuade the General Assembly from going ahead with the expansion of the Opportunity Scholarship program. The group "Public Schools First NC" is strongly opposed to using public dollars to fund private school education.

In contrast, private schools have seen a 25% increase in enrollment in the past five years, fueled in large part by the Opportunity Scholarship program. Last school year, 25,547 students received a taxpayer-funded voucher to help them attend a private school. Traditional public schools educate 76.5% of the state's 1.78 million K-12 students. That percentage, which was 86.5% in 2010, has been steadily dropping.

I believe that traditional public schools can be the foundation of education in our country. It is important that we invest more resources in our public schools.

National Neighborhood Night Out



Senator Waddell helps to distribute COVID testing kits to Griers Grove residents.



COVID Booster

Just when we think we have a handle on COVID it reappears. The virus that causes COVID-19 is circulating more widely across North Carolina, and health experts are again urging people to make plans to get updated vaccine boosters. Data released recently shows there was an average of 17.3 million COVID-19 particles in sampled wastewater for the week of July 26, the most recent week of data available. That marks the fifth straight week of increase, and the highest weekly average since early April. It is a level four times higher than the low point set in late June.

Hospitalizations with COVID-19 have not increased at a similar rate, an indication that vaccines and immunity from prior infection are — for now — keeping most people from getting badly sick. However, hospitalizations are still increasing. For the week ending July 29, there were an average of 239 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 per day, also the highest daily average since early April.

Some of the increase comes through the seasonality of the virus, says a Duke Health infectious disease expert. It is unclear how much of that is due to increased travel and mixing of social circles, and how much to normal cycled of the virus, but that some seasonal fluctuations are to be expected.

Vaccinations

Fall is around the corner, and getting your flu shot early will be important. In doing so, we ensure that we do not have to wait in the event of vaccine shortages. Between flu and COVID, getting vaccinated will be important, especially for those who have underlying conditions.

Please do not hesitate to contact your healthcare provider to inquire about your vaccinations. It could be a matter of life or death for you or someone you might pass the disease or virus on to.



Sen. Joyce Waddell, District 40 | 1113 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601

[Unsubscribe sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org](mailto:sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by joyce.waddell@ncleg.net powered by

