Nearly four of every 10 public school employees are education support professionals (ESPs) who work together with teachers and administrators to ensure the basic right of every student to attend a great public school. ESPs make up a half million of NEA’s over 3 million membership.

Education support professionals perform a variety of jobs that promote quality education, foster positive learning environments, offer nutritious meals to ensure students are ready to learn, provide reliable transportation, and maintain safe and clean schools for all students. ESP job families include:

- **Clerical Services**: Secretarial, clerical, financial, and administrative support
- **Custodial and Building and grounds maintenance Services**: Building and grounds maintenance and repair
- **Food Services**: Food planning, preparation, and delivery
- **Health and Student Services**: Nursing, health and therapy support; community, family, parent, and welfare services
- **Paraeducators**: Instructional and non-instructional support
- **Security Services**: School guards and resource personnel, security specialists
- **Skilled Trades**: Electricians, carpenters, painters, heating and ventilation specialists, machine operations, and printing services
- **Technical Services**: Computer, audio-visual, and language technical support; media, public relations, writing, and art specialties
- **Transportation Services**: Bus driving and delivery services and vehicle maintenance

### How Association Membership Supports Education Support Professionals

NEA and its state affiliates help ESPs:

- Organize and win better pay, benefits, and working conditions
- Earn no less than a living wage
- Have effective employment-related representation
- Advocate for quality professional development opportunities
- Ensure safe and clean schools
- Develop effective local, state, and national leadership
- Promote quality public education and public school employee issues in state legislatures and in Congress
- Defend against outsourcing of work to private, for-profit companies
- Stay informed through electronic and print media
- Gain access to exclusive, member-only financial services and insurance benefits
- Receive on the job liability insurance

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Fast Facts about NEA’s ESP Members

- **83%** of NEA’s ESP members work full time.
- **77%** work in a school building.
- **44%** work in a preschool, kindergarten or elementary school.
- **56%** live in a small town or rural area.
- **85%** are female.
- ESPs’ average age is **52**.

Workplace Conditions and Issues

ESPs in every job category want greater awareness and appreciation of the ways they contribute to great public schools. They want job descriptions that accurately describe their work and responsibilities. Although a large majority of ESP—eighty-four percent (84%)—have a written job description, forty-five percent (45%) are often or sometimes asked to perform duties outside the scope of that description.

ESPs would like to see increased wages, better retirement benefits, and improved health and dental insurance provisions. ESP in all categories want professional development opportunities and chances for advancement. They want training to keep up with new technology and equipment, policies and regulations, and changing skills.

In addition, ESPs are concerned about job security as more and more school districts are facing budget cuts and are turning to outsourcing ESP work to private, for-profit companies.

NEA’s ESP Members Are:

**Educated, well-trained, and experienced.** ESPs have made significant personal accomplishments in education. Nearly one half (47%) have an associate’s or more advanced degree.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of support professionals have taken college courses. Fifty-one percent (51%) take or have taken job-related classes. Forty-six percent (46%) have special certificates and twenty-five percent (25%) have a license.

On average, education support professionals have been employed in public schools for 13 years. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of ESPs have more than 15 years of experience. Eighty-five percent (85%) plan to stay in the profession, and seventy-five percent (75%) plan to stay with their current jobs until they retire.

**Committed to students and their success.** A major source of support professionals’ job satisfaction is the personal fulfillment they get from working with students.

Fifty-six percent (56%) provide care to students with special needs. Thirty-five percent (35%) volunteer to read books to students. Seventy percent (70%) have volunteered in the past 2 years to assist children and benefit the community.

Sixty-six percent (66%) give money out of their own pockets to help students with things such as classroom materials, field trips, and class projects, averaging $217 per year.

**Active in the school community.** Three-quarters (75%) of ESPs live within the school district in which they work. Thirty-nine percent (39%) have supported activities of a parent organization. Thirty-five percent (35%) participate in the activities of an education association.

**Focused on safety.** Seventy-six percent (76%) of ESPs have responsibilities for ensuring student and staff safety. Nearly all (94%) agree that intervening in bullying situations is a part of their job.

Seventy-three percent (73%) have seen bullying in the past month at their schools and ninety percent (90%) feel that they have effective strategies to handle a bullying situation.