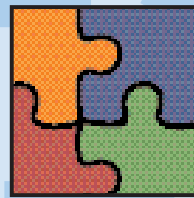
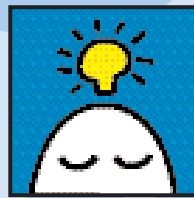


The **ESP** professionals



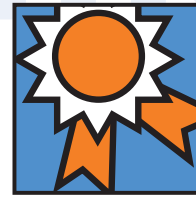
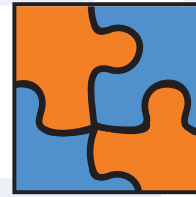
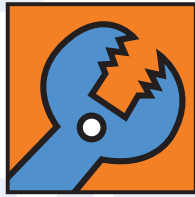
An Action Guide to
Help You in Your

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

NEA RESOLUTION D-15

The NEA believes that professional development should be required throughout the career of educational support professionals. Professional development programs should provide equal opportunities for these employees to gain and improve the knowledge and skills important to their position and job performance. Professional development programs should assume that appropriate education employees have a decisive voice at every stage of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The **ESP** professionals



An Action Guide to
Help You in Your

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 2.7 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

NEA Officers

Reg Weaver, President
Dennis Van Roekel, Vice-President
Lily Eskelsen, Secretary-Treasurer
John I. Wilson, Executive Director

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FOREWORD

By
Reg Weaver, NEA President and
John Wilson, NEA Executive Director



Reg Weaver



John Wilson

Public education today is in the midst of profound change, and the nation's education support professionals are in the forefront of that change — with new roles, new responsibilities and new expectations.

In recent decades, many teachers have begun receiving the respect they deserve, as school districts and state governments have raised salaries, provided better professional development opportunities, and broadened the role of teachers in organizing their schools for excellence.

Now is the time for education support professionals to gain the respect they deserve. New laws, notably the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), are setting higher standards for training and professionalism. At the same time, there is a growing recognition of the vital role that education support professionals play as co-equal members of the team of educators within each public school.

Support professionals account for more than 40 percent of today's K-12 public education workforce. They include bus drivers, custodians, security specialists, nurses and health aides, secretaries, paraprofessionals, and more. The key to public school quality is to enlist the full range of skills, talents, and creativity of these superb professionals.

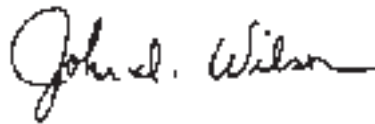
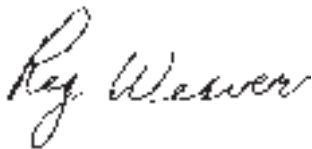
Support professionals provide the living infrastructure within each of our public schools. Yet while these professionals bear a tremendous responsibility for the safety, well-being, and education of our students, they too often must make do with inadequate, haphazard training and professional development.

Today, our Association is speaking out and demanding more and better for our support professional members: more respect, better training and professional development, and more involvement by support professionals in organizing their workplaces for high performance.

This publication is our call to action. It illustrates the improvements and successes that are possible when education support professionals are respected, consulted, and fully engaged by administrators and their teacher colleagues. It also shows that quality training and professional development are the key to tapping the full potential of a school district's staff of support professionals.

Rev. Jesse Jackson put it brilliantly: "Children need all school workers. A person is not 'just' a janitor, not 'just' a custodian. Janitors can see children when teachers don't see them. And bus drivers recognize that children who are disruptive on the bus are likely to be disorderly in the classroom. They are partners in education. We need each other to make this work."

We wholeheartedly agree. It is impossible to imagine public school excellence without the full participation and engagement of our support professional colleagues.



What do we know about our ESPs? Here are a few facts:

- Approximately 55 percent of K-12 ESP members need to meet at least one specific training, license or certification requirement to qualify for their position — and this doesn't include the Federal Commercial Driver's License required of bus drivers.
- Nearly 30 percent of ESPs are required to take professional development classes and exams in order to keep their jobs.
- ESPs are well educated. Sixty-two percent have completed at least some college or hold an advanced degree.
- ESPs work effectively with students because they are involved in their communities. Three-quarters of NEA K-12 ESP members volunteer in at least one community program.
- Support professionals are experienced and loyal. The average ESP has more than 10 years of experience. Most ESPs have spent their entire education careers with their current employer.

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

A MESSAGE

from
Al Perez, NEA ESP Quality Division Director



Al Perez

Dear Friends,

As a young boy growing up in South Texas, I struggled with the English language once I entered elementary school. I put in endless hours of after school work — conjugating verbs, practicing spelling, dissecting sentences.

I filled the classroom trash can to the brim with crumpled papers and what I saw as failed attempts to succeed. The more papers I threw in, the less inspired I became to learn.

While my teachers were patient and my parents were understanding, it was one man who helped me get past my struggles and start to succeed: Mr. Frank Ramirez, Kleberg Elementary School Custodian.

After weeks of emptying the trash behind me, Mr. Ramirez realized I needed one-on-one help. And though he wasn't a teacher, he knew he could make a difference. Soon, my after school work became interactive learning sessions with Mr. Ramirez, as he quizzed me on spelling and worked with me on sentences.

Though his custodial duties were done for the day, he didn't leave the school building. He stayed a little longer — for me. Not because he had to, but because he wanted to. When I asked him why, he simply said, "Because I've been where you are. I struggled, too."

I tell this story because I credit Mr. Ramirez, and so many other support professionals like him, for helping me get to where I am today. They gave their time to help build my confidence, extra food on my plate on the days I was hungriest, and a kind word or pat on the back when I needed it most. They were from my community. And they truly wanted me to succeed.

Today, as Director of NEA's ESP Quality Division, I am finally able to give back to the so many that gave to me, like Mr. Ramirez. And one way I hope to give back is by offering

you this publication, *The ESPProfessionals: An Action Guide to Help You in Your Professional Development*.

Inside, you'll find professional development ideas and best practices to help you do what you already do well, even better. As NEA ESP members, you have spoken loud and clear about what you want and need to succeed in your chosen profession: tools to help you excel in your work and advance in your career.

Using ongoing training and other opportunities to develop your career is the first step. It's what NEA likes to call "professional development." It's what you have called "career development" — learning how to calm the kids on the bus, or ergonomically lift a disabled child so you won't hurt your back, or becoming an expert in that new software program to ease accounting, or gaining new psychology strategies to help you communicate better with students, or maybe just mastering the English language so you can help a struggling child learn.

The truth is that schools are more than just buildings. It takes support for teachers to teach, and children to learn. You are that support and you are the role models. You know, without exaggeration, that students' lives can depend on your ability to perform your jobs well.

Though the publication is segmented into different job sections, I hope you will at least skim through the success stories to find out what your colleagues are doing to become experts in their chosen professions. And I hope you will share with me any feedback you have about its contents. You can email me directly at ESP.Program@nea.org.

Mr. Ramirez, this is for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mr. Ramirez", written in a cursive style.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When NEA members voted at the 2002 Representative Assembly to establish a new Education Support Professional (ESP) Quality Department, department staff immediately established a Task Force to obtain member insight, and to create a framework for action surrounding one of the Quality Department's key priorities: ensuring quality professional development for all ESP. This publication, *The ESPProfessionals: An Action Guide to Help You in Your Professional Development*, is a direct product of their work. We would like to thank members of the Task Force for their valuable contributions.

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INTRODUCTION

When **Shirl Anne Ingram** — former president of the Kyrene Classified Association in Tempe, Arizona — was asked to make a 15-minute presentation at a district board meeting about why her ESP members needed a raise, she didn't give a speech.

Instead, Ingram chose to take the committee on a “virtual tour.” Asking members to close their eyes, she verbally walked them through a school without support professionals.

“Imagine,” she said, “driving up to school and the yards are a mess. Inside, no secretaries answer phones or welcome you. Down the hall we hear water running in the girl's restroom and there's water everywhere from a broken pipe, but nobody to fix it. A teacher at a computer can't sign on, but there's no technology staff to help. The school is quiet because there are no children. There are no bus drivers to bring them.”

Her point was well taken and the Kyrene support professionals received their raise. “This is truly how important we are,” she says. “We're behind the scenes keeping everything running, and people need to realize that.”

A Lack of Resources Equals a Lack of Opportunities

Across America, nearly 3.5 million support professionals transport students to schools that are kept safe, clean and well-maintained; where school offices are operating efficiently and records are kept properly; where nutritious meals are served; where quality instructional assistance is provided; and where special programs — such as those for handicapped and disadvantaged students — are provided.

But despite their power in numbers and the fact that schools clearly couldn't operate without them, support

professionals are often thwarted from turning their jobs into careers, or gaining promotion opportunities, *because of a lack of professional development and advanced training.* Most say they want professional development programs but can't pay for them.

And even though many support personnel jobs actually require specialized training, licenses, and certificates — with about 55 percent of ESP members needing to meet at least one specific training or certification requirement to qualify for their positions — support professionals all too often pay these licensing and test fees out of their own pockets.

“It's crazy to hire people, neglect to train them, and throw them into a situation with kids,” says **Sarah Horton**, a school health aide from Mobile, Alabama. “But that's the reality of worklife for far too many educational support professionals these days.”

We Are 'Professionals'

In 2002, **Karen Mahurin**, President of NEA's National Council of Education Support Professionals (NCESP) members, led a successful campaign at the NEA Representative Assembly to change ESP's formal name from “Education Support Personnel” to “Education Support Professionals.”

“The name change to ‘professional’ acknowledges the major contribution ESPs make for children and public education everyday,” says Mahurin, a 22-year secretary in Alaska. “We impact the lives of children every day, maybe not in the classroom but certainly in our own special and professional ways.”

This new name reflects a growing pride in the valuable role ESPs play throughout America's schools. From instructional assistants and paraprofessionals, office employees and data processors, and food service workers to custodians, bus drivers and security guards, today's support professionals provide invaluable services that enable students to learn in positive, supportive environments.

Our Jobs: Not as Easy as They Look

Conventional wisdom suggests that no special knowledge, skills or training are needed to do the multitude of jobs that fall under the ESP umbrella, which might be one reason why professional development has not been a priority for school districts. But a closer look reveals that these jobs often involve very complex and sensitive tasks.

Many support professionals do work that requires considerable physical exertion, or have jobs working directly with chemicals and other hazardous substances. Ironically, fewer than half of ESPs receive regular health and safety training on such issues as ergonomics, hazardous waste removal, asbestos, or workplace violence.

Custodians operate heavy machinery such as floor wax machines and carry heavy loads up and down school stairs. Paraprofessionals working with disabled children often lift students many times a day

as they tend to their needs and move them among various activities.

“If you’re working with disabled children as I do, you also need to know everything you can about the IDEA law,” adds Horton.

Audrey Haskell, a School Secretary in Grand Forks, North Dakota, believes structured professional development opportunities for support professionals would affect everyone’s success in an educational setting.

“Professional development is just as important for support personnel as it is for any other profession,” she says. “Teachers, doctors and lawyers all partake in professional development to stay current in their fields, and we should, too.”

Especially, she adds, with new programs such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 2002. “ESPs are continually asked to meet new workplace conditions and standards, and as professionals,

MAJOR HISTORICAL, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY EVENTS THAT HAVE AFFECTED NEA’S EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

1946

National School Lunch Act – Congress creates the school lunch program, recognizing the connection between nutrition and learning capacity. Today, the program feeds approximately 27 million students. School cafeteria workers are expected to know about food allergies, nutrition and food safety.

1965

Elementary and Secondary Education Act – Congress invests billions of dollars in “poor schools” through the Title I program in an effort to

provide equal opportunities in education. The program was reauthorized in 2001.

Head Start – This “Great Society” program serves low-income children, from birth to age 5, and their families. Head Start programs are often based in schools, where school support staff play a key role in preparing children to be ready to learn when they enter school.

1966

Child Nutrition Act – Today 7.7 million students receive assistance through the National School Breakfast Program, which was established by this law to provide assistance to “nutritionally needy” children. The growth of this program reflects the increased awareness that students need good nutrition – and well-trained school support staff – so they will be safe, healthy and ready to learn.

1967

Educational Professions Development Act – Congress provides federal funds to address the training of teachers in critical shortage areas, and provides fellowships for teachers and other education professionals.

NEA Representative Assembly (RA) – Members adopt a new membership category — “Educational Secretary” — into the NEA Bylaws.

1969

NEA Representative Assembly – Members adopt Resolution C8, the first recognition of paraprofessionals and auxiliary personnel in NEA governance proceedings. The resolution urges local affiliates and school systems to “become involved in the recruitment, orientation and training of paraprofessional and auxiliary personnel.”

1970

Occupational Safety and Health Act – OSHA is created to ensure that every worker goes home healthy every day. Supported by NEA, OSHA regulations have helped make schools safer for staff and students.

1974

NEA Representative Assembly – A task force is appointed to study the problems related to organizing and servicing substitute, part-time, and paraprofessional personnel, including examination of their “proper” professional and legal relationships with full-time teachers.

1975

Summer Food Service Program – In a continuing effort to improve nutrition for children, Congress expands school food service, establishing this program to provide healthy meals to 2 million children during the long summer vacations.

we need to be prepared to meet those demands.” In a recent survey of support professionals, 35 percent of respondents said that having to perform tasks for which they had not been adequately trained was a source of stress and ongoing concern. But nearly 70 percent felt that expanding training opportunities would help to alleviate those problems.

Our Strength: Our Communities

In addition to supporting instruction, support professionals promote good communications between a school and its community. As many as 90 percent of ESP are recruited from the communities in which they work, compared with just 40 percent of teachers. Support professionals also closely mirror the ethnic, racial and socioeconomic diversity of the students they serve.

In addition to being student advocates and special friends to students in need of advice and support, ESPs serve as the vital link between parents and the school — before, during and after school hours. As



DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are nearly 3.5 million support professionals in today’s public schools, comprising more than 40 percent of America’s total K-12 education workforce.

members of civic groups, religious congregations, and informal social networks in their communities, ESPs often give community members the good news about the education system and help parents bond with the local schools.

Katie Ridgeway, a School Office Manager in Highland, California, agrees, and says professional development can play a key role in this success with the community — especially with students.

“Because we are such an integral part of our communities, when students see us striving to better

Education for all Handicapped Children Act – Now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Congress passed this law to ensure access to a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities. Many school support professionals, especially security officers, paraprofessionals and bus drivers, are expected to know IDEA’s complex regulations.

NEA establishes a special membership category for Paraprofessionals – the name is subsequently changed to Education Support Personnel (ESP).

1980 Educational Support Personnel (ESP) are voted full membership rights in NEA by the Representative Assembly.

1986 Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act – Lawmakers raise standards for school bus drivers, helping to maintain an excellent record of transporting students safely.

1990-91 NEA Representative Assembly – Resolutions are passed that highlight the essential role of ESPs in enhancing the learning environment and education process, and that recognizes their contributions as positive role models.

1994 National Skill Standards Act – This law establishes a National Skill Standards Board to oversee the development of a voluntary, industry-based national system of skill standards, assessments and credentials. The act lays the groundwork for national certification of paraprofessionals.

1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – This law guarantees the right of all students to educational opportunities, regardless of disability. IDEA affects all ESPs in the educational system, especially as students with disabilities are placed into general education classes.

1998 NEA Representative Assembly – Members adopt a resolution endorsing the professional development of ESPs and recognizing a need for the ESP voice to be represented in the planning, implementation and evaluation of their professional development programs.

2001 NEA Representative Assembly – Members vote to officially change the term “Education Support Personnel” to “Education Support Professional.”

2002 Elementary Secondary Education Act – Known as the “No Child Left Behind” Initiative, this reauthorization requires that current and potential paraprofessionals must meet certain educational requirements or obtain state-approved certification in order to perform their duties.

NEA Representative Assembly – Members vote to adopt a new Education Support Professional Quality Department with an operational and staffing budget. The RA also adopts a new core priority that focuses on professional quality for ESP members.

NEA’s new Education Support Professional Quality department is officially recognized as its own department, separate from its original parent department, Affiliate Building Capacity.

ourselves, they realize that there is never a bad time for improving one's personal achievements," she says. "Support staff — hand-in-hand with teachers, administrators and parents — all help set examples for the students."

The entire staff can teach students how people with different assignments and gifts can work toward a common goal. For example, the custodian who consults with faculty to facilitate after-school meetings and the landscaper who arranges to cut the grass adjacent to classrooms before school starts demonstrate their willingness to collaborate as instructional team members.

The building engineer who fixes the circulation problem that trapped stale air in classrooms also

“There’s no clearer way to build a meaningful job than by enhancing your self-esteem, and there’s no better way to enhance your self-esteem than by building your skills.”

makes a contribution to learning. As does the nurse who fits her health lessons into the second-grade social studies unit, or the playground aide who works with the gym teacher to follow up on rules of sportsmanship.

“Clearly,” Ridgeway says, “everyone in a school can promote student learning, and I believe as support professionals, we are finding innovative ways to do that.”

Research has found that simply encouraging students to become lifelong learners is not enough. Educators, including ESP, must also show evidence of their own intellectual curiosity if they are to inspire students.

“Students are more likely to function as continuous learners and effective collaborators if the entire edu-

Professional Development /S Union Work

Across America, education support professionals — secretaries, paraeducators, custodians, maintenance employees, bus drivers, food service workers, nurses, security employees, and more — are joining NEA in record numbers and taking collective action to improve their jobs and their schools.

ESPs are now the fastest-growing membership category of NEA. During the 2000-01 school year, 21 percent of new NEA members were ESPs. More than 22,000 support professionals joined NEA that year, producing a 6.8 percent increase in ESP membership over the year before.

Why? Because more often than not, NEA members and affiliates are the ones driving better working conditions — including opportunities for professional development.

“ESPs are very serious about their jobs and the children they serve,” says **Sandra Rice**, a UniServ director and ESP liaison in North Carolina, where state ESP membership grew by more than 20 percent last year. “And they are willing to step up to the plate.”

According to Rice, support professionals are more eager to get involved in NEA because their diverse jobs are often low-paying, and tough economic times are making it harder than ever for ESPs to support their families.

“I started as an ESP,” says Rice, “and I’ve found that the first problem is trying to define us. Each ESP unit is unique. We’re bus drivers, food service workers, and media employees. It’s not easy to figure out that this diverse group of workers can have a common voice.”

But seeking quality professional development, and using the Association to better our careers, *gives us that voice.*

cation community — including the bus drivers, food service workers and school secretaries — demonstrate those characteristics,” Ridgeway adds.

A Simple Solution

“People who come to work for schools do it because they can think of nothing more rewarding than working with the students who are America’s future,” explains **Iona Holloway**, a veteran paraeducator in Louisiana and NEA leader. “It’s not about money or fame to us. It’s about doing something that makes a difference.”

And partaking in continuous learning only leads to more rewarding work because by improving our skills, we better the schools we touch.

Holloway adds: “There’s no clearer way to build a meaningful job than by enhancing your self-esteem, and there’s no better way to enhance your self-esteem than by building your skills.”



SKILLS FOR ALL ESP

While professional development for support professionals is still very much in its infancy in some job groups, it is important to recognize that professional development does not have to be job specific. There are certain skills that should be gained by all ESP:

- Effective discipline
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Diversity awareness
- Stress management
- Motivating at-risk students
- Working with special needs students
- Crisis intervention
- School safety (for example, gang awareness)
- Self defense
- Customer/community relations
- Health and safety issues (for example, blood borne pathogens)
- Time management
- Dealing with difficult people
- Legal and ethical issues
- Leadership skills
- CPR/first responder courses
- Reporting suspected child abuse

A CALL TO ACTION

WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Professional development is the process of enhancing your personal growth and job skills and improving your job performance to contribute to outstanding educational results for students.

Professional development, long recognized as important for teachers and administrators, is coming into its own and gaining fast momentum for support professionals.

In 1998, NEA members overwhelmingly passed a resolution (D-15) signifying the importance of professional development for ESP members. (For full text of the resolution, please refer to the inside cover).

Iona Holloway, a veteran paraeducator in Louisiana, was a strong supporter. “To me, professional development is all about respecting oneself,” she says. “It’s about wanting to be the best you can be and bringing that to your chosen profession.”

Barbara Morris, President of the Colonial Paraprofessional Association in Delaware, agrees. “No matter what job you’re in and no matter what you do, you are a professional first,” she says. “It’s about how you see yourself and how you approach your job that matters, and professional development is a huge part of that.”

In fact across America, ESP leaders everywhere are implementing hands-on, high-quality career development. Why? To improve their job performance, create a deeper and more satisfying connection with their jobs, succeed in their chosen fields, take charge of their futures, and get the skills necessary to move ahead.

In 1997, teachers participating in The Teacher Network’s National Teacher Policy Institute (NTPI) concluded after a year of study and collaboration that effective professional development programs promote “an environment that values and nurtures learning and achievement for both teachers and students.”

They further suggested that making professional development an integral and embedded part of the normal working school day gives teachers the time for inquiry, reflection and mentoring that is necessary for long-term change in practice.

Today, that learning can and should be applied to support professionals.

Though this notion is now gaining steam in the educational community, it will require a push from ESP members to actually make it happen. According to a recent report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the typical school district allocates only about one percent of its budget for improving the abilities of its staff.

“There is no doubt that creating a ‘learning organization’ raises expectations for all staff and student performance,” says **Karen Mahurin**, President of the National Council of ESP. “But more times than not, we have to help a school or a district realize this by



DID YOU KNOW?

There are a wide range of professional development opportunities today, including workshops, presentations, mentoring, modeling, coaching, orientation, Internet learning, personal development, professional skill development, on the job training, and higher education courses.

getting them to rethink their approach to professional staff development.”

Iona Holloway says ESP members she meets with across the country tell story after story about negligible professional development opportunities.

“Too often, professional development activities for support personnel are imposed by the central office with little regard for the individual needs and goals of the staff, with programs of questionable quality and with little consideration for the learning style of adults,” she says. “But by rallying together and supporting the need for quality staff development, we can, and will, help change that.”

Audrey Haskell, a school secretary in North Dakota’s Grand Forks Public Schools, says it is vital that ESPs make professional development a part of their careers. “Every ESP on staff should be treated with respect and the knowledge that they are a valued member of our schools,” she says. “And by committing to professional development, we will be treated as professionals, gaining the respect and recognition we deserve for the valuable roles we play in the education chain.”

This Publication Can Help

This publication attempts to lay a foundation to help ESP members across the country organize around professional development. It gives real examples of how members created and implemented ideas to advance their professions, improve their working conditions, and contribute to student achievement. This guide was designed to help you:

- **Put Your Ideas Into Action:** The goal of this guide is to help local associations move from thinking



WHAT IS “GOOD” PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

According to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) and based on years of research, effective professional development:

- Is ongoing
- Includes training, practice and feedback; opportunities for individual reflection and group inquiry into practice; and coaching other follow-up procedures
- Is school-based and embedded in staff work
- Is collaborative, providing opportunities for staff to interact with peers
- Focuses on student learning, which should, in part, guide assessment of its effectiveness
- Encourages and supports school-based initiatives
- Recognizes staff as professionals and adult learners
- Provides adequate time and follow-up support
- Is accessible and inclusive.

about change to doing it. The guide provides tools to lead professional development change in your own school or district.

- **Debunk the Myth that You Need to be an “Expert”:** Most success stories illustrate grassroots action from members who were concerned about their professions and the success of their schools — their successes were not derived from professional development “experts.” Most learned about the power of professional development by conducting

After you read this guide, you can expect:

- To know action steps for leading professional development change in your association, school, district or state.
- To walk away with new ideas about professional development and knowledge about what ESP members are doing around the country.
- To better understand why it is important to link your own professional development activities with the educational goals of your school or district.

local research and tapping the resources available to them through their Association membership.

- **Make Professional Development a Part of Your Everyday Life:** By becoming an active learner and recognizing how to identify opportunities to take advantage of professional development, you can better integrate it into your life to become better at your job and better in your life.

QUICK REFERENCE

Throughout this publication you will see references to some key concepts represented by the icons below.



Tools to Use Right Now



Simple Successes That Might Work for You



Success Stories: Real Examples of Making it Work



Who We Are as
NEA ESP Members



Quick Facts about
the ESP Profession



Resources for More Information



Professional Development Facts
and Ideas

ORGANIZER'S CHECKLIST

Congratulations! *You've decided to take the next steps to create and implement quality professional development at your site, within your district, or beyond.*

According to research by the U.S. Department of Education, staff development in the most successful schools is no longer the domain of a district-level curriculum supervisor. Instead, it is organized to give educators the authority and resources to take charge of their own learning.

But taking charge means seeing professional development as a process rather than a single project or event. It also means investing in significant planning. This checklist will help you organize your steps as you begin to take charge. Use it in conjunction with the Action Tools located at the back of this guide.

1. Include professional development participants and organizers in the professional development design process.

- Decide who should be involved in the initial professional development working team.
- Invite members and school leaders to participate in your professional development work team meeting.
- Determine the process for the working team.
 - When should you meet?
 - Who will schedule meetings?
 - Who will be in charge of collecting agenda items and sending out the agenda?
 - Who will facilitate the meeting?
 - Who will communicate decisions to those who can not participate?
- Review “WHERE ARE WE NOW?” (Action Tool 1 on page 81) and answer the questions as a team.
- Prepare and plan for distribution of a SURVEY to association members and other staff (Action Tool 2 on page 83).

2. Survey members regarding their professional development needs and wants.

- Review survey data with team and compile a report.
*Note: Support staff development will be best

implemented if there is meaningful involvement from all the players and if the administration conveys its belief in its importance to the school district's mission.

Important! Make sure to follow up with survey participants by sharing a brief recap of survey results via a special newsletter, flyer or bulletin, or even email. It is imperative that people know the survey data is actually being used to construct your professional development program.

3. Research and evaluate current professional development programs and opportunities using the ideas presented in this book. Once you've found an idea or program you like, ask yourself the 10 questions in “WILL THIS WORK?” (Action Tool 3 on page 84).

4. Review “PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL OF US” (Action Tool 4 on page 85). Assess if any of these trainings and resources meet your members' needs and desires based on survey feedback.



BRIGHT IDEA

At your first meeting you may want to spend 30 minutes answering the following four questions. Use these answers to guide your work in every meeting.

1. What are our expectations for how our team will operate?
2. What role will the Association play? (for example: coordinator, provider, facilitator, partner)
3. What are our two or three most important goals this year?
4. What indicators will we use to assess the effectiveness of our team?
5. What process will we use to resolve conflict?

5. Using your conclusions from the two steps above, complete the “ACTIVITY PLANNER” (Action Tool 5 on page 88) for each potential professional development activity (workshop, presentation, on-the-job training program, higher education course, etc.) you plan to conduct. This spreadsheet will help you keep track of your actions and identify:

- Sources and uses of financial resources.
- Other professional organizations (for example: American School Food Service Association) and higher education facilities that you can work with to deliver training.
- Community groups who might serve as a resource (for example: local law enforcement, PTA, Red Cross, etc.).
- Expert sources to assist with staff needs (for example: UniServ directors and other state association staff).

6. Draft a professional development plan using data from all of the tools above.

- Use the “SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN” (Action Tool 6 on page 89) to guide you. Keep in mind that the plan should include:
 - Your local association’s professional development goals.
 - How your professional development goals support the school or district’s long-term plan for both staff development and student learning.
 - You’ll find answers as you brainstorm with your team using Action Tool 1. Be sure you take the time to review existing educational goals for the state, district and school and make sure that your goals fit into those.
- A statement about why engaging in professional development will lead to success in your workplace.
- Proposed professional development content, processes and activities and what resources are currently available to you.
- How you plan to evaluate professional development actions.
 - Identify success measures and plan a process for reporting evaluation findings to the school or district (or sponsor of your workshops).

7. Share the plan with your school administrators and community (teachers, parents, students) via association newsletters and school/district publications.

8. Review “Characteristics of Adult Learners” (Action Tool 7 on page 90). In order for support staff development to have maximum benefits, participants must see the relevance of and have some control over the training.

9. Look at the “Final Checklist” (Action Tool 9 on page 95) to ensure that you have completed all of the necessary steps above.

10. Plan your workshop or training program.

At a follow-up planning session, the group should discuss options for types and times of sessions, emphasizing ongoing activities and coaching. These meetings are also a good time to discuss the contributions made by support professionals, as well as the significance of staff development to achieve “lifelong learning.”

11. Advertise the sessions, giving participants ample registration time.

12. Review “Model Language and Sample Contracts” (Action Tool 8 on page 92) and use it to as a resource to help you bargain professional development language into your next contract. Taking the above-mentioned steps will help to ensure that professional development activities for support professionals are relevant and well-received. And don’t forget to take the time to celebrate your accomplishments!



BRIGHT IDEA

Stay abreast of best practices within the ESP community

Make an action plan for conducting ongoing research and incorporating new ideas into your professional development efforts. For example: assign a member to read *NEA Today* magazine every month and report to your team what other ESP associations are doing for professional development.



ESP CERTIFICATION AT THE STATE LEVEL

“What makes the creation of our Center so special is that ESPs have worked gradually to gain respect for years. Now that respect is being formalized. It’s a statement that we are professionals and have a right to become even better.”

—**Carol Brannan**

Board of Director for the Michigan ESP Center for Professional Learning, and library aide at Central Michigan University

It’s no secret that a key employment issue facing today’s Education Support Professionals across the country is the lack of training and professional development they need to perform their jobs well and advance in their careers.

But thanks to several state programs— in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania — ESPs are quickly gaining the skills and respect they need to make a difference.

“Time and time again, we hear our support staff members tell us their jobs are vastly different than they were 20 years ago, or even 10 years ago,” says **David Crim**, director of the Michigan ESP Center for Professional Learning, which was founded by the

Michigan Education Association (MEA). “Until now, our ESP members have often been overlooked — there’s been little professional development to speak of. That’s all changing.”

Michigan’s ESP Center for Professional Learning was officially opened in 2002 after six years of planning and development. In researching an effective professional education program for ESPs, MEA looked in part to neighboring Wisconsin. There, the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) created the Professional Development Academy in 1992, and launched an ESP Certificate Program in 1994.

Both state programs are very similar, requiring 40 hours of instruction in core and elective categories for a Level One Certificate. Certificate seekers take classes and workshops at approved education institutions, including in their own districts and at universities and community colleges. Once the total hours have been achieved, program participants receive an official state “certification,” which can include financial or merit recognition depending on the district.

“I’ve seen the need for ESP professional education since the start of my career,” says 30-year ESP veteran **Carol Brannan**, who works in library monographic services at Central Michigan University and

ESP CERTIFICATION AT THE STATE LEVEL

also sits on the Center's board of directors. "What makes the creation of our center so special is that ESPs have worked gradually to gain respect for years. Now that respect is being formalized. It's a statement that we are professionals and have a right to become even better."

Joyce Jones, a school secretary in Onalaska, Wisconsin, agrees. In 1994, she spearheaded a program in her home school district to address the important and growing training needs of support staff. Eventually, this program would tie in with the creation of Wisconsin's statewide ESP Certificate.

"I felt very strongly that support personnel in our schools needed training in their fields, whether they drove a bus, worked with children as teacher assistants, cooked and served meals, kept the buildings safe and clean, or worked directly with the public in the offices," she says. "We are called on to handle all kinds of situations — tend to sick and injured children, calm irate parents, administer medications, defuse tense situations, make judgment calls in emergency situations, and be a 'jack of all trades' and master of all."



TAKING LEARNING "ON THE ROAD"

ESP members in Wisconsin are proving that geography is no barrier for support staff to learn, grow and advance in their professions.

Paraeducators **Judy Emerson**, **Louann Pechacek** and **Brenda Olson** recently spearheaded an effort to make sure their colleagues in Amery, a rural community in northwest Wisconsin, had access to quality professional development opportunities.

Today, paraeducators interested in earning an ESP Certificate — or just in keeping up with the latest in their profession — can do so without having to drive dozens of miles for classes. The classes now come to them.

At the trio's suggestion, the Amery School District created a committee of paraeducators to address in-service needs. The committee, which includes both Judy and Louann, then developed courses that fit into the statewide certification program and also arranged for trainings.

In some cases, instructors have been brought into the community from institutions such as the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, area Cooperative Educational Service Agencies, or Wisconsin Education Association (WEA). In other cases, Amery's staff conducts approved courses.

"These special people found a way to make it convenient for themselves and other support staff to take classes on an ongoing basis to help them continuously become better at what they do," says WEA's Professional Development Academy Director **Debra Berndt**, who oversees the ESP Certificate Program. "They serve as a model for others in similar situations throughout the state."

"The classes have been fun and the entire program has brought those of us interested in learning more information closer together," adds Louann.

Most important, says the trio, is the ultimate goal: improving the skills that help educators help children succeed.

"I have seen the paraeducators take ownership of this important training program," says **Cheryl Wesle**, Special Education Director for Amery. "The program has definitely benefited the district, the paraeducators, and the children of this community."

MYTH #1

“Certification doesn’t mean anything to people outside of the Association.”

Though both the Wisconsin and Michigan programs were born from the state associations, they are quickly gaining acceptance from a wide range of education institutions and organizations.

For example, in Michigan, the ESP Center for Professional Learning is supported not only by MEA, but also by the Michigan State Department of Education, Lansing College, and Genessee Intermediate School District. It is the first comprehensive statewide program designed to deliver training for school support staff in a structured program.

The Center itself also does not provide instruction

for the certificate. Organizations that offer a large number of courses and workshops in Michigan — such as community colleges and professional organizations — have a designated coordinator who submits approval forms to the Center and who acts as the verification officer for approved courses and workshops. At a recent Michigan conference, **Tom Watkins**, State Superintendent of Public Education, called the certificate program “something that’s been long overdue” for public school support staff.

MYTH #2

“Certification is nothing more than a piece of paper.”

Both the Wisconsin and Michigan programs were designed to make ESPs become more aware of their personal and professional merit, and the important



A LOOK AT MICHIGAN’S CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The ESP Certification program in Michigan is modeled on a “career continuum” approach, where participants move from instruction in a broad variety of content areas to more concentrated learning in specific topics. The level one certificate program requires 40 hours in four basic areas:

1. **Communication** (Minimum of 5 hours)

Designed to help participants understand their colleagues and express themselves, the communication curriculum covers work-related writing, team-building, speaking and listening skills, decision-making, interpersonal communications, telephone skills, and problem solving.

2. **Legal/Ethical** (Minimum of 5 hours)

This curriculum focuses on the protections, privileges, rights, and responsibilities provided by federal and state law to people in educational institutions. For example, participants might take classes in workplace ethics, confidentiality, child abuse, indoor air quality, Freedom of Information Act, disability laws, and student and employee rights and responsibilities.

3. **Behavior Management** (Minimum of 5 hours)

Course work here involves effective strategies for managing student behavior and covers subjects such as conflict resolution, peer mediation, discipline strategies, crisis intervention, and students with special needs.

4. **Growth and Development** (Minimum of 5 hours)

This curriculum emphasizes an understanding of human growth and development — normal and abnormal — to help school personnel better understand and respond to various situations in the school setting. Topics include age-appropriate behavior and expectations, learning styles, and human relations.

5. **Elective Categories** (Minimum of 10 hours, with another 10 in core or elective classes)

Certificate program participants must also spend at least 10 hours in learning activities directly applicable to daily job responsibilities — for example in classes to learn about technology, nutrition, safety, cultural diversity, hazardous materials, or instructional issues. An additional 10 hours is required to complete the certification process, and can include extra hours from both core and elective areas.

ESP CERTIFICATION AT THE STATE LEVEL



contributions they make collectively to student learning.

This translates into 40 hours of structured professional development that becomes progressively challenging and focused as study continues — an approach known as “career continuum.” Participants move from study in a broad variety of basic content areas to more concentrated learning in specific topics.

“It’s not just a piece of paper,” states Special Education Aide **Julie McFaul** of Greendale, Wisconsin — one of the first ESP members to earn the WEA Certificate. “It’s about improving myself to benefit the students.”

Greendale Library Aide **Gina Hand**, agrees: “I strongly believe support staff need to advance their education goals as much as professional staff. We need to keep up with changing curriculum and technology.”

In fact, experts say that certification programs are a guarantee to the public that those engaged in providing services to the public — be it in medicine, law, construction or education — are equipped with the proper training and experience to do their jobs.

Certification also provides the professional development opportunities support staff need to keep their skills up to date and advance on the job.

As early as 1998, contracts in some Wisconsin districts called for financial incentives for support staff that participated in or completed the program. Such incentives include stipends, salary scale increases, reimbursement of certification expenses and release time, and funding for ESP professional development.

“Now, educational support professionals not only can earn a certificate to hang on their wall, they may be rewarded financially for the accomplishments,” says WEA Professional Development Academy Director **Debra Berndt**, who oversees the ESP Certificate Program.

But even in districts that don’t yet financially reward certificate holders, recipients agree it generally gains them increased respect, helps them improve their job performance and may help open up opportunities for career advancement.

MYTH #3

“Not many ESPs are interested in earning a certificate.”

More than 50 support professionals in Michigan are currently enrolled in the program, and over 5,000 ESP in Wisconsin have received state certificates. And because response to the Wisconsin program has been so great, Wisconsin ESP members have pushed for and received higher levels of training and more certification opportunities in their local areas (see story on page 22).

Additionally, Wisconsin added a “Level Two” certificate that requires an additional 80 hours of instruction, an individual learning plan, a reflective summary of learning experiences and two years of work experience in an education setting.

Plans for a similar Level Two certificate are now underway in Michigan, and a full program will be offered by 2004.

“The certificate program is recognition that the knowledge of support professionals counts, and that they play an important role in the district,” adds **T.C. Motzkus**, staff developer for West Bend schools in Wisconsin. There, support staff can earn all the credits necessary for a certificate by taking courses within the district at no charge.

“Teachers are not the only teachers,” she adds. “In the community, we’re all teaching at all times. We all have something to offer.”



State Certification Resources

The Wisconsin Education Association’s ESP Certificate Program

Contact Debra Berndt at berndtd@weac.org or
www.weac.org/Constit/PDA/ESPCert/main.htm

The Michigan ESP Center for Professional Learning

(517) 333-6260
www.mea.org

Why a Certification Program?

Recognizing an existing need, Michigan’s ESP Center for Professional Learning, MEA and the community colleges worked to develop an in-depth Certificate Program for ESP members. In Wisconsin, the WEAC Professional Development Academy worked closely with the University of Wisconsin system. The goals of both state programs are to:

- **Increase the attention** given to ESP needs for professional development.
- **Raise the level** of professionalism for ESP.
- **Develop broad curricular parameters** so that when participants complete the program, their knowledge and skills related to their individual jobs and to the institution’s mission would be greatly increased.
- **Assure quality and applicability** of all courses and workshops offered through a pre-approval process.
- **Award Certificates** upon completion of a basic course of study.





A STORY OF SUCCESS

“Our Certificate of Distinction program has helped us hone our skills as well as boost our morale. One of the biggest benefits from this program has been the recognition by our school district that as support staff, we are valuable.”

—Gloria Smith

Secretary, Professional Development Department
Pinellas County School District, Florida

“CERTIFYING” PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Pinellas Educational Support Professional Association, Pinellas County, Florida

THAT WAS THEN

Pinellas Educational Support Professional Association (PESPA) Past President **Gloria Smith** noticed several years ago that support staff had “bits and pieces” of professional development — mainly shadowing teachers during their professional development days. What would it take, she wondered, to create a complete professional development program for ESP? At an NEA Conference, she learned about the Wisconsin Education Association’s certification program for its ESP. She quickly rallied PESPA members and district leaders to launch a local, and smaller, version of the program.

THIS IS NOW

Today PESPA is proud to report that Pinellas County Schools awards support staff from all job classifications certification for professional development efforts, as well as a small stipend. This “Certificate of Distinction” program not only builds staff morale but improves job performance.

“A number of our support staff have even used materials created through the program, such as their portfolios, during their formal evaluations,” Gloria explains. “People have also been promoted as a direct result of the certification process.”

Another benefit is the effect the program is having on students. “When support staff feel valued, that attitude trickles down to the students,” she adds. “The students see us as role models. We talk about the importance of being continuous learners, and here we are setting a good example for them.”

Participants in the Pinellas County Certificate of Distinction program must complete coursework in four areas:

- 1. Orientation** — This three-hour orientation covers goal setting and portfolio development.
- 2. District Strategic Directions** — Also three hours, this course covers district background and goals.
- 3. Quality Concepts** — This 12-hour course includes information about the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria.
- 4. Diversity Training** — This six-hour training includes classes in everything from conflict resolution to Holocaust training.

Once the required 25 hours are achieved, participants must then spend another 40 hours taking classes designed around personal and professional development goals. When the total 65 hours have been completed, participants receive a \$200 check, usually just before winter holidays — an amount they will continue to receive on an annual basis. Gloria calls it her “just in time” money, as it makes the holidays a little easier each year.

Gloria says support for the program is strong, and calls the growth “phenomenal” with more than 1,500 support professionals having earned certification. In fact, the program is so successful that new orientations now take place once a month. Planning has also begun on creating a “Certificate of Distinction Level II.”

THIS IS HOW

The concept began in 1998 with a five-member steering committee, which included Gloria. After extensive research to find out how the program

should be designed, the committee offered it to a pilot group of secretaries. Gloria explains, “We chose secretaries because they were all over the district. We knew if the secretaries liked the program then it would be easier to sell it to the other groups. We were committed to the idea that this professional development had to be for everyone, not just for certain groups.” All 120 secretaries who worked in the district voluntarily signed up for the pilot.

Today, most training takes place in the evenings or on Saturdays, and comes from a variety of sources, including NEA UniServ Directors. The local association has also bargained for a non-student contact day each year, in conjunction with the teachers. This catalog of choice day is a paid day designed by support staff.

As an extra, PESPA teamed up with the Pinellas Education Foundation and other groups to provide an annual breakfast for certificate holders. “We now have so many attendees, who also bring their supervisors, that the breakfast has to be held over two days,” Gloria says.

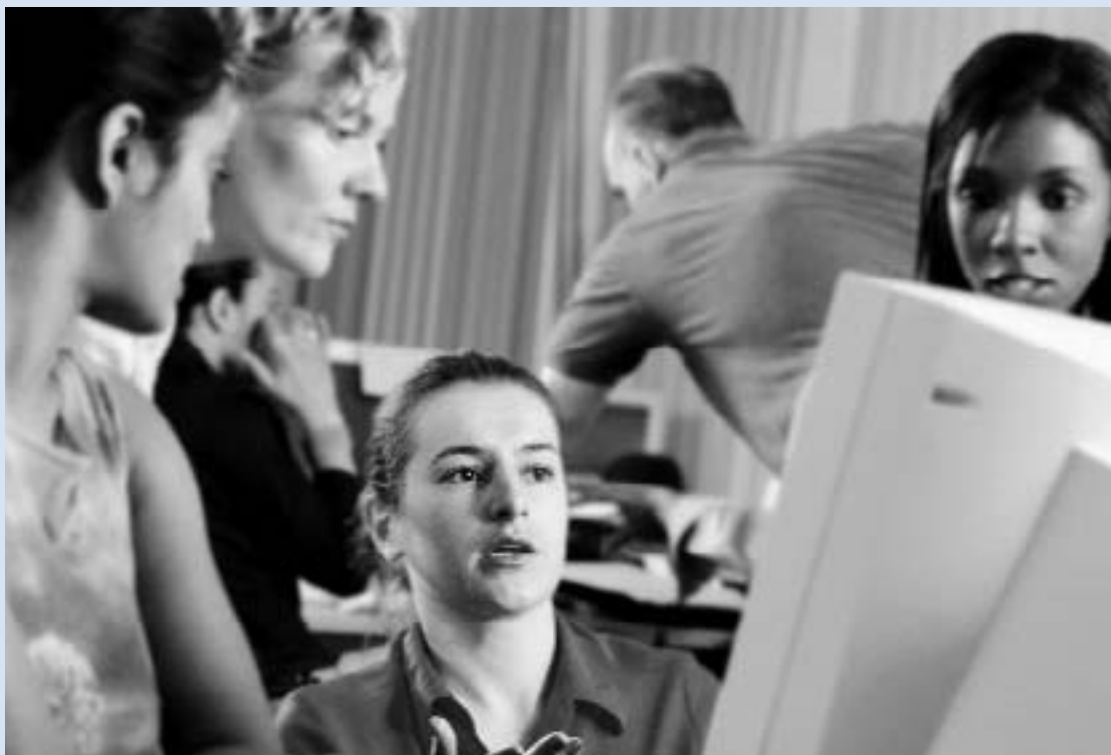
WORDS OF WISDOM

“If a school district does not allow support staff to have training, the first thing ESP must do is remedy that. Then if they receive training but no recognition, support professionals need to organize their members, look to what other states have accomplished, and create a system on their own.” Gloria adds, “The secret to our success is being visionary and believing that support professionals deserve to receive professional development just as much as teachers and administrators do.”

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PARAEDUCATORS

Instructional and Noninstructional Assistants; Teacher and Program Aides; Library Aides, Technicians and Assistants; Preschool Care Givers; Building, Bus, and Playground Monitors; Crossing Guards; Nonmanagerial Supervisors

“The range and flexibility of paraeducator positions make it difficult for most folks to understand exactly where our role begins and ends. We are the mortar that fits where it needs to fit to keep the whole structure together.”

—**Sandie Blankenship**
Special Education Paraeducator
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

The changing landscape of public education has had a significant impact on the roles of support professionals who serve in our schools. Teacher shortages, increasing numbers of English language learners, and the rising enrollment of students with disabilities and other special needs are just some of the factors that make the need for a dynamic school team more necessary than ever. In this challenging environment, paraeducators — also known as paraprofessionals — play an increasingly critical role in improving student achievement.

Paraeducator means “along side of” and like their counterparts in the legal and medical fields — para-

legal and paramedics — they assist and support the work team in a variety of ways. In many districts, these special professionals live in the school neighborhood, speak the language of the students and provide a special liaison to the community and its culture.

Employment of paraeducators has grown steadily and their functions have changed dramatically since they were introduced into classrooms as teacher aides almost 40 years ago. Their duties are no longer limited to recordkeeping, preparing materials, or monitoring students in lunchrooms and other settings. Today, paraeducators are active members in teams that provide instruction and other direct services to students and their parents.



DID YOU KNOW?

By 2010, more than 120,000 new paraprofessionals will be needed in schools throughout the United States.

MYTH #1

“Assisting in a classroom or school isn’t challenging. There’s no need for professional development.”

While many of today’s paraeducators originally came into the education system due to federal programs designed to provide supplemental or special services to groups of children facing academic obstacles, it didn’t take long to realize that they would need ongoing professional development to meet the complex needs of these students.

“The range and flexibility of paraprofessional positions make it difficult for most folks to understand exactly where our role begins and ends,” says **Sandie Blankenship**, a special education paraeducator in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. “But I feel like we’re the mortar that fits where it needs to fit to keep the whole structure together.”

Across America, paraeducators are indeed “keeping it together” by supporting and strengthening the curriculum taught by teachers, assisting with school instructional programs, and enabling teachers to spend more individualized time with students. Because of this, paraprofessionals need and want professional training.

Delaware’s **Gail Uncapher**, President of the Red Clay Paraprofessional Association in Wilmington, says training is especially important because so many paraprofessionals work directly with students.

“Paraprofessionals in Red Clay often have no choice but to deal with the behavior of not only our own students, but other students who are causing trouble,” she explains. “If we attend a training session on how to handle discipline with these students then we are armed with practical tools that we really need.”

In this district, Uncapher, who has been working with mentally challenged children for 30 years, recently developed a one-day training event for her colleagues — with no financial support from the school district.

“I’m absolutely committed to getting my peers some training, so I simply ask potential trainers if they will work for free,” she explains. Uncapher says she is amazed at the caliber of speakers who participate — such as a state trooper to talk about safety, an instructor from the University of Delaware to discuss personal budgeting, and dynamic UniServ directors from the Delaware State Education Association.

“These workshops have been so beneficial” she says. “And I think people are finally waking up and realizing just how important we are in the education equation.”

Iowa’s **Michele Carter**, who works with disabled preschoolers, agrees. Even before Iowa passed a paraprofessional certification law in 2000 — which states that paraprofessionals can earn a voluntary state certification license — Carter earned a five-year Special Needs paraprofessional certificate from the state at Kirkwood Community College.

Now, she explains, she has reached a professional high. Her classroom partner, special education teacher **Emily Dolezal**, “wants me to use what I have learned and is willing to take suggestions, which makes me comfortable and relaxed.”



WHO ARE WE?

- We comprise 46 percent of NEA ESP members — more than 151,000 members
- 81 percent of us work full time
- 66 percent of us do not have an advanced degree, but 38 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 85 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 12 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 71 percent of us work with special education students
- 63 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$10.95 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$15,348

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

PARAEDUCATORS

Thanks to her coursework, Carter also shares the same vocabulary with Dolezal. “I used to say, ‘no, that’s not for me.’ Now I know what teachers are talking about, and if you understand, you can have input.”

Allyson Story, President of the Cedar Rapids Organization of Teacher Associates (CROTA), agrees. For the last several years, Story has led the charge to successfully modify Cedar Rapids’ salary schedule for paraprofessionals who earn Iowa’s voluntary certification license.

“If a paraprofessional takes a professional development class and brings that experience to the classroom, he or she will likely stay on the job longer, and that better serves students,” she explains. Proof positive is that to date, not one paraprofessional who has earned state certification has quit his or her job.

MYTH #2

“There is no room for career growth as a paraprofessional.”

Louisiana paraeducator **Iona Holloway**, a former Senior NEA Executive Committee Member, believes now is a great time to be a paraprofessional.

“It’s becoming a widely known fact: paraprofessionals are integral to successful schools,” she says. “And with new requirements demanded by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now is the time to think about becoming highly qualified so that you can advance into teaching if that’s what you want.”

According to a recent NEA survey, nearly half of the nation’s 650,000 K-12 paraprofessionals — 49 percent — say that’s exactly what they want: training to become teachers.

Dr. Cathy Wooley-Brown, who developed Florida’s Paraprofessionals as Teachers Program — an innovative curriculum that provides alternative routes to teacher certification for support professionals — says that today, “most school districts in America are developing comprehensive plans to provide professional development for paraprofessionals because they know they can’t afford to lose these employees.”



“Put simply, the paraprofessionals are the people who know the kids and the climate of the school,” she adds. Not only do they already have hands-on classroom experience, but “paraeducators also offer ethnic diversity and a level of maturity that directly benefits school districts. And because they are already a part of the community and local schools, they are unlikely to move away or flee the teaching profession.”

California’s **Kathy Crummey**, president of the Hayward Education Association, believes finding teachers from within is a great way to build schools of the future. “Paraprofessionals have already shown their dedication in the classroom. They are established in the community and have a sense of history,” she explains. “They understand basic classroom management, plus district policies and procedures. They are a valuable resource and can be a wonderful way to fill the teaching shortage.”

More than ever, districts around the nation are developing teacher training programs specifically for their paraprofessionals.

For example, New Jersey’s Trenton Paraprofessional Association (TPA) has bargained a new contract with the district that includes up to 12 tuition credits paid per year by the district if participating paraeducators choose to pursue other career opportunities within the district.

“There’s a constant need to hire teachers in this urban district,” explains **Maureen Cronin**, New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) UniServ

Representative. “The board saw paras as a large resource. They represent a dedicated workforce already in place and living in the community that the district had not fully tapped.”

Through the program, paraeducators with no college credits can take workshops and trainings offered through NJEA and outside sources. The contract also contains language on sabbatical leaves. Five paraprofessionals per year may receive sabbaticals for the purpose of pursuing an education degree. They keep their health benefits and half their salary and in return make a commitment to teach in the district for three years.

In Hayward, California, the Paraeducators Teacher Training Program has been providing college tuition assistance and support to paraeducators wishing to pursue a teaching career for three years. It is a collaborative venture by the Hayward Education Association, Hayward school district, Chabot Community College, California State University-Hayward, and other local associations.

Through state funding, and matching district funds, the program pays for paraeducators — who must be employed at least half-time by the district — to take classes toward a teaching credential.

Daphne Baxter, a paraeducator who works with emotionally disturbed students, is just one of many paraeducators taking advantage of the opportunity. “The program has been a godsend,” says Baxter, who didn’t have the money to go back to school on her own. “It has enabled me to go back to school now, instead of waiting five or six years.”

Sandra Vasquez, a bilingual and special education resource paraeducator says it’s not easy, but it’s something she wants to do. Working 30 hours a week at Longwood Elementary School, taking 12 units at CSU-Hayward and being a single parent is a juggling act.



“I have to prioritize,” she explains. “After I help my daughters with their homework, then I have to do my homework.”

And unlike some new teachers who don’t realize how difficult the job is, **Monica Ruiz**, a paraeducator who works in a before- and after-school program, says the Teacher Training Program has helped prepare her for the reality of teaching.

“My confidence is high. I’m not afraid of being in the classroom or being with children,” she explains. “Because of my work, I’m not intimidated about handling a class. Because I already have experience, I know exactly what I’m getting into.”

MYTH #3

“Paraeducators do not affect student achievement.”

Student achievement depends on rigorous standards and a knowledgeable education team — including paraprofessionals.

Additionally, because paraeducators are such an integral part of their communities — more than 75 percent live in the school districts where they work — they play a very important role in the lives of the students they work with. More often than not, they go above and beyond their job descriptions to make school better for their communities and the children.

New Jersey’s **Patricia Beaulieu**, a teaching assistant at Green Township School, is one of them.

In addition to setting up an after-school tutoring program in conjunction with the student council, she also helped establish an evening study group for seventh and eighth graders, and even prepared instructional materials for selected special needs students. On her own time,



she completed specialized training on working with autistic students. And it's these new skills that enabled an autistic third grader to remain with his peers in a neighborhood school setting.

"She has been able to befriend even the most disaffected students and provide direction and guidance in the most caring manner imaginable," says teacher and former classroom partner **Monica Kroger**.

In Pennsylvania, Special Education Assistant **Cecilia Pitcher**, who works at Pocono Mountain High School, helps run a "Volunteers for Understanding" workshop that breaks down racial and cultural barriers and stereotypes.

This native of Ecuador has also put together a student Latino dance group that has performed on TV, in front of Girl Scouts, and even at an army depot.

In Coupeville, Washington, **Deanna Schulz**, a paraeducator and playground supervisor, started a school-wide mediation program that uses peer mediators to settle playground conflicts. Adapting a technique she learned during a training in conflict resolution, Schulz trained student mediators for 10 hours before and after school. Armed with clipboards and active listening skills, these young mediators now help their classmates find solutions to common playground clashes.

"They use language that gives complainants the power to choose, such as 'I see you guys are having

a problem. Would you like us to help you with that?'"

But perhaps a story that **Gwen Andrews**, a veteran paraeducator in North Carolina, shares sums it up best.

She recalls how she and **Sherry McDonald**, her classroom partner at Konnoak Elementary in Forsyth County, once talked a special education student out of thinking he was stupid.

"We sat this child down and told him he had value and could be anything he wanted to be if he believed in himself," she says. After providing him personalized attention for much of the school year, the child started to thrive.

"By providing personal attention and helping build up students who come in with low self-esteem, I make a difference," she adds. "We all make a difference."



TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR LEARNING

There is growing recognition that staff development for paraeducators can be key to increasing the success of the students they work with. Here are some examples of topics for paraprofessional staff development:

- Understanding the rights of children and parents
- Learning about diversity and cultural heritages
- Learning the history of special education laws and current federal and state mandates
- Understanding the distinction between the roles of teachers and paraeducators
- Assisting children to cultivate self-esteem and interpersonal skills
- Communicating effectively with team members, students and parents
- Managing stress
- Learning skills for time management.



DEALING WITH ESEA

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) may be on the books, but that doesn't mean support professionals are on their own as they work to meet the federal law's new requirements.

ESEA, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act, outlines specific qualifications for paraprofessionals who work in Title I-funded programs. These paras must have a high school diploma and either an associate's degree, two years of college, or a passing score on a state or local assessment that demonstrates their ability to assist with instruction in reading, writing, and math. Newly hired paraprofessionals must meet the requirements immediately, while those hired before Jan. 8, 2002, have until 2006.

Among NEA members, 66 percent of paraprofessionals have less than a two-year degree, according to a 2002 NEA ESP Membership Study.

How are local associations helping their paraprofessional members meet the federal requirements? Here's a look:

NEW JERSEY: In New Jersey's Trenton Paraprofessional Association (TPA), where about 75 percent of the local's 300 members currently do not meet the education requirements of ESEA, association leaders arranged for several two- and four-year colleges to provide classes at a local high school.

TPA also bargained tuition reimbursement into its contract. The district pays tuition expenses up front, so the paraprofessionals never pay anything out of pocket. The local also organized a workshop to help those paraprofessionals who return to college.

NEW MEXICO: The Classified School Employees Council of Las Cruces, New Mexico, secured additional education for its paraprofessionals. The local worked with the Las Cruces Public Schools, Dona Ana Branch Community College, and New Mexico State University to create a "career ladder" for paraprofessionals, says **Irma Valdespino**, president of the local. The school district pays tuition for paras who pursue an associate's degree at the community college. Paras then can apply those credits toward a bachelor's degree at New Mexico State University, where the school district also covers the cost of tuition and books.

Paraprofessionals who complete 60 credit hours advance on the salary schedule as well, says **Milas McLeod**, a middle school paraprofessional and vice president of the local Association. And in 2003, the local will bargain for additional compensation to reflect the new standards paraprofessionals must meet.

"To retain these people the district will have to restructure the salary scale," McLeod says. "As people get better educated, school officials are going to have to pay better."

NORTH CAROLINA: Members of the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) turned their state paraprofessional assessment into an organizing tool.

Through its Center for Teaching and Learning, NCAE offers local and regional workshops to prepare paraprofessionals for WorkKeys, the assessment selected by the state department of education for ESEA.

The Association offers the workshops only to NCAE members, so UniServ directors and local presidents publicize them during membership recruitment drives, says **Angela Farthing**, manager of the Center for Teaching and Learning. ESP membership has increased 25 percent since the workshops started in August 2002, she says.

More than 60 percent of paraprofessionals who complete the workshops pass WorkKeys the first time, Farthing says. Those who don't, receive remediation or attend additional review sessions.

WANT MORE ABOUT ESEA? NEA has developed a comprehensive online site at www.nea.org/esphome/issues/eseapara.html where you can find answers to frequently asked questions, checklists and steps you can take right now to get informed about how the law affects you, and links to other resources. You can also call the NEA-ESEA Hotline with questions or suggestions: **(866) 373-3732**.



“No matter what job you do, you are a professional. School districts need to realize that it is to their advantage to provide meaningful and direct professional development for all its staff.”

—**Barbara Morris**

Paraeducator, Colonial Paraprofessional Association
Delaware

LIKING LONG-DISTANCE LEARNING

Colonial Paraprofessional Association
New Castle, Delaware

THAT WAS THEN

Even though Delaware paraeducators in the Colonial school district formerly worked the same number of days as teachers, 185 days per year, they received inferior professional development. As a middle school paraeducator, **Barbara Morris** felt slighted.

“Paraeducators either tagged along with the teachers during professional development days or stayed in the classroom to straighten up,” explains Morris. “Even though we’re the teachers’ right hands in the classroom, we felt like we were being told our professional development needs weren’t as important as theirs.”

So the then 120-member Colonial Paraprofessional Association (CPA) took professional development matters into their own hands — eventually looking to Wisconsin and Utah for help.

THIS IS NOW

Though it sounds like an odd place to begin for a small Delaware local, Wisconsin is where Barbara attended her first National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP) conference. It’s also where she first heard of a professor from Utah State University who was developing a distance-learning program in conjunction with NRCP.

Today, Colonial paraprofessionals no longer have to

“tag along with the teachers” during professional development days, Barbara says. Instead, they attend courses online through a distance learning program sponsored by Utah State University. They benefit from such courses as “Enhancing the Skills of Paraeducators” and “Effective Behavior Management Practices for Paraprofessionals.” They can also attend “Colleagues in the Classroom: Building Effective Teams” — a course designed for both teachers and paraeducators.

“The distance learning course that we are now taking is three hours one night a week for nine weeks and all new employees are required to take this course,” explains Barbara. “For the first 18 hours of courses, participants receive a salary increase. After that, they receive a \$13 per hour one-time stipend for the remaining hours.”

A host professor from Utah “beams in” via computer to an auditorium where Barbara and her colleagues sit to present topics for discussion and explain the lessons. With the help of a facilitator — a Delaware State Education Association UniServ Director — participants then engage in activities and discussions about the topics presented. Any “homework” is done on personal computers at home.

One of the first homework assignments was to review a list of roles and responsibilities for paraeducators and decide if the items were the responsibility of the teacher or paraeducator — an assignment that was “refreshingly relevant to our jobs,” says Barbara. The online course has also taught the paraeducators how to write an Individual Education Performance (IEP) document for students, a task that is usually not in a paraeducator’s job description but is helpful to know, Barbara adds.



Paraprofessional Resources

THIS IS HOW

Barbara says that getting the Colonial district to approve an instructional paraprofessional training via long-distance learning wasn't as hard as she had imagined. With a supportive assistant superintendent behind them, the Association was quickly able to bargain professional development stipulations into the contract — which actually spells out an after-school provision.

The Association also bargained in a salary increase for those who participate in the program. In 2003, Level 1 participants earned an annual \$750 salary increase and Level 2 paraprofessionals earned an additional annual \$1,000 salary increase.

Barbara believes it's a win for the paraprofessionals, the district, and the students. "We're saving the district a whole lot of money because they don't incur any bills for special equipment or other costs," she says. "Most important is that we're utilizing a relevant training opportunity and becoming better at what we do because of that opportunity."

WORDS OF WISDOM

"Research NRCPP online at www.nrcpp.org and present a plan to take to your administrators. You can get a full description of all courses at www.trisped.org," Barbara says. "Districts need to realize the value of our professional development and the impact it can have on students."

Technology has made our world a "wired one," Barbara adds, and professional development online is just one of the revolutions to come from that. "Computers are everywhere, long-distance learning is everywhere," she says. "There's just no reason it can't be in schools, too."

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*See CPA's Contract Language on page 93.

The NEA Paraeducator Handbook — This online publication is intended as an information source for paraeducators to give them a strong and accurate sense of the increasing nation-wide recognition that they are full-fledged members of the professional education team. Local education associations and unions will find useful information in the Handbook to help them represent paraeducator employees in collective bargaining.

www.nea.org/esphome/nearesources/para-handbook.html

The NEA Paraeducator Handbook: Professional development for paraeducators

— This section in the book above profiles several professional development programs for paraeducators already in existence. Included are programs offered by university and college departments in partnership with school districts; state standards or credentialing programs requiring paraeducator training; and a peer mentor program worked out between a local Educational Support Personnel (ESP) unit and a school district.

www.nea.org/esphome/nearesources/para-handbook/sec9.html

Education Support Professionals to Teacher Transition Programs

— This NEA site contains a comprehensive state-by-state list of teacher-training programs and opportunities available to support professionals.

www.nea.org/recruit/minority/espteach.html

Understanding How ESEA Affects Paraprofessionals

— This series of brochures provides information about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as The No Child Left Behind Act, as well as tips for educational staff and supporters on proactive ways of responding. Brochures are available specifically for paraeducators, administrators, teachers, and local leaders, in HTML, Word (.doc) and PDF format.

www.nea.org/esphome/issues/espforparas.html

Roles for Education Paraprofessionals

— This is a publication of the U.S. Department of Education.

www.ed.gov/pubs/Paraprofessionals/index.html



“To have the best classroom we can have, teachers must work with paraprofessionals as a team. This means that we must receive the same training they do.”

—**Diane Robinson**

Special Education Records Paraprofessional
Caesar Rodney School District
Camden, Delaware

SHARING TRAINING MONEY WITH TEACHERS

Caesar Rodney Education Association
Camden, Delaware

THAT WAS THEN

Caesar Rodney Education Association (CREA) teachers used to have access to a “travel fund” — money set aside to attend conferences. But for their needs, paraprofessionals couldn’t get near that money. **Diane Robinson**, currently a special education records paraprofessional and a former pre-K paraprofessional, didn’t think that was fair.

She was tired of staying behind in the classroom or, when permitted to attend, being the “third wheel” at the teachers’ workshops. When the wake-up call came with regard to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and new Title I requirements (see page 33), Diane joined the huge outcry with her fellow paraprofessionals. She explains, “We wanted the training. We wanted to know what was going on in special education. How else were we to find out about new laws and regulations, things we need to know for our jobs? Teachers would attend conferences, then walk back to the classroom to explain the concepts to us. This was very inefficient. Information would get lost in translation.”

THIS IS NOW

Gone are the days when paraprofessionals were merely told what to do by the classroom teacher. Says Diane, “Our Title I paraprofessionals are

changing quickly. Now everyone is starting to see the real need for everyone to be trained. This is a trend that is not going to go away.”

Diane remembers when professional development for each teacher was limited to a maximum of \$400. “They had to pay for their substitutes out of that money. That didn’t leave much for the workshops,” she explains. Now, the school district picks up the tab for the substitutes. Says **Cynthia Angermeir**, a school psychologist for the Caesar Rodney School District, “It was especially difficult for our special-ists, like the speech pathologists, who have to be licensed. You can’t get too far with \$400.”

Per a new contract in 2002, CREA’s travel fund for each school year is now approximately \$10,000, and both teachers and paraprofessionals can submit an application for a share of the money. The application is then reviewed by a handful of Association members along with school board members and district office administrators.

THIS IS HOW

For two years prior to the new contract, negotiations centered on language to strengthen CREA’s contract. The bargaining team looked closely at teachers’ rights, noticing that the rights of the paraprofessionals were largely ignored in the contract.

Professional development was one of the areas to which the school district was responsive. Says Diane, “It wasn’t a major issue. They were quite agreeable to having language in the contract that guaranteed us opportunities for professional development.” She adds, “Given this age of accountability, the district knew they just couldn’t refuse.”

Diane sums up her reasons why the paraprofessionals wanted to be able to use the travel fund. “For 10 years, we didn’t get to use any of the money. We believe that we are as important as the teachers. In fact, we’re working in the trenches right alongside the teachers — that has to count for something.”



Paraprofessional Resources

WORDS OF WISDOM

“For us, since teachers and paraprofessionals are in the same bargaining unit, our best allies in our battle for better professional development were teachers who knew the value of a trained paraprofessional. Once they worked with us in the classroom, they realized what an asset we were to them and to the students.”

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*See CREA's Contract Language on page 93.

ESEA on the Web

The U.S. Department of Education maintains a website dedicated to the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act for parents and the general public. The site includes an overview of the law's requirements in text form and as a PowerPoint® presentation. The site also offers a glossary of terms, fact sheets, an online newsletter, and links to other useful websites.

www.nochildleftbehind.gov

www.ed.gov/nclb

LET'S TEAM UP — The NEA Professional Library has released a new edition of *Let's Team Up! A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals*. This unique checklist is written to help paraeducators, teachers, and principals understand their roles and responsibilities as they work together. The book includes practical suggestions for paraeducators on clarifying their jobs and their relationships with students and school staff. You can order a copy for \$5.50 by calling 800/229-4200 or visiting www.nea.org/books

The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services (NRCPS) — This national organization is a source of research and information on paraprofessional training and information.
www.nrcpara.org

Project PARA

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) offers free online training for paraprofessionals. Project PARA is a self-study program paras can complete on their own or with a local school district. The program includes units on classroom organization and management; instructional skills; behavior management; effective communication with students, teachers, and other professionals; and special education programs and procedure. If paras enroll with a local school, then results from the program are E-mailed to an instructor or mentor provided by the school. This instructor provides the participants with feedback and monitors their progress.



Paraeducator Resources

Paraprofessionals also can use the resources on their own, although UNL cannot provide feedback or support.

www.para.unl.edu/default.html

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources — link to articles of interest about paraprofessionals and career advancement.

www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

U.S. Department of Labor's
Occupational Outlook Handbook on Teacher Aides

stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos153.htm

IDEA News (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) — information for professionals, families and the public about IDEA and strategies to improve educational results for children and youth with disabilities. www.ideapractices.org/ideanews

Designing State and Local Policies for the Professional Development of Instructional Paraeducators

This report published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Program and Planning Development is a general guide to state and local education agencies that are designing policies for paraeducator development. Existing programs that demonstrate the key elements of effective paraeducator development are highlighted. Promising programs in the states of Iowa and Washington are described in some detail. Resources for possible standards and guidelines are suggested for states and local educational agencies exploring how to appropriately train their paraprofessionals. Information about post-secondary educational programs and the current scope of paraprofessional training and employment are also presented.

www.nwrel.org/planning/reports/policypaper2002.pdf

Guide to Developing Paraprofessional to Teacher Toolkit

This guide discusses the value of paraeducator-to-teacher programs; obstacles paraeducators face in becoming teachers; important elements of effective programs; what is involved in staff and recruiting participants; and how to build support for a program. www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/paraed/RNTtoolkit.pdf

Paraprofessionals: A Resource for Tomorrow's Teachers

Prepared by Mary Jean LeTendre, Director of the Title I Program, United States Department of Education, this article discusses the role of paraprofessionals in Title I schools and offers funding sources to assist those wishing to become highly qualified. www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CEP/parfinl.html

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources Site includes full-text resources; abstracts from ERIC Database; paraeducator-to-teacher career ladder programs; and an electronic discussion forum on paraeducators. www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

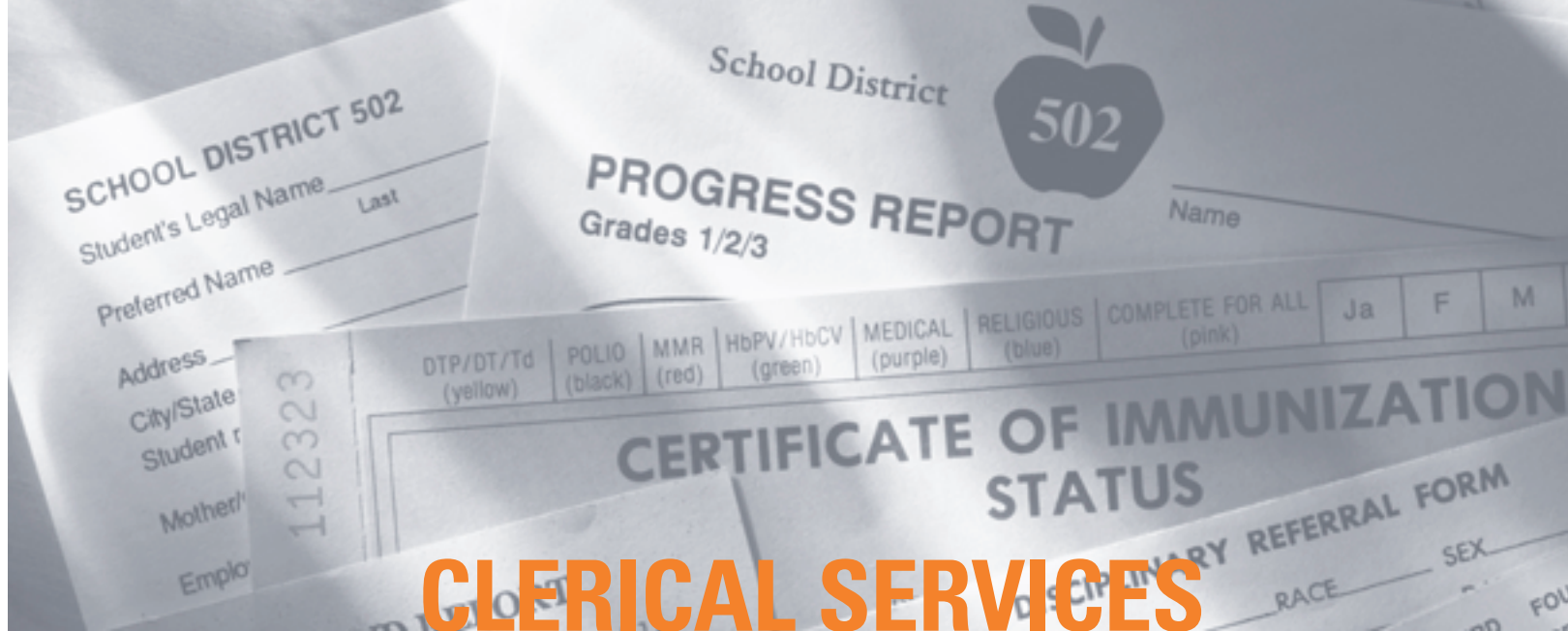
National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals

This site addresses policy questions and other needs of the field, provides technical assistance and shares information about policy questions, management practices, regulatory procedures, and training models that will enable administrators and staff-developers to improve the recruitment, deployment, supervision, and career development of paraprofessionals. www.nrcpara.org

Roles for Education Paraprofessionals in Effective Schools: An Idea Book

Roles for Education Paraprofessionals in Effective Schools: An Idea Book offers decision makers, program planners, and educators an overview of strategies that can enhance the contributions of paraprofessionals to school and classroom effectiveness. The report presents profiles of several innovative and effective programs that focus on the work of paraprofessionals and that offer them work-related opportunities for advancement.

www.ed.gov/pubs/Paraprofessionals/index.html



CLERICAL SERVICES

Secretarial, Clerical and Administrative Services; Office Assistants, Bookkeepers, Accounting and Financial Assistants; Statistics, Payroll, General Office Assistants; Registration and Records Attendants; Telephone Operators; Nonmanagerial Supervisors

“I was everywhere and into everything, kind of like a ‘Chief Information Officer’ at a big corporation.”

—Karen Mahurin

Former school secretary in Alaska,
President of National Council for ESP

Karen Mahurin, President of NEA’s National Council for Education Support Professionals, served as a school secretary in Alaska for 22 years before moving south to Oregon.

In those 22 years, she saw first hand how America’s changing society has impacted public schools. “As a school secretary, I saw more and more students and families with financial and emotional challenges, as well as special circumstances,” she says. “They needed extra attention and as a secretary and someone they knew and trusted, I was there to give it.”

In the last two decades, the workload for school secretaries and other clerical staff has increased dramatically. Some of the factors include an increase in student mobility, the growing documentation needed to keep track of special education students, a

surge in children who require verification of school enrollment in order to receive public assistance, and the current nursing shortage.

“I originally joined the Association for the liability insurance,” Mahurin admits, “because nine days out of ten, I was the one giving students their daily medications for asthma, Attention Deficit Disorder, and more.”

Because public schools mirror their communities, new issues are arising yearly for public school staff — and especially clerical services professionals.

For example, the increasing numbers of foreign-born students are bringing new language challenges into the schools. Secretaries must gather and maintain



DID YOU KNOW?

More than 75 percent of Clerical Services ESP live and vote in the school district they work for. More than one-third have children in the same school system.

CLERICAL SERVICES

information for all students, including those who are not native English speakers.

Increased standardized testing for students has also created a whole new area of recordkeeping and information gathering for secretaries and other clerical workers.

Another big challenge is the growing number of students who are also parents. Clerical services members are often very involved with student parents — arranging appropriate school schedules, setting up appointments with medical personnel, and sometimes even making arrangements for babysitters.

MYTH #1

“Secretaries sit in the central office all day and do busy work.”

Karen laughs at the thought of sitting in an office all day but says she knows it is a common misperception about the role of clerical staff professionals.

“I was everywhere and into everything, kind of like a ‘Chief Information Officer’ at a big corporation,” she explains. “I was the absolute front line of public relations with parents and the community, yet still had to balance the mountain of paperwork the school had to process.”



CREATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Pennsylvania school secretary **Darryl Rowland** helped chart a “change of course” at Abington Junior High School when in the late 1990s, she wrote for and received a grant from NEA’s National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE).

Her idea? To bring together several groups of school stakeholders — including members from the Abington Secretaries/Aides Association and Abington Education Association, along with district leaders and Parent Teacher Organization members — to build community understanding and support for the use of high-end technologies.

Proposed by support professionals, the team worked to implement a computer training and mentoring program that was eventually adopted by the entire school district.

“We believe that all school employees have a role in supporting student learning by modeling the successful use of technology,” says **Sheila Shapiro**, coordinator of curriculum and instruction at Abington Junior High School.

“When I first heard that we were all going to get training on computers,” remembers **Dolores Hannum**, a secretary at the junior high, “I was very excited because it was a wonderful opportunity to have classes available that would help us better ourselves and help us do our jobs better.”

Dolores, along with secretaries **Josephine Haviland** and **Bonnie Kash**, wrote a training manual codifying the word processing and database management activities for which support staff is responsible, while teacher **Bob Heine** and computer lab aide **Megan Maule** organized a team of student technology coaches who, in the first three months alone, provided 62 hours of assistance to Abington staff.

“Not only was our computer training worthwhile and fun, but we felt that everyone was made more of a team,” says Josephine. “Support staff was looked at as equals and as a valuable part of the district.”

Teacher **Janine Sack** agrees: “There was no line between teachers and support staff when it came to technology,” she says. “We were all learning together, as colleagues, and we had never done that before.”

For more about NFIE: www.nfie.org

She refers to a famous quote by Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor under former President Bill Clinton. “He once said that anyone who has been in the military, and in the Navy in particular, understands the meaning of the expression: ‘The chief runs the navy,’” she explains. “Reich said, ‘As it is in the Navy, so it is in a public school district. The secretaries keep the school running.’”

Saundra Roberson, secretary to the principal at Booker T. Washington High School in Shreveport, Louisiana, agrees.

“I produce programs and brochures for all school functions and various departments, fulfill material and supply requests from teachers, train students and staff on software programs, and help coordinate reproduction of school publications,” she says. “I also organize homecoming and all of our football activities.”

MYTH #2

“Computers have made it easy for clerical workers.”

While an outsider might think computers have made jobs easier for clerical workers by decreasing paperwork, the computer age has actually increased information collection and storage. The many gaps in training with new computers and software also make it difficult for clerical services personnel to meet their ever-changing job requirements.



WHO ARE WE?

- We comprise 17 percent of NEA ESP members — more than 56,000 people
- 91 percent of us work full time
- 73 percent of us do not have an advanced degree, but 17 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 81 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 5 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 25 percent of us work with special education students
- 53 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$12.77 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$26,985

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

“We are required to work smarter with all this technology, but since many districts don’t invest in our professional development needs to teach us how to work smarter, we go out and learn it ourselves.”

Like Mahurin, Louisiana’s Saundra Roberson paid for her own professional development — earning a computer training and certificate from a reputable consulting company. She then used the knowledge to lead workshops and teach school staff how to use software programs — such as Microsoft Word — more effectively and efficiently.

Karen says most clerical ESP members she talks with have indeed paid for training out of their own pockets.

“I’ve ‘trained myself,’ or ‘I’ve learned on the job’ are big phrases among clerical staff,” she says. “I also know of numerous clerical services employees who have devised their own training programs based on immediate need and then instituted these programs within their own circle of co-workers, completely independent of any supervisor assistance or even knowledge.”

CLERICAL SERVICES

Ohio's **Debbie Szalkowski**, secretary for Special Pupil Services at Maple Heights City Schools, is one of them. When her colleagues expressed an interest in getting help to manage extra tasks, she applied for a grant from National Foundation for the Improvement in Education (NFIE) to study strategies for project and time management, and then held district-wide training sessions to share the techniques.

Christine Koyish, a Secretary in Michigan's Ionia High School's Guidance Department, attended a series of technology seminars to become an "expert" in the school's software. With the help of her colleagues, Koyish then wrote a manual for employees and began hosting workshops for teachers and student staff aides.

"Computer training, time management training, communications training...we would benefit from all of it," Mahurin adds.

MYTH #3

"Secretaries have little impact on student achievement."

"Because so many of us live in the districts we work in, we care deeply about our students — as if they were our own kids," explains Oregon's Mahurin.

Ohio's Debbie Szalkowski agrees. When she noticed that many Maple Heights students were going straight from high school to the workforce, she started freely passing on her prioritizing strategies to them. "I'm touching students in a meaningful way," she says. "ESP staff has a really important role to play in supporting student achievement." When Louisiana's Sandra Roberson realized not many students had access to a home computer, she

began working with them after school with research on the computer for reports and other assignments — on her own time.

Colorado's **Joann Falk**, a Human Resources Secretary for Pueblo School District 70, helped design a new program for substitute teachers, start a beautification project for several of the district's schools and create an elementary school media center — all in addition to her "daily" roles.

Says this NEA 2002 Support Professional of the Year: "We must work as teams to improve education for all of our students, no matter what we do for a living."



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT...A MUST!

Appropriate and meaningful professional development opportunities will enable clerical staff to better meet and resolve daily issues that arise with America's 21st Century challenges. Some training ideas:

- Computer and Software Skills
- Language Arts
- Records Management
- Time management
- Financial recordkeeping, spreadsheets and databases
- Accounting
- Business law
- Office administration and technology
- Business communications
- School law



A STORY OF SUCCESS

“Being the secretary means you’re usually the first person to be seen by the public who come to the schools, and your professional behavior in the office and over the telephone puts the school’s best foot forward every day.”

–**Nancy Herring**

Secretary/Bookkeeper, George W. Long High School
Ozark, Alabama

ASKING FOR SUPPORT

Dale County Education Support
Professionals Organization
Ozark, Alabama

THAT WAS THEN

At first, Secretary/Bookkeeper **Nancy Herring** was pleased when in 2000 the Alabama legislature granted two additional days to all education employee contracts to be used specifically for professional development. Then she realized there were no provisions for actually offering the training — the school district assumed that the support employees would come in on those two days and just do their jobs. That didn’t sit well with Nancy, so she started her own quest for professional development opportunities for the members of her small local, the Dale County Education Support Professionals Organization (DCESPO).

THIS IS NOW

According to Nancy, the superintendent and principals have come to realize that training for ESP pays off for everyone. Nancy explains, “It has come to the notice of the superintendent and principals that training to help us do our jobs better makes things better for the whole school system. By receiving drug awareness training, for example, we became much more knowledgeable about a problem with the student population. Now it’s not just the teachers who know what to watch out for, and consequently, we now know better how to help.”

Of late, training for each job category has gotten much more specific. Just after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, all of the support staff assembled to hear about school safety from an FBI agent and a postal worker, among other speakers. A vendor from New York recently demonstrated a new floor wax system to the custodians — a system that the custodian supervisor thought would be less expensive to use in the long run. A technology grant from NEA has also allowed DCESPO to purchase a computer and supplies as well as receive computer training.

THIS IS HOW

The first hurdle to arranging professional development was funding. Nancy was able to find creative ways to overcome this problem. Living in a small rural town has its advantages — Nancy “just went around and asked for favors.” She was friendly with bank managers and grocery store managers — who gladly offered assistance — such as providing lunch for workshop attendees.

Even on a larger scale, Nancy found it effective just to come out and ask. Troy State University had been offering a program called “Technology in Motion” to teachers, which provided training in computers. The trainers would go right to the schools, and due to an agreement between the school district and the university, the training was provided at no cost to the teachers. Here was a system that was already in place, and all it took was a phone call to ask, “Can support employees get some training, too?” The answer was yes.

DCESPO has been documenting its training sessions for the superintendent, and, says Nancy, “he has approved our efforts by providing his support.” Validation for the local’s efforts has also come from colleagues in other school systems, adds Nancy. “They see that something different is happening and want to know how they can get professional development for their support employees.” Nancy’s advice to them is “Just ask.

If no one is providing training for you, then you organize it yourself. If the school administrators don't have to organize the workshops, they won't say no when you do the work!"

WORDS OF WISDOM:

"By working so hard to arrange professional development for myself and my colleagues, I ran the risk of overstepping my boundaries with the administration. However, I knew if we were going to get anything it would have to be on our own, and you don't get anywhere without taking a few risks."

CONTACT

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Clerical Services Resources

The EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit, which is co-sponsored by NEA, shows schools how to carry out a practical plan of action to improve indoor air quality.

www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tools4s2.html

The National Association of Educational Office Professionals (NAEOP)

has chapters in a number of states.

www.naeop.org

Professional Standards Program: A Certification Program for Educational Office Professionals

is a program run through NAEOP.

www.naeop.org

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

is a good place to find information about safety on the job, including in schools.

www.osha-slc.gov

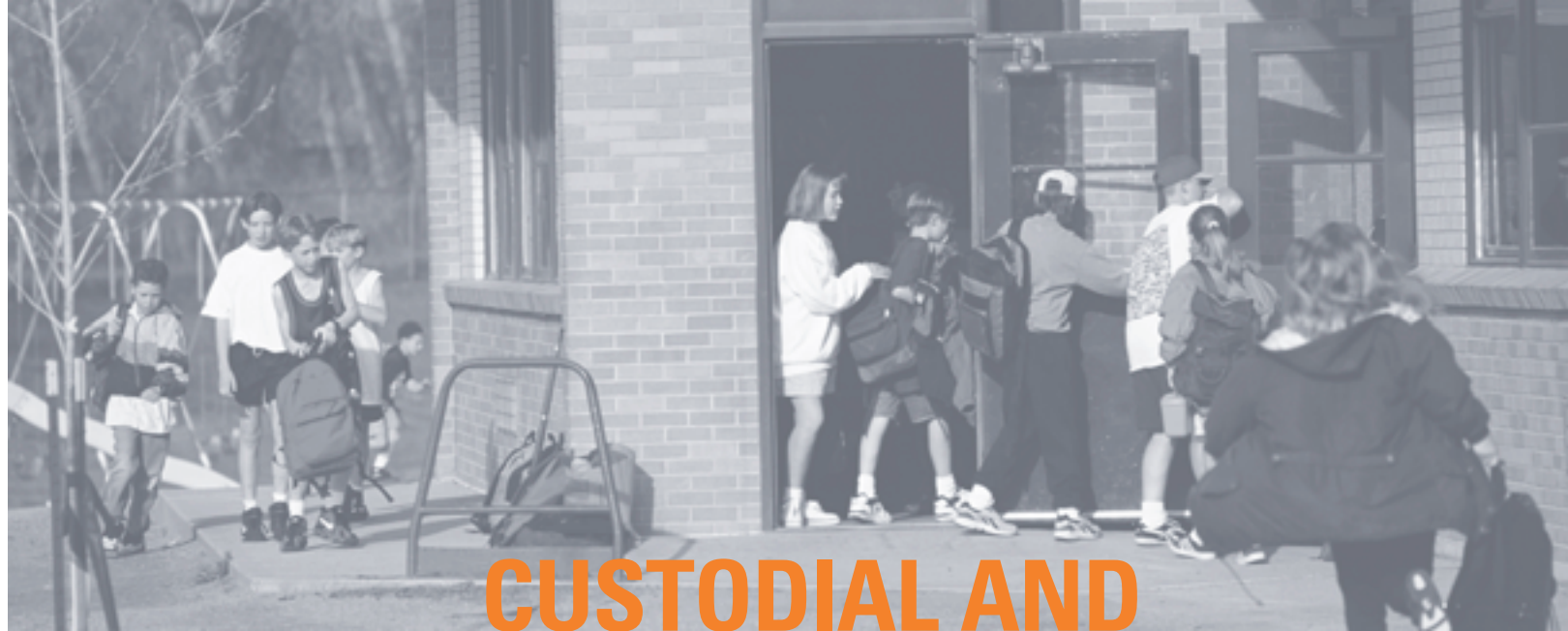
Administrative support personnel may be interested in **The International Association of Administrative Professionals** (formerly Professional Secretaries International), which describes itself as the "World's premier organization for office professionals." The association also hosts numerous online learning seminars for support staff.

www.iaap-hq.org

The Association for Work Process Improvement (TAWPI)

800-99TAWPI

www.tawpi.org



CUSTODIAL AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Building and Grounds Maintenance Staff; Custodians and Housekeepers; Mechanics and Repairs; Laborers; Helpers; Warehouse Personnel; Nonmanagerial Crew Leaders

“My job is to make sure teachers concentrate on teaching, food service workers on feeding children, and office personnel on caring for children and parents.”

—**Martin Meyer**

Head Custodian, Fernan Elementary School, and NEA ESP of the Year 2003
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

Kentucky’s **Nancy Toombs** spent two years as a paraprofessional and 16 years as a custodian. And though it’s been more than a decade, she can’t help but recall a tragic event that changed many lives during one of her custodial rotations.

“One of our custodians left an aerosol can of a chemical that we use for freezing gum on top of his cart when classes were changing in the hallway,” she says. “A little boy thought it would be funny to spray the can in his mouth, and it basically froze his mouth and lungs.”

“It was a horrible day for all of us.”

Had the custodian been given training about chemical safety before he began his job, the accident might not have happened. “There are many districts out there that hand support professionals keys to the building and say, ‘go work,’” says Toombs, Kentucky Education Support Professionals Association (KESPA) President. “That’s hazardous not only for ESP but for all school community members.”

Today, custodians in Henderson County, Kentucky meet every other month with Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) officials to review playground, chemical and electrical safety, as well as learn about bloodborn pathogens and other important issues important to custodial and maintenance professionals. Toombs says the district custodians also recently established a successful mentoring program.



DID YOU KNOW?

Custodians sweep, mop and wax 31 billion square feet of floors in public schools per year.

CUSTODIAL AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

But not all custodial and maintenance staff are so lucky. According to a recent NEA ESP study, fewer than half of support professionals receive regular health and safety training on such issues as hazardous waste removal or asbestos, even though many face these issues on a daily basis.

MYTH #1

“Custodians and maintenance workers don’t need professional development.”

Custodian and maintenance employees are “guardians of the school environment” for students, staff and the community, and their workloads continue to grow as new technology and equipment requires new skills, increased duties and responsibilities.



DID YOU KNOW?

Maintenance and landscape workers mow 7.1 million acres of public school grounds per year.

One of the most important responsibilities is to insure the proper indoor air quality, uniform temperatures, and healthful ventilation. And often with little, if any specific or meaningful training, the custodian must also deal with dangerous materials such as laboratory spills, toxic materials, and, of course, asbestos.

That is why a lack of meaningful, multi-tiered professional development programs are a real health and safety issue for the public school custodian — and the entire school community.



USING SKILLS TO BETTER OUR SCHOOLS

Want proof that custodians and maintenance employees can make a real difference?

In 2001, New Hampshire Custodian **Bob Waterman** — affectionately known as “Mr. Bob” to the K-12 students at Sacred Heart Public School — used skills he learned in an architecture class to turn the school from dull to delightful.

“The school looked like a prison,” he says about the 100-year-old building that once housed a Catholic school. “If you can imagine an old two-story brick building surrounded by an eight-foot high chain link fence, where even the playground is paved with asphalt, then you are picturing Sacred Heart.”

Bob mapped out ideas for a new school look — with grass, curved walkways, flowers and tree — and spent six months getting feedback from the principal, teachers and other support staff.

He then presented his ideas to the local Parent Teacher Organization and the school board, which unanimously agreed to fund construction. In just one summer, the school was transformed, as Bob took the lead in working with contractors and city officials on the school’s behalf.

When kids went back to school in the fall, they were met with Bob’s dream: flowers, park benches and new playground equipment on a large grass field.

“I’m not a sentimental guy, but what I witnessed on those children’s faces the day they came back to school still chokes me up,” he says. “One little girl told her mom, ‘Look at how beautiful my school is.’”

Bob is proud to use his architecture know-how to better the school. “I’m always looking at how we can better utilize our space so the kids will benefit,” he says. “It’s so important to me that kids have a good place to learn, and I’m going to use all of the resources in my power to make sure they do.”





WHO ARE WE?

- We comprise 9 percent of NEA ESP members — nearly 30,000 people
- 93 percent of us work full time
- 92 percent of us do not have an advanced degree, but 10 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 61 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 3 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 67 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$13.10 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$23,783

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

Delaware Custodian **Mike Behm** agrees. An activist in the Lake Forest Education Association, Behm works with his UniServ director to arrange innovative ESP workshops such as “Health and Personal Safety” and “Cleaning for a Healthy Environment.”

Custodians as environmentalists? Absolutely. In Behm’s mind, a custodian’s job isn’t cleaning buildings, but providing the safest, healthiest environment possible for learning — be it through disinfecting classrooms or helping fourth graders prepare a garden bed for a unit on botany.

Behm believes that support professionals should know how their jobs impact student learning, no matter what the title.

“Support staff represent one-third of all school employees,” he says. “And we all have something very important to contribute to learning.”

In Washington, Shelton Middle School Custodian **Hilton Malone** actually sought out ways to get professional development to members of the Shelton Education Support Personnel Association. As President, Malone formed a team of custodian and maintenance personnel, education assistants and food service employees to meet regularly with district administrators.

“We wanted training about stress reduction, crisis intervention with students, and on various types of equipment — and we made that clear to administrators,” he says. “To continue to improve the services we provide, we must receive access to quality professional development opportunities. It’s highly beneficial to us as a team, and to our students.”

Malone also encourages his local members to sit on district “solution teams” to help solve problems identified by staff.

“It’s a way for our voices to be heard,” he says of the nine-member teams. “These teams absolutely bring up staff morale by getting more people involved in problem solving.”

MYTH #2

“Cleaning and maintaining are not hard tasks to do.”

Sandy Wilson, a Kenowa Hills, Michigan Maintenance Worker, says he feels like he goes to a different job every day.

“My job offers a lot of variety — clearing snow from building walkways, spraying weeds, doing minor electrical repairs, installing switches and lights, plumbing, spill clean-up, and maintaining boilers to keep them running efficiently and lasting as long as they should,” he says.

He and his team have also built a fireproof wall in an elementary school boiler room, painted the school’s gym and installed a new ceiling, and



CUSTODIAL AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

completely remodeled a small building once used for storage, enabling a pre-primary special education program to move in — ultimately freeing up more space in an elementary school.

But that's not all. He is also versed in computers — having to control the buildings' new computerized heating and cooling system from a laptop and desktop computer. He holds state certification in both commercial pesticide application and asbestos abatement, as well as a basic boiler operator's license. To maintain certification, Wilson takes an annual course in asbestos abatement.



“I maintain a clean, safe environment conducive to learning,” he explains. “It's hard for anyone to learn if the roof is leaking, if it's too hot or cold, or if half of the toilets don't work.”

In March 2003, NEA President Reg Weaver presented the annual NEA ESP of the Year award to **Martin Meyer**, head custodian at Fernan Elementary School in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

“Marty's job doesn't begin or end at the schoolhouse door,” Reg explains. “Whether he's testifying in Boise for ESP legislation, lobbying in Washington, DC, writing letters to the editor, running a political campaign, or challenging and educating public education's foes, Marty gives his all and he's doing it for the children he works with every day of the week.” Meyer's colleagues say as head custodian of a 49,500 square foot elementary school, his responsibilities — and philosophy — extend far beyond the simple cleaning of the facility.

Meyer himself agrees: “My job is to make sure teachers concentrate on teaching, food service workers on feeding children, and office personnel on caring for children and parents.”



MYTH #3

“Student achievement has nothing to do with the work of custodians or maintenance employees.”

In more ways than imaginable, hundreds of custodians and maintenance workers make a profound impact on students everyday.

Tucson, Arizona's Amphitheater High School Custodian **Mark Cavendish** is one of them. Several years ago, Cavendish organized a school-to-work program — called “Jobs for Today's Students” — in which more than 50 students shadow ESP employees as custodians, computer aides, secretaries, even health inspectors.

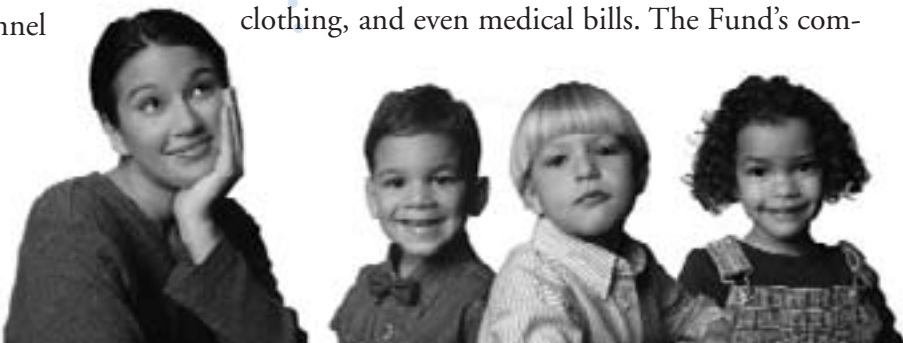
“I care about these kids and I care if they drop out of school,” he explains. “My thinking is that if students work for the school rather than fast food restaurants or in other businesses, they are more likely to stay in school.”

Cavendish gained funding for the program through parent outreach and political organizing. He's also brought the Tucson Literacy Coalition to the high school campus, where more than 250 volunteers assist in ESL adult and family literacy instruction.

And he's done it all on his own time.

Phil Krueger, a custodian at Park Lawn Elementary School in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, along with his wife, anonymously “adopted” a family that couldn't afford to pay for school lunches for their three children.

His generosity touched Park Lawn's staff so much that together they created “Phil's Fund.” In just two years the staff has anonymously donated more than \$3,600 to families at the school for groceries, winter clothing, and even medical bills. The Fund's com-





mittee has also developed a network of dentists and doctors who volunteer their time to the children.

“It’s all about helping these children succeed,” Krueger explains. “If they can succeed in school, then chances are good that they will succeed in life.”

Pennsylvania Custodian **Jim Verazin**, who has a passion for computers, used his free time to create a Web site for his school, the Greater Nanticoke Area Education Center — a middle school just south of Wilkes-Barre. Eventually, he included information about all of the district’s schools on his site.

In 2001, the school board recognized Verazin’s volunteer efforts by “adopting” his site as the district’s official homepage, which now includes everything from schedules to links for Web homework resources.

The district’s teachers, many who were new to using the Internet, also benefited from Verazin’s help. In a section called “Classrooms,” Verazin built in space for each teacher to have his or her own Web site. But he did more than just post the information they supplied to him. He found additional Web resources for teachers and showed them how to use them.

In Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, **Kenny Bloch**, a 28-year veteran custodian, spent every Saturday and Sunday at Neil Armstrong Middle School during a recent summer break to paint a mural in the cafeteria depicting the school and its grounds and students.

He’s also used his art talents to paint a picture of a German castle with knights on horses for a foreign

language teacher’s classroom and another mural in the health room that depicts the various seasons of the year. Next up: another cafeteria mural that includes a police dog and an antidrug message for students.

“The bottom line is that we’re not in this job to get rich, we’re in this job for the kids and it doesn’t matter what role we play,” explains Sandy Wilson. “This job is about teamwork.”

Verazin adds that it’s not as easy as it looks. “When someone says ‘janitor’ you think of a guy with a cigar pushing a broom,” he laughs. “But there’s so much technology involved in school buildings now that we all have to be technicians, and we all have to be good at what we do.”



THE KEY TO SUCCESS?

EXTENSIVE AND MEANINGFUL TRAINING

Professional development for custodians and maintenance employees should include some of the following elements:

- Building security, including neighborhood watch programs.
- Asbestos training, including information about state and federal regulations pertaining to the handling and removal of such material.
- Bloodborne pathogen training, including the potential risks of blood and human waste cleanups. This should include information about the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard drafted by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- Hazardous equipment, including how to operate all machinery.
- Hazardous chemicals, including extensive training in the use of cleaning chemicals to reduce injuries.
- Ergonomics, including how to properly lift to avoid back injury and information about new cleaning tools and products that can minimize back strain.
- Time management, including how workers can prioritize their tasks so they can accomplish them efficiently and effectively.



A STORY OF SUCCESS

“We have wall-to-wall ESP in our district, everyone but the bus drivers. We bargain as a whole and make the effort to work together and listen to everyone in order to best meet the needs of all of our members, no matter what they do during the day.”

—**Debra Chandler**

Attendant Secretary, Rogers High School
Spokane, Washington

TAKING OVER THE TRAINING

Spokane Education Association
Spokane, Washington

THAT WAS THEN

It would seem a monumental task to offer quality and ongoing professional development to members of a local Association to which food service workers, custodians, secretaries, and paraeducators all belong. But ESP leaders in the Spokane Education Association (SEA) accomplished this task when they worked as a team to take professional development out of the hands of the district and put it into their own.

THIS IS NOW

Debra Chandler, an attendant secretary for Rogers High School in Spokane, as well as secretary for Washington Education Association’s ESP Professional Development Committee, is proud to note that there is now \$15,000 allocated for three training conferences per year for SEA members. Each conference is organized by those who really know what they’re doing — the education support professionals themselves. Furthermore, all of the participants receive credits for attending, which makes them eligible for district-paid stipends.

“We conducted a survey to find out what our members needed to learn. We wanted to be very job specific. What we got back were needs like boiler repair classes, truck driving instruction, and computer classes,” recalls Debra. “It was predictable that secre-

taries would ask for computer classes, but our survey showed they also wanted classes on stress management, wellness, and training for how to handle bullying. These are skills we really need in our work environment.”

THIS IS HOW

The Spokane school district used to provide training on specific job-related issues for support educators in selected schools or work units. But trainings weren’t always available, and only 100 or so of Spokane’s 1,400 plus ESPs would get any in-service during a typical year.

In the summer of 1998, SEA proposed to district management that members be in charge of ESP training because they felt they weren’t getting what they needed to grow their careers. Management agreed to an initial one-year trial.

During that first year, SEA had only enough money to offer three in-service training sessions. To their surprise, more than 200 support professionals participated, which paved the way for more money to host bigger conferences in the following years.

The group formed a committee of members — at least one representative from every job category including custodians and secretaries — to organize the annual events. The committee then surveyed members about what trainings they needed and wanted. Each year, the committee comes to agreement on the member needs and then goes about recruiting trainers from around the state.

It’s a new — and effective — way of working, says Debra. “When I visited NEA in 2002 for a professional development committee meeting, they were so happy at what we have been able to achieve so far, and so are we!”

UniServ Director **Sharon Bacon**, says there is a change in attitude today that has built over the last several years because of the new system. Both support



Custodial and Maintenance Services Resources

staff and administrators are realizing, she says, “that school support staff have demanding jobs and they need professional development options, just like teachers do.”

WORDS OF WISDOM

“All support professionals need to go to classes to better themselves — just like teachers,” argues Debra. “It was not hard at all to get the school district to go along with our ideas for professional development because the district truly values us. They also saw the excitement and response from ESP when we put together meaningful and valuable trainings.”

CONTACT

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The EPA’s *IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit*, which is co-sponsored by NEA, shows schools how to carry out a practical plan of action to improve indoor air quality.

www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tools4s2.html

NEA “Custodial Issues” Web site offers a host of information about workloads, safety and health, and professional development.

www.nea.org/esphome/issues/custissu.html

The Red Book — Exposure to Blood on the Job: What School Employees Need to Know. Contains basic information that every school employee should know about dealing with Hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS viruses. Order a free copy from the NEA Health Information Network (HIN) on-line at www.neahin.org.

The Healthy School Handbook: Conquering the Sick Building Syndrome and Other Environmental Hazards In and Around Your School, NEA, 1995. Order from NEA Professional Library Distribution Center, PO Box 2035, 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis, MD 20701-2035. 800-229-4200
www.nea.org/books

Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov





FOOD SERVICES

Cooks and Food Preparation Workers; Cashiers and Dieticians; Technicians; and Nonmanagerial Supervisors

“Food Services ESP affect public school children in many ways. They not only provide the food and ensure proper nutrition, but they serve as role models for teaching kids how and what to eat at school.”

—**Iona Holloway**

Former NEA Executive Committee Member
Louisiana

Everyone knows students must eat to learn. So when it comes to providing the most basic component for student success, it’s the Food Services ESP members who do that.

Rosemarie Wood, head cook at Sedgwick Elementary in Maine, says food has become a vital part of education “because a lot of kids don’t get what they need at home.”

“Sometimes the kids just don’t want to eat when the bus comes early in the morning,” she adds. “But by the time they get to school, they are usually hungry.”

Only in recent years has it been acknowledged that without proper nutrition, students can’t learn and thrive in school. Studies have demonstrated that students who come to school undernourished are often uninterested in learning and unable to concen-

trate — factors that significantly impact the ability to learn. Hungry children also miss more school, losing even more ground academically.

“Food Services ESP affect public school children in many ways,” says **Iona Holloway**, a veteran paraeducator in Louisiana and the only ESP member to sit on NEA’s Executive Committee. “They not only provide the food and ensure proper nutrition, but they serve as role models for teaching kids how and what to eat at school.”

MYTH #1

“Food Service employees don’t impact student achievement.”

Lynn Lenker and other food service employees know that their nutritious meals and love for kids directly impact student achievement.



DID YOU KNOW?

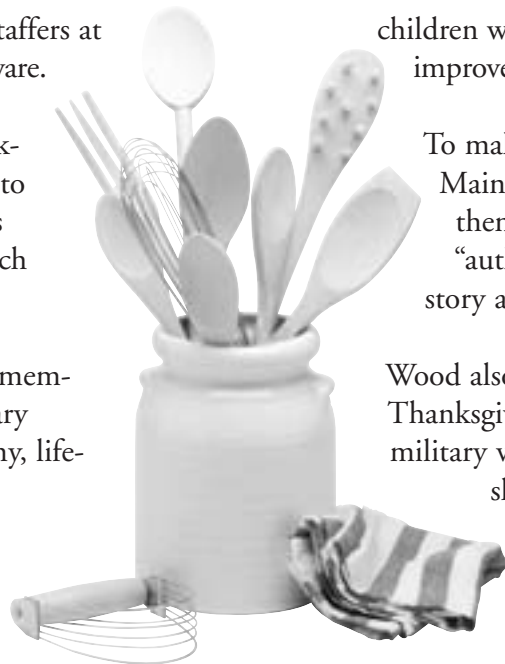
On average, NEA’s K-12 ESP members have 10 years of experience with their current employer. This employment stability means that education support professionals really know their schools.

Lenker is one of 10 food service staffers at Middletown High School in Delaware. She says she is quite proud of the quality of their baked goods, chicken cheese steaks, and subs — not to mention the fully balanced menus and range of options they offer each day to MHS's 1,200 students.

The meals they serve, these NEA members say, meet recommended dietary guidelines and help develop healthy, life-long eating habits.

“We’re proud that we’ve reduced total fat consumption to 30 percent of calories in all of our meals,” Lenker says. “We provide a wholesome breakfast and lunch.”

Hungry children, she adds, are lethargic, irritable and have shorter attention spans. “Studies show that



children who eat a nutritious breakfast improve their reading skills and test scores.”

To make meals fun and educational, Maine’s **Rosemarie Wood** plans several theme lunches each year. These include “author’s day,” when lunch relates to a story all the students know.

Wood also helps arrange special lunches on Thanksgiving and Halloween and days when military veterans are invited to dine and share stories with students. Her favorite theme was “Indian day,” when she researched and created a meal of Native American food for students.

“The kids are the most important part of my job,” says Wood, who was honored in 2000 as Maine Education Association’s Support Professional of the Year. “I just try to focus on them and interact with what’s going on in their classrooms.”



INSPIRING KIDS WITH FOOD

As a graduate from the world-renowned Culinary Institute of America in New York, **Michael Gaul** knows what it takes to be a good cook. And as Food Service Director for the Colorado River Union High School District in Arizona, he used his experience to implement a first-class food service training program for kids.

In the late 1990s, Gaul started a culinary arts class teaching special education students how to work the machinery in the cafeteria. By 2000, the program had expanded to include courses on food preparation with a wide variety of students participating, especially those who wanted to become chefs.

His program quickly grew so popular, with food so good, that Michael and his students frequently cater community events with dishes such as Chicken Florentine and Apple Upside Down cake. He also opened “Le Bistro,” a student-run restaurant open to the public at various times throughout the year.

To get the restaurant off the ground, his students did the cooking, a shop class built the woodwork, a creative writing class wrote the menu, while French students translated it. A business class tackled Le Bistro’s books.

“My philosophy,” he says, “is that because there is so much in the kitchen that needs to be done — chopping, baking, even paperwork — there is a job for everyone.”

Because he worked as an executive chef in some of Laughlin, Nevada’s best hotels before joining the district, he also uses those relationships to help students after they graduate.

“If students can take my class and get a job, or get the experience they need to go to that next level, then I’ve done what I set out to do when I came to work for the schools.”



WHO ARE WE?

- We comprise 9 percent of NEA ESP members — more than 29,000 people
- 69 percent of us work full time
- 94 percent of us do not have an advanced degree, but 6 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 67 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 1 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 21 percent of us work with special education students
- 69 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$10.70 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$18,146

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

MYTH #2

“All these employees have to do is put the food on the trays.”

Today, the school Food Services department is modern, extensive, technologically complicated and very busy. Child nutrition programs have expanded as school administrators have become aware that poorly nourished children do not learn.

Unlike the days of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, Food Services employees today must focus on more complicated and important aspects of their jobs than ever before, including proper food handling, proper use and handling of chemicals, adapting recipes for certain children, nutrition education and practice, and 21st century student disorders, such as anorexia, bulimia and obesity.

Lenker, former president of Delaware’s Appoquinimink Food Service Workers Association, believes there are many misconceptions about her job — including how “easy” it appears to be.



“You’re constantly moving on this job,” she says. “We’re always cooking, even during the last lunch, to keep food fresh. After that, we clean trays and utensils, sterilize the serving line, and sweep and mop.”

“Even three hours on the job can feel like 10,” she adds.

And because many of today’s families have two wage earners, they have little time for chores like food shopping, meal planning and cooking. In many places, school meals have become the major source of nutrition for many children, and the interaction between Food Services employees and students and their families has increased dramatically.

MYTH #3

“Privatized companies can offer better food service.”

This team approach to child nutrition and delivery of food services has created the need for much greater training and cooperation among Food Services employees. Unfortunately, good training and professional development for Food Services workers is rare.

And because there are generally no employment standards, regulations, certifications, licenses, or ongoing training and professional development for the men and women who work in Food Services, the threat of privatization strikes this group of professionals more often and more completely than almost any other category of public school employees.

In Chicago, for example, city officials privatized the food services department at the nation’s third largest school district to “improve the quality and wholesomeness of student food.” But in 2002, they admitted that privatization had become much more costly than the school-run program, an increase of 50 percent in just five years.

A City Department of Public Health report also found that “rodents and bugs infest Chicago school kitchens and cafeterias. Chips of paint float into cooking pans...frozen entrees wrapped in cellophane

are warmed then left to sit for hours in plastic containers that do not hold a safe temperature. And children's illness outbreaks are mishandled and brushed aside."

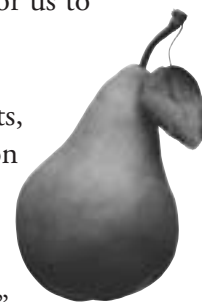
Louisiana's **Iona Holloway** says when Food Services is owned and operated by school employees, mishaps like this rarely happen. "People come to work for the schools because they love and care about children," she says. "As support professionals, we take accountability and pride in our work."

Still, the effects of privatization on Food Services employees continue to be dramatic and long-range, including loss of income, health insurance, and pension benefits. If ESP are retained by the privateer in some capacity, they work for lower wages, often with no benefits, no promotional opportunities and no job security.

Helen Loop, Head Cook at LeRoy Elementary School in Michigan, knows this first-hand. In the late 1990s, she led a nearly two-year battle to take

back the Food Services Division from a private consultant. "The firm, Canteen/Chartwell promised not to change much, but then it did. The company changed our hours, cut portions, and made us feel like there was always someone waiting for us to mess up," Loop says.

But with the help of teachers and parents, Loop and the Pine River ESP Association won back the right to run the division. "We're now allowed to serve kids healthy, home-style meals in decent portions and in a friendly environment."



Food Service Resources

American School Food Services Association
www.asfsa.org

The Case Against Privatizing Educational Support Services
www.nea.org/privatization/privcase-privatization.html

Handbook of Noncommercial Foodservice Management
www.chipsbooks.com/hbnoncom.html

Food and Nutrition Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic

Center for Applied Safety and Food Nutrition
www.vf.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/nutrlist.html

Tufts University Center on Nutrition Communication
www.navigator.tufts.edu

International Food Information Council Foundation
www.ific.org

American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org/nuresources.html



LOOKING FOR TRAINING TOPICS?

Training in the area of food services has largely emphasized the needs of supervisors and managers. As more team approaches within schools have developed, there has been a greater appreciation of the training needs for all those who work in the food services area. Some of the topics that should be addressed include:

- Proper food handling
- Awareness of hazardous bodily fluids
- Proper use of chemicals
- Being able to adapt recipes
- Safety and sanitation
- Kitchen math
- Preparation and merchandising
- Equipment
- Nutrition education



A STORY OF SUCCESS

“My goal is to get the word out that food service workers are a collaborative group. We are just as interested in education as healthy meals.”

–**Kathy Creasy**

School Nutrition Manager, White House Middle School
Franklin, Tennessee

MOVING OUT OF THE CAFETERIA AND INTO THE CLASSROOM

Tennessee School Food Services Association
Franklin, Tennessee

THAT WAS THEN

Kathy Creasy is not a certified teacher, nor is she an administrator. She is a school nutrition manager at White House Middle School in Sumner County, Tennessee, as well as a member of the Tennessee School Food Services Association (TSFSA) and NEA's affiliate, the Tennessee Education Association (TEA). She also teaches volumes about world hunger to students, teachers, and administrators. This teaching experience was not in her initial job description, but then Kathy picked up a copy of *School Food Services Magazine*, the official publication of the American School Food Service Association, and saw an enclosed curriculum kit, called “Going Global.” With 3,000 children dying every six seconds from hunger, Kathy felt the calling to educate students and anyone else she could reach about this terrible problem.

THIS IS NOW

Now Kathy is often seen out from behind the school's kitchen counters. She has made presentations not only to students but to many other groups. In summer 2002, Kathy made a presentation to teachers and principals at the Tennessee Educational Leadership Conference. Then in October, she appeared at the “World School” at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, to talk to college students from all over the world who were studying to become teachers.

Kathy is pleased at the reception she has been given by her audiences. “The kids don't care if I get up in front of them and maybe stutter a little. They are just so receptive to the subject matter,” she explains. “And it doesn't hurt that at the same time they are learning that cafeteria workers can make a difference, that the old school cook stereotype is just that, a stereotype.”

THIS IS HOW

Kathy initially shared “Going Global” with **Susan Dalton**, TEA's coordinator for Instruction and Professional Development, who was then working as a social studies teacher. Susan was interested in the project from a social studies perspective. Kathy just wanted to get the word out on world hunger. Together they made a great team.

Their first step was to make a presentation to the seventh grade students at White House Middle School. Says Kathy, “The students were very receptive. We pointed out to them the problem of world hunger worldwide. Because it was right after Sept. 11, 2001, we focused on how females especially have suffered under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The food was going to the boys while the girls were starving. This really hit home with the students.”

Kathy and Susan did not limit their focus to social studies. They expanded to the subject of science, making a presentation on world hunger to sixth grade science students. “Our emphasis was on different land ‘biomes,’” explains Kathy. “We wanted to inform students that the problem of world hunger is not just social or cultural. Much of it can be attributed to scientific factors, such as typhoons wiping out crops, no access to fresh water, and droughts.”

For a teen wellness class, Kathy baked bread and made rice not to feed the hungry students but to illustrate an important point about malnutrition. “Although food always talks in any classroom, my point was that there are people all over the world who eat just these foods for breakfast, lunch, and

dinner every day for their entire lives. Even if they have food to eat, it may not be what their bodies need to sustain them.” Although the students joked that eating french fries every day wouldn’t be so bad, they also agreed that it wouldn’t be a nutritionally sound option.

So far, the campaign to get the word out on world hunger has not been a financial burden on the school district. The curriculum kit that Kathy found in *School Food Services Magazine* was offered for free, except for a small shipping fee. TEA has been instrumental in funding the few travel expenses that Kathy has incurred, and Kathy’s supervisor, **Linda Becker**,

has been cooperative in allowing her the flexibility she needs in her job to accomplish her goals.

WORDS OF WISDOM

“Food service workers, especially managers, might try getting out of their comfort zone once in a while to see what they can achieve. With a problem as big as world hunger, someone has to step up. That person can be a teacher, a principal, or a cafeteria worker.”

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TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Bus Drivers; Truck and Van Drivers; Vehicle Mechanics;
Garage Workers; Nonmanagerial Supervisors

“Driving a bus is like having to keep track of 65 students in a classroom with nothing but a rear-view mirror.”

—Nancy Toombs

President, Kentucky Education Support Professionals Association (KESPA)

“He’s just a bus driver.”

Have you heard that one before? What most people don’t realize is how important bus drivers — and all transportation employees — are to the education equation. Across the nation in small towns, big cities and everywhere in-between, bus drivers are the first people to greet children on their way to school and the last to bid them goodnight as they drop them back home.

Public school drivers and all employees involved in a district’s transportation department have a challenging and comprehensive profession — one that is becoming more complex year after year. These employees must keep up with new safety requirements, stay abreast of laws and regulations, and pass comprehensive skills tests to hold a commercial driver’s license. They must also stay up to date on ever-changing certification requirements for busses and other commercial motor vehicles.

It’s not surprising then that bus driver training has long been recognized as an important part of pupil transportation. In fact, school bus drivers are the ESP group with perhaps the longest track record for professional development. Since 1939 there have been 12 national conferences on school transportation which have produced “standards” with regard to pupil transportation.

But what about comprehensive professional development training that helps with the **non-technical** aspects of the job?

MYTH #1

“Bus drivers are...just drivers.”

“We care deeply about safety and discipline,” says **Jill Travis**, a 13-year driver from Rockdale County in Atlanta, Georgia. “As drivers, we deal with a lot of traffic and car drivers who ‘can’t see’ a school bus. And too often, a child who is a model student inside



DID YOU KNOW?

Bus drivers travel 4.4 billion miles every year to safely transport students to school.



WHO ARE WE?

- We comprise 11 percent of NEA ESP members — more than 145,000 people
- 65 percent of us work full time
- 86 percent of us do not have an advanced degree, but 11 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 76 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 3 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 53 percent of us work with special education students
- 64 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$13.32 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$13,851

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

the building can become disruptive when he's stuck for 20 to 40 minutes on the bus with an audience." Drivers could benefit by having access to professional development training about issues such as student discipline, she adds, as well as input into the school's discipline process.

Mark Perez, a UniServ Director in Georgia, agrees. "A big complaint is that when drivers go to administrators with disciplinary problems, they get little or no support. Too often these professionals are considered 'just drivers' who have nothing to do with educating a child."

Kentucky Education Support Professional Association (KESPA) President **Nancy Toombs** says she isn't surprised. When there is a lack of meaningful training opportunities for drivers, she says, many administrators and community members consider transportation personnel as simply "drivers."

But one look at the multitude of skills transportation employees need to do their jobs and the doubters may change their minds. In addition to knowing about buses, these ESP members must be skilled in the computer routing systems used by their districts,

versed in communications equipment such as two-way radios and video surveillance equipment and good at keeping track of paperwork, including seating charts, pre-trip sheets, checklists for inspection safety, emergency contact forms and much more.

Toombs says she knows plenty of drivers who have even been asked by their districts to help administer medicine to children as well as document the behavior of "problem" students.

"Driving a bus is like having to keep track of 65 students in a classroom with nothing but a rear-view mirror," she says.

MYTH #2

"Bus drivers can't get anything out of professional development trainings."

Preparing bus drivers with the skills and personal knowledge required to face the school bus challenges of today is good for students, parents, schools and communities.

And with valuable and relevant career enhancing professional development opportunities, transportation employees can demonstrate just how much more there is to their jobs.

For example, last year more than 500 bus drivers in Kentucky received intensive professional development through a partnership KESPA has with the state's Center for Safe Schools. The trainings centered on new bus safety laws, how to effectively communicate with children, and how to build relationships with supervisors.

"The feedback from participants was amazing," says Toombs, who helped organize the six sessions. "They took the learnings back to their every day work to become better professionals and better employees."

In New Jersey, bus drivers are now better prepared to deal with potential terrorist-related crises thanks to training they received from the Toms River Transportation Association, who organized a workshop that addressed ways school bus drivers should handle violent or life-threatening situations.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The sessions included tips for reducing the chance for violence on and around school buses and defusing volatile situations between students.

With better training and professional development in skills that affect their daily jobs, transportation employees are given more opportunities to make decisions themselves and connect with administrators and the rest of the school community.

MYTH #3

“Bus drivers have nothing to do with student achievement.”

Because drivers are the first and last school contact children have, they play a vital role in helping to reinforce lessons learned in school. Their jobs are clearly connected to student achievement.

In Bucks County, Pennsylvania, bus drivers in the Pennsbury School District link bus safety activities

with the language arts and social studies curriculum for kindergartners.

A bus driver in Midland, Texas, makes completed homework the “price of admission” for students who ride her bus to school, serving to remind students that all school employees are concerned with their education.

In San Diego, bus drivers work personally with parents to understand any behavior problems of the children and willingly try any suggestions that parents make.

In upstate New York, bus drivers developed a reading program called “Riding the Road to Success,” where children check out and read books on school buses, drastically reducing discipline issues on the bus and reinforcing the importance of reading.

Vickie Hendrickson, a bus driver in New Jersey’s Morris School District, says she makes it a point to



WALKING IN “OUR SHOES”

Nancy Toombs, President of Kentucky Education Support Professionals Association (KESPA) — the ESP-branch of the state association, says making administrators aware of what it’s like to actually drive a bus has helped change the “just a bus driver” perceptions in her state.

“Several bus drivers did a hands-on presentation at a state superintendent conference in 2002 where the superintendents were actually in the driver’s seat with a bunch of screaming kids in the back,” she says. “After the demonstration they honestly looked at the bus drivers with new eyes and said they couldn’t believe how hard it was to keep control of the kids with all of the pressure of just driving and trying to stay safe.”

A similar outcome was achieved in Florida as school board members, assistant superintendents and a PTA president shadowed bus drivers and other ESP members as part of Escambia-NEA ESP’s program, “Walk in Our Shoes.”

The annual event, held in conjunction with Education Support Personnel Day during American Education Week, raises awareness about the importance of the “behind the scenes” jobs that allow teachers to teach and students to achieve, says UniServ director **Ellen Lawrence**.

“It started two years ago in response to a school board member who was pushing privatization for our transportation services,” Ellen says. “We knew if they walked in our shoes, even just for a day, they would realize how important our jobs were.”

Escambia County PTA President **Cathy Roche** said she was humbled by the experience. “I thought I knew what driving a bus would be like from driving my own van with five kids,” she said. “But from that point forward, I started saluting bus operators everywhere.”



connect with students. “I try to find out who they are and where they come from because my primary concern is that the children I serve are safe and happy.”

“We are a vital link in the education process,” Georgia’s Jill Travis adds. “I need to know just as much as the teachers do about the children. What if a child is prone to an asthma attack during an emergency bus evacuation? I need medical details to give EMTs, so they can check on certain kids in an emergency.”

Transportation personnel who have participated in professional development opportunities say the best training is a marriage between theory and practice. Safety skills and communication skills for bus drivers especially, are a hot training need.

Adds Toombs: “Where there is good communication between school officials and bus drivers, the whole transportation department runs that much more smoothly.”



BECOMING THE BEST

Looking for training topics to improve your skills? Try these:

- School Bus Student Management — How to deal with students in a positive manner, how to increase appropriate student behavior on the bus and help avoid major disruptions and/or potential crises.
- Communication Skills — How to effectively communicate with children and how best to respond using non-verbal, verbal and body-language skills.
- Mentoring — The basics of creating a mentoring relationship between veteran and new bus drivers.
- First Aid, CPR and Universal Precautions Training — First-aid training and hands-on CPR training with adult and child-sized mannequins.
- Defensive Driving Course — How to analyze traffic situations and avoid collisions in spite of conditions and actions of other drivers. Tips for avoiding the most common traffic accidents.
- Computer Programming — How to use technology to create transportation materials such as maps, schedule and route sheets, pictures of student passengers, student information cards and seasonal decorations for buses.



A STORY OF SUCCESS

“I’ve been in this school district for 50 years as a student, a mom, a grandmother, and a bus driver. Don’t try to tell me that bus drivers are not professionals. We have a vitally important job to do. We are practically the first people the kids see in the morning and the last they see at night.”

—**Kay Klinger**

Bus driver, Colonial School District
New Castle, Delaware

HANDLING PROBLEMS IN-HOUSE

Colonial Transportation Association
New Castle, Delaware

THAT WAS THEN

The Colonial Transportation Association (CTA) — which includes transportation employees and bus aides — had a disturbing history of personality clashes between members and supervisors, admits **Kay Klinger**, a veteran bus driver for handicapped children.

And even when a good relationship did exist between an employee and a supervisor, too much time was wasted tracking down the supervisor, filling him in on the details of a challenge, and scheduling time to meet and iron out the problem. According to CTA’s contract, grievances are required to be handled within five working days.

“I knew there had to be a better way to work out our problems,” Kay says.

THIS IS NOW

With the help of the Delaware State Education Association, Kay and other members in CTA found peer mediation — and a new mentoring program — to be the answer they were looking for.

Established in the 2002-2003 school year, this pilot program helps CTA members solve challenges at the peer level rather than the management level, saving

time and streamlining a sometimes tedious process. A UniServ director who has experience with peer mediation guides the process, which includes role playing. “Now when a problem arises, we listen to each other rather than making immediate decisions,” Kay adds. “We have learned to talk a situation out rather than have it handled for us.”

The program is also having a positive effect on morale. “We feel more professional by taking control of the situation ourselves, which is helping improve morale and our attitude toward the entire school.”

THIS IS HOW

As a first step, Kay went to the Executive Board and Leadership Team to see if there was any interest in a peer mediation program. Once she saw that there was interest at the leadership level, Kay wondered whether or not there would be enough interest to get the bus drivers themselves to go through a training session. She did not have to wait long to find out. At a general meeting of CTA members, she received a positive reaction to the idea. The consensus was, according to Kay, “We would rather talk to a co-worker than a supervisor about our problems.”

Kay did not find it too difficult to set up the initial training session, as the Association, being relatively small, could take advantage of its central location. Initially, 10 members attended the first training session — under the watchful eye of the school district.

“Management was interested to see how the program was progressing, and they ended up thinking that it would spread throughout the entire district,” Kay says. “Three people from management were even invited to one of the training sessions, and district leaders have expressed interest in having some training themselves.”

Kay adds that the training series has also helped members deal with student conflicts on the bus. “We have new skills to use with children on the bus, and even our own kids at home,” she says. “I’ve



Transportation Resources

definitely been practicing what I've learned.”

WORDS OF WISDOM

“When considering peer mediation as a way to handle difficulties, don't make a decision right off the bat just because it's not the way you've always done things. At least try one training session and see if you can adapt that to your group.”

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Bus Drivers — Building a Quality Workforce

This recent NEA publication highlights the challenges bus drivers face as they work to build a quality workforce — including job descriptions, downsizing, health and safety issues, and professional development.

www.nea.org/esp/jobs/busqual_intro.htm

The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) —

founded in 1964 to “promote and foster the highest degree of safety in the transportation of school children,” the site is a source of information on safety and effective programs.

www.schooltrans.com

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration — established within the U.S. Department of Transportation in 2000, its mission is to prevent commercial motor vehicle related fatalities and injuries.

A resource for rules, regulations, facts, figures and safety programs.

www.fmcsa.dot.gov

School Bus Driver — Great site with information for school bus drivers. www.user.mc.net/~hyden

National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) — a membership organization to promote safety and enhance efficiency in pupil transportation through communication, education, government relations and services to members.

www.napt.org

Pupil Transportation Safety Institute — a not-for-profit school bus safety organization that provides resources on training, consultation services, a speakers bureau and program development and evaluative studies.

www.ptsi.org

School Transportation News — a monthly news magazine serving the school transportation industry.

www.stnonline.com/stn/index.shtml

U.S. Department of Labor's

Occupational Outlook Handbook on Bus Drivers

www.bls.gov/oco/ocos242.htm

The National Safety Council

www.nsc.org

The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)

ASE School Bus Technician Certification Program

www.asecert.org



HEALTH AND STUDENT SERVICES

Licensed Practical Nurses; Nurses’ and Health Aides; Medical Technicians;
Family and Parent Services Aides; Community Welfare Services Workers;
Nonmanagerial Supervisors

“A lot of people have this perception that school nurses sit around their office and wait for someone to put a Band-Aid on...but that simply isn’t true.”

–**Marge Knuuti**
School Nurse
Searsport, Maine

School nurse **Paula Apa-Hall** scribbles on a yellow legal pad the numbers of kids struck with chronic ailments in Oregon City schools: Diabetes, 15. Seizures, 31. Cardiac problems, 16.

The tally reaches 95 children in the 7,671-student district. It includes seven who have tubes that drain extra brain fluid and two in wheelchairs who were born with spina bifida. And the list doesn’t count the

number of hours she has spent counseling students since two of their classmates went missing and were later found dead.

“It’s overwhelming,” said Apa-Hall, president of the Oregon School Nurse Association.

MYTH #1

“School nurses only hand out band-aids.”

“A lot of people have this perception that school nurses sit around their office and wait for someone to put a Band-Aid on,” says **Marge Knuuti**, a veteran nurse in Searsport, Maine and 1998 School Nurse of the Year. “But that simply isn’t true.”

Today, school health officials face a dizzying array of responsibilities in addition to the traditional roles of providing first aid, monitoring immunizations, conducting health screenings, and assisting sick and injured children. They must interact with teachers, doctors, child study teams, administrators, school counselors, coaches, parents, police, special law enforcement, drug and substance abuse professionals, courts, truant officers, social workers and other ESP staff.



DID YOU KNOW?

In a recent survey, 59 percent of Health and Student Services ESP members said they are often asked to work outside of their current job descriptions.

In short, says Knuuti, their roles have expanded to now include social worker, physical therapist and clinician.

As a school nurse in Seattle, **Muriel Softli** offers students much more than ointment and bandages. Not only does she make referrals to social agencies and help disadvantaged students get breakfast, “Muriel consoles students when they have problems,” says special education instructional assistant **Rosa Cook**. “And when some are not as clean or dressed up as they should be, Muriel cleans them up and provides clothing.”

For **Clare Stewart**, the sole registered nurse for the 5,580-student Fallbrook Union Elementary School District in California, being a nurse means visiting a different school every day to check on individual students, testing children in special education classes, and looking for ways to help families unable to afford medical or vision care for their children. This is in addition to the mandated hearing and vision tests she oversees.

Stewart says she relies heavily on health care technicians at each school who are responsible for checking temperatures and administering first-aid to injured students and employees. The technicians also assist students who require feeding tubes, help disabled students and students in wheelchairs use the lavatory, and assist students who have epileptic seizures.

MYTH #2

“It’s easier to work in a school than at a hospital or private practice.”

“Back in the ‘70s, all you needed was first aid and some office nursing skills to be a school nurse,” says **Martha Bergen**, Nursing Instructor at the University of Minnesota. “But today, kids who once couldn’t leave the hospital are living at home and getting on a school bus everyday.”

And it’s the Health and Student Services employees who are taking care of them. Deborah Burton, Executive Director of the Oregon Nursing Center, a nonprofit group that studies nurse work issues, says school nursing used to attract many experienced hospital nurses.

“Here is a job that’s nine months of the year, 8 to 5,” she says. “The hours, the independence — plus it’s rewarding. But now, working in a school is not so attractive because everyone knows that school nurses are just so stretched.”

According to the National Association of School Nurses and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, schools should have one nurse for every 750 students. But that is a far cry from reality. A national survey in 2000 found that there are roughly 2,200 students to every nurse in the state of Oregon — three times the recommended number. And in



TEACHING EACH OTHER

Because health and safety are paramount community concerns, ESP staff are sustaining innovative programs to address these concerns — especially Health and Student Services members.

In Seminole County, Florida, members of the Seminole Educational Clerical Association (SECA) recently planned and coordinated training for school staff on invasive health procedures necessary to serve some special education students. In partnership with the district’s exceptional student support services division, teacher assistants, nurses, and clerical staff planned and organized the voluntary training, which was provided during the workday.

SECA members participating in the training received broad-based information; those working with medically fragile students received more intensive training on site. SECA also offers their ESP members a training manual as well as a task force report to help them better serve students with special medical needs.

HEALTH AND STUDENT SERVICES

Utah, there is one school nurse for every 6,330 students — the worst ratio in the nation.

Like California's Clare Stewart, Health and Student Services employees are spending much of their time racing from school to school. Meanwhile, the number of students with medical needs continues to increase, partly due to legislation that has opened schools to more medically fragile children. At the same time, school budgets and funding for student services continues to get cut.

Stewart, a former emergency room nurse, says there has also been a major upsurge in the number of children with severe asthma, diabetes and children taking prescription medication while at school.

"In the past five years, there's been a 10 to 20 percent increase in the number of students with diabetes, a lot of it due to childhood obesity," she says. "And we've seen a 30 to 40 percent increase in referrals for children with emotional or mental problems."

Paula Apa-Hall — Oregon's 2002 School Nurse of the Year — spent 15 years in hospital nursing before

becoming a school nurse. While she is overwhelmed in her school job, she won't go back to emergency room nursing. "I get to see the kids as themselves, not as 'appendectomy in room three,'" she says.

Regardless of the difference in workloads, like their counterparts in private practice, school nurses and health professionals must earn the credentials to practice. For example, in Seattle's Public Schools, nurses must have a four-year bachelor's degree in nursing, hold a current Registered Nurse license and have a Washington State Educational Staff Associate (ESA) certificate. Many school nurses also have advanced degrees and additional health education training.

MYTH #3

"There's minimal correlation between health care workers and student achievement."

Employees who provide health and student services programs are the lifeline of a school — directly advancing the well-being, academic success and lifetime achievement of students. Without them, equal access to education for students with substantial disabilities would not be possible.

Like guidance counselors and school psychologists, school health professionals are an integral part of the educational community, actively participating in policy making, curriculum planning, IEPs, classroom teaching, and most other aspects of the school environment.

They also care deeply about the students they work with, and the students know it. Often nurses and health technicians console children whose hurts are invisible. These may be children whose parents are divorcing, who have lost a grandparent or who are worried about a parent in the military.

Grace Lee, a veteran school nurse at Frelinghuysen Middle School in Morris County, New Jersey, is just one of the thousands of compassionate school health professionals. In addition to her daily duties, she has organized a health careers club, a loss and grieving



WHO ARE WE?

- We comprise 3 percent of NEA ESP members — nearly 10,000 people
- 79 percent of us work full time
- 40 percent of us have advanced degrees, and 29 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 88 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 9 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 65 percent of us work with special education students
- 65 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$12.29 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$21,720

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study



group, health and safety fairs, a faculty weight-loss group, after-school fitness walks, and a cooperative program for physically challenged students.

“Every child needs, and is entitled to, primary health care in order to reach his or her optimal learning potential,” she says.

Cecilia Baker, a school nurse in Marianna, Arkansas, 50 miles outside Memphis, teaches health, hygiene and anger management to both elementary and high school students, and has also organized several after-school programs to help at-risk students. Additionally, she talks with parents about the importance of providing good care and nutrition.

“Above all, in everything I do, I always stress the importance of getting an education,” she says. “Every day in my office, I follow up with students because I want them to know I care about their health, and their education.”



EXPANDING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

If there is one downside to working in a school, say members, it's that they are isolated from the usual exchanges with the medical community. There are few opportunities to attend seminars and workshops. And the literature and Web offerings are so overwhelming it's hard to keep up.

Meanwhile, comprehensive preparation and ongoing training is increasingly important as more students are attending school with severe and/or life-threatening medical conditions, injuries or birth defects. Staying up to date about new state requirements, communicable diseases and policies about administering medications is critical.

Health professionals report many areas where little training is available, including computer skills, recordkeeping, time management, liaisons with community health organizations and social services organizations, appropriate communication with local law enforcement, familiarity with child abuse services, local and state courts and substance abuse agencies, current medical insurance availability, and funding information in order to adequately stock and supply medical equipment.

Any of the above would make excellent training topics. Others include:

- Background information on new medications and their effects on children
- Updates on use of new or improved medical equipment or technology
- Communications skills related specifically to communicating with parents and staff relating to a sick child.



A STORY OF SUCCESS

“Our administration has come to respect the job of the school nurse and realizes the importance of a health professional as part of the educational team. We are integral to the health of the entire school environment, and they know it.”

–**Diana Elliott**, RN, BS
Lead Nurse, Rockwood School District
Rockwood, Missouri

PROMOTING WHOLE SCHOOL HEALTH

Rockwood Association of Nurses
St. Louis County, Missouri

THAT WAS THEN

In her 17 years as a school nurse for public schools in the Rockwood School District, **Diana Elliott** has witnessed a growing respect for school nurses. It’s not just about putting band-aids on scraped knees or tending to the sniffles anymore. Communities are catching on to the fact that school nurses work for the health of not only the students but also the entire school.

To help achieve a healthy school environment, the Rockwood Association of Nurses implemented a school improvement plan — and they believed that professional development for school nurses was essential in order for the plan to be a success.

THIS IS NOW

According to Diana, all of the nurses in the district worked together to achieve a requirement that each full-time nurse has seven “contact hours” (similar to continuing education units for teachers) and every half-time nurse has three contact hours. “We knew that it was important to police ourselves. The health field changes every day, and we wanted to be on top of any new innovations that related to our jobs. A continuing education requirement would help ensure this.”

As a result of their commitment to professional development, nurses in the Rockwood school district are on the cutting edge of new techniques and technologies in nursing. For example, in early 2003, a neurologist talked with the nurses about Strattera, a new drug on the market being used to treat Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD).

As part of a coordinated school health program, the nurses have also partnered with facilities such as Saint Luke’s Hospital in St. Louis County. Together they created a wellness program, which includes a blood pressure monitoring program.

“We have actually found several staff members who had high blood pressure and didn’t realize it,” Diana explains. “This kind of program can save staff members’ lives, and there’s no question that this helps the schools that employ these workers.”

The growing respect for the Rockwood school nurses is apparent. They began with \$125 per year negotiated for professional development, and that figure is now up to \$300 per year.

THIS IS HOW

In 1990, the Missouri State Board of Education adopted new accreditation standards for school districts to be implemented through the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP). Districts that adopted the Coordinated School Health Program model could choose to develop a plan for all eight of the components, which would serve as the School Health Services Plan for MSIP requirements. According to the *Missouri School Improvement Program: Standards and Indicators Manual* (July 1997), “The school nurse can play a key role in developing a plan which meets the needs of students and staff and also meets the Missouri School Improvement Program requirement.”

The Rockwood school nurses then made the eight health components of the Missouri School Improvement Program the keystone of their school

programs. They implemented programs addressing the areas of health education, school environment, counseling and guidance, community and parent involvement, staff health, health and nutritional services, and physical education.

Speakers for the health education programs are now obtained from a variety of areas, including the Suburban Nurses Association, Diana explains. “We have both state and national organizations that we can draw from. Many of these are available at no cost to the school district.”

WORDS OF WISDOM

“School nurses must realize what a difference they make. For example, the American Lung Association came to our school district at our request to demonstrate their ‘Open Airways’ program, which trains nurses to teach children to manage their asthma. They even put a nebulizer in every school at no charge. Suddenly, children with asthma were missing fewer days of school as well as going home to educate their parents about managing asthma. What administration isn’t going to respect such accomplishments?”

CONTACT

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Health and Student Services Resources

Safe Health Care: The Role of Educational Support Personnel

A how-to resource by NEA for support professionals on working with medically fragile children and how to best help them.

www.nea.org/esp/resource/safecare.htm

The Red Book — Exposure to Blood on the Job: What School Employees Need to Know

NEA Health Information Network (HIN)

www.neahin.org

American Nurses Association

www.ana.org

Nurses Service Organization

Information and resources for the nursing and health professional industry, including legislation, products, services, training, and health technology updates

www.nurses.com

American School Counselor Association

The American School Counselor Association is the national organization that represents the profession of school counseling

www.schoolcounselor.org

U.S. Dept. of Education

Education Publications, School Health and Student Services, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, Maryland 20794, 1-877-4-ED-PUBS fax: 301-470-1244. Offers free publications on student health and health services and programs available through the Federal government.

www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html

National Library of Education, Educational Resources Information Center

Free publications and material on every aspect of public school student health and services, including public health information.

www.accesseric.org

National Network for Immunization Information

This site provides the public, health professionals, policymakers and the media with up-to-date, scientifically valid information related to immunization.

The site includes the latest immunization news, a vaccine information database, a guide to evaluating vaccination information on the Web and more.

www.immunizationinfo.org

School Health Resource Services

Hosted by the University of Colorado, School Health Resource Services (SHRS) is a way to access the diverse resources needed to implement or improve school health programs and services. SHRS is a network of services designed as a coordinating link between school nurses and information available from school health, maternal and child health, education and other disciplines. SHRS provides school health personnel with technical information, resource materials and research assistance.

www.uchsc.edu/schoolhealth

Academy for Educational Development

This is an independent, non-profit organization committed to solving social problems in the U.S. and throughout the world. Major areas of focus include health, education, youth development and the environment.

www.aed.org

Child Health Toolbox Home Page

This online resource can help state and local policymakers, program directors and staff answer questions about measuring health care performance in child health programs.

www.abrq.gov/chtoolbox

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information

The clearinghouse is a national resource for professionals seeking information on the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect and related child welfare issues.

www.calib.com/nccanch



SKILLED TRADE AND CRAFTS

Electricians; Carpenters; Painters/Glaziers; Plumbers; Heating and Ventilation or Air Conditioning Mechanics; Machine Operators; Assemblers and Inspectors; Printing Services; Nonmanagerial Supervisors

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Computer Operators and Programmers; Systems Analysts and Data Processors; Media and Public Relations Specialists; Designers; Photographers; Graphic Artists; Audiovisual or Language Technicians; Mechanical and Electrical Technicians; Nonmanagerial Supervisors

“We are a big part of our schools and a big part of our communities. Everything we do is for the kids.”

—Carter Foshee
Electrician
Broken Bow, Oklahoma

Two of the highest paying, yet most demanding school support profession groups are Skilled Trades and Crafts, and Technical Services — and employees in both job categories must meet the same professional criteria as their colleagues who choose to practice outside of the school system. For example, employees in Skilled Trades and Crafts usually participate in some form of specialized training for their

profession — be it plumbing, electricity or ventilation. But because they work in a school district, they must also know how to work within a school environment and how to communicate with both students and staff.

MYTH #1

“Working for a school or school district is easy.”

Bill Snow, a Maintenance Mechanic and Carpenter in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, says he left construction to work for a school district because he liked the benefits and the flexibility. But, he says, that doesn't mean the work is easy.

Today, he spends most of his days remodeling and modernizing old school buildings and facilities. “Most importantly, I upgrade classrooms,” he says. While the work is similar to what he used to do, Bill and other trade professionals who work for schools face an additional challenge: How to keep aging buildings humming and healthy with fewer dollars in today’s supply and maintenance budgets.

Cutbacks in these budgets means leaky boilers, outdated electrical networks, and inefficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in many of America’s schools. Our Skilled Trade colleagues are working hard to fix them.

Bob Lepak, an electrician in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, is one of them. Several years ago he became concerned about safety when on one of his

rounds he noticed a fire hazard — “circuit breaker panels that are rated at 15 amps, but are pulling 60 to 70 amps through the wires and won’t trip.”

He alerted his school district, and wrote to his Congressman.

Even today’s newer schools are feeling the heat as demands for innovative teaching methods and assessment techniques mean they must be equipped with everything from adequate space — for small- and large-group instruction — to wiring and air conditioning for networked technology. It goes without saying that skilled trade employees must be masters in this new way of working.

John Lynch, a heating and air conditioning technician for Clark County, Nevada schools, is part of a



UNITING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When Maryland’s **Barbara Thompson** became president of the Frederick Association of School Support Employees (FASSE) three years ago, she vowed to do something about the “separateness” she had observed among ESPs.

Members of the various job groups tend to keep to themselves, she says. “We needed to find how we were the same instead of how we were different.”

The one thing that united them? Their interest in professional development.

So with help from the Frederick County Public Schools and Maryland State Teachers Association (MSTA), Thompson organized a support staff professional development day to unify her colleagues.

Today, the event has become an annual gathering where ESPs network and build their skills through workshops on leadership and communication skills, resume writing, legal issues for ESPs, school safety, and workplace stress, among other topics.

The organizers try to offer sessions that appeal to a variety of job groups, says Barbara, an administrative secretary at Twin Ride Elementary School and now former president of the local association. Staff from MSTa, UniServ directors, members of FASSE, and representatives from the school system facilitate workshops.

The local also negotiated financial support for a professional development day into its contract and the school system provides \$2,000 for the event. FASSE also received a \$1,500 grant from MSTa.

“This event exemplifies what we should be doing in this county, and that’s learning from one another,” says **Jack Dale**, superintendent of Frederick County Schools.

Barbara adds that the day shows nonmembers how FASSE supports ESPs. “I want them to know how special they are, and I also want them to know that as an organization we recognize that there is a hunger for personal and professional development.”

specialized team that is responsible for the climate control of 250 schools in the Las Vegas area.

“We’re busy all the time with airflow problems, replacing units and working on temperature control problems,” he says.

But unlike his peers in private contracting firms who usually just work one job at a time, Lynch has a lot of “windshield time” — driving between schools every week that are more than 90 miles apart.

The rapid spread of computers and information technology has also increased workloads for Technical Services employees, such as computer operators and systems analysts.

In addition to solving computer problems or planning and developing new computer systems, it’s not uncommon for a systems analyst to have to upgrade an outdated network system for a building that was wired before the World Wide Web revolution.

MYTH #2

“These jobs don’t require specialized training or professional development.”

Employees in both Skilled Trades and Crafts and Technical Services need specialized training to do their jobs well and keep up with changing technology.

Electricians, for example, enjoy one of the higher paid fields with a solid future, as schools become even more dependent on consistent and well-maintained supplies of electricity. But electricity is still dangerous: Electricians must constantly stay informed about safety procedures and new techniques.

That’s why electricians in most states participate in apprenticeship or journeyman training programs that involve course work and on-the-job training — usually under the direction of a licensed electrician.

The programs are typically run by such unions as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers or the National Electrical Contractors Association. Most programs take four years to complete and can-



didates must attend nearly 160 hours of classroom instruction and 800 hours of practical training per year.

Most plumbers are also certified, and complete apprenticeship training that consists of five levels. The training requirements for learning on the job and at school are a minimum of 1,800 hours per level. About 80 percent of this time is spent learning practical skills on the job while the remaining 20



WHO ARE WE?

Skilled Trades and Crafts

- We comprise two percent of NEA ESP members — more than 6,500 people
- 93 percent of us work full time
- 74 percent of us do not have an advanced degree, but 21 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 75 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 6 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 62 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$15.44 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$29,612

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

percent is devoted to classroom instruction to learn the theory and technical requirements of the trade.

For a school's Technical Services employees — those who keep data processing up-to-date, or bring school news to the community, or facilitate student learning — new technologies mean a new way of working. Schools today are looking for professionals with a broader background and range of skills, including not only the technical knowledge but also skills in communications, problem-solving and possibly art or graphic design.

In fact, many of the jobs in the technical services field promote communication. Through the improved use of the schools' computers, these professionals can enhance communication not only for and throughout schools, but to students and their parents, as well. Promotion of school successes can be showcased on the school's Internet, or via pamphlets created by a school's graphic artists and audio-visual and public relations specialists.

MYTH #3

“These jobs are performed in isolation and don't affect student achievement.”

It doesn't matter what they do — electricians, plumbers, carpenters or computer operators, web technicians, or Internet specialists — all of these important ESP play a vital role in the success of today's schools and student achievement.

For Pennsylvania's Bob Lepak and his colleagues in Skilled Trades and Crafts, safety is a top priority.

“Adequate maintenance is essential to quality education for students,” he explains. “That means clean schools free of contaminated air, asbestos, and electrical hazards.”

Technical Services team members frequently interact directly with students and teachers. For example, the computer technician may host a procession of classes that come to work on writing projects, social study activities and math skills, or run weekly workshops for teachers and other staff who want to learn software programs on their computers.

Like their other ESP colleagues, these professionals also care about the children and communities where they work — like Pennsylvania's Bill Snow. After Hurricane Floyd devastated portions of the nation in 1999, this school carpenter organized a group of electricians, plumbers and others who volunteered their time to fix houses that had been hit.

“Our small town, Neshaminy, is on a creek and many people didn't have flood insurance,” he explains. “We just worked to put people's houses back together, including many of the district's employees.”

Carter Foshee, a master journeyman electrician from Broken Bow, Oklahoma, was recently honored by NEA for helping his ESP colleagues gain opportunities to participate in the decision-making that affected their own rights as employees and promoted the welfare of schoolchildren.

On his own time, Foshee organized communities throughout Oklahoma to reject privatization efforts, often times traveling distances of up to 260 miles to hear education employees' grievances and help them protect their jobs and gain a greater voice.



WHO ARE WE?

Technical Services

- We comprise two percent of NEA ESP members — more than 6,500 people
- 90 percent of us work full time
- Approximately half of us do have an advanced degree, and 32 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 84 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 11 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 67 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$13.37 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$25,156

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

“We are a big part of our schools and a big part of our communities,” he says. “And everything we do is for the kids.”

Foshee, a father of five and also a community fire department leader and youth activity organizer, says that students are his most important constituency. Speaking to his colleagues at a recent NEA Representative Assembly, the former NEA ESP of the Year told them, “If you haven’t already been, in the future you will be an angel in some child’s eyes — for as long as you remain part of the public education system.”



Skilled Trade and Technical Services Resources

International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officers (IAPMO)

www.iapmo.org

National Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors (NAPHCC)

www.naphcc.org

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)

www.ieee.org

National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA)

www.necanet.org

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)

www.iste.org

Institute For Certification of Computing Professionals (ICCP)

www.iccp.org

American Institute of Graphic Artists (AIGA)

www.aiga.org

Graphic Arts Education Technical Foundation (GATF)

www.gatf.org



KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Because technology is ever-changing, technical services employees must participate in ongoing staff development to keep up with current trends and technology innovations in their respective fields. For example:

- Installing, repairing and upgrading equipment
- Designing, maintaining and operating internal computer networks
- Assisting with the development of a school’s Web site
- Mentoring students, teachers, paraeducators, administrators and other staff in the use of computing and telecommunications technologies
- Conducting training seminars for staff.





Guards; School Resource Officers; Security Workers; Police; Nonmanagerial Supervisors

“I am a combination of counselor and big brother to the kids — a person they can come talk to when they need to bend an ear or vent frustrations.”

—**J.D. Jones**
Special Law Enforcement Officer
Fayette, Kentucky

Years ago, school security was traditionally treated not as a separate and respected discipline but as an additional duty that could be handled by anyone in a school with free time. Teachers and aides “policed” hallways when not in the classroom, and principals provided the “last line of defense” in the form of disciplinary action or by calling parents or the police.

But today, school security is more important than ever; a front-burner issue for most educators, students, and citizens who are still affected from the rash of school shootings in the late 1990s. Today’s schools face not only student aggression, drugs and weapons, and gangs, but also a new threat of terrorism in the wake of Sept. 11 and the United States conflict with Iraq.

It’s no surprise then that school security officers stand on the front line for protecting America’s

children. Various forms of security staffing are being used at schools across the country:

- **School security departments** typically are comprised of in-house personnel with differing levels of authority contingent on the school system and/or state or local laws.
- **School Resource Officers** are usually local or county law enforcement officers assigned by their departments to work in schools within their jurisdiction.
- **School police departments** are regular law enforcement entities with police authority that work for, and are paid by, the school district.
- **Hall monitors** are often paraeducators who perform security functions in addition to other administrative duties.



DID YOU KNOW?

Despite occasional high-profile tragedies, children in the U.S. are safer in schools than outside them. Of all violent deaths that occur among school-age children, less than 1 percent occur at or en route to school or school-sponsored activities.

Regardless of how schools are staffed, one thing is clear: school security professionals need to be fully trained and have a clear understanding of not only security techniques, but also the unique nature of the school populations they are working with. That is why ongoing, quality professional development is so important.

MYTH #1

“You don’t have to know a lot about security to become a school security officer.”

In Kentucky, **J.D. Jones** has secured 400 hours of training from the Academy of Law Enforcement at Eastern Kentucky University. This Special Law Enforcement Officer, employed by the Fayette County Board of Education, is also required to participate in 40-hours of training every year.

“We are required every summer to take a training course in some type of law enforcement,” he says. Trainings are offered in investigations, weapons, sensitivity, traffic law, administrative matters, court procedure, evidence collecting, and more.

“Our training never stops,” he adds. “We pursue every avenue that’s open to us because it makes us that much better on the job.”

In fact many school security professionals have had extensive law enforcement backgrounds. For example, the District Security Chief in Cherry Creek, Colorado is retired Arapahoe County Sheriff **Pat Sullivan**. Just a few months after beginning his post in late-2002, Sullivan used his law-enforcement expertise to prepare terrorism emergency kits for the schools, update the district’s crisis plans, and educate security personnel and other school employees in life-saving skills.



LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Who better to teach school security personnel about security than the United States Secret Service?

In October 2002, nearly 40 Washington, DC, area school security officers and administrators attended a Secret Service-sponsored seminar about how best to protect children at school. The event came just after a 13-year-old boy was critically wounded by snipers on his way to Tasker Middle School in Prince George’s County.

At the training, Secret Service agents talked about security techniques that were developed over the years to protect dignitaries, and that could just as easily work for children.

Trainers urged officials to think ahead and to head off problems, whether sniper attacks, gang violence or terrorism.

As part of that thinking, Secret Service agent Lisa Stokes suggested schools should follow the sort of preparations that the Secret Service uses for presidential details: trying to imagine what portions of a building or area a criminal would exploit to commit a crime.

“They’re looking for areas where the targets are exposed for a long period of time,” she explained.

Stokes and other agents also suggested that school security officers check wooded areas for hideouts, think about changing locks on doors if too many former employees may still have keys, look at the placement of trash cans near buildings where explosive devices could be left and encourage members of the community to keep an eye on the schools and to report suspicious activities.

After the presentation, **Donald Mercer Jr.**, director of security for Prince William County schools, said, “We’ve got a lot of work to do in this area. It’s a whole new world.”

New Jersey's **Joe Galego**, a security guard at George Washington Elementary school in Elizabeth, came to education after working security at both a detention center and corporate pump manufacturer.

He is also a certified instructor, having participated in an in-depth training at the Crisis Prevention Institute in New York City. Since solidifying a "Pride in Public Education" grant from the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), he now trains hundreds of educators in his district — and across the state — in nonviolent crisis intervention. The program focuses on making children, staff, and parents feel safe at school and helping them learn to handle potentially violent situations.

Elizabeth, he says, can be a tough place for kids to grow up. "Some kids here are lucky to have a place to go home to. They need so much more."

MYTH #2

"There's no connection between security services personnel and student achievement."

Study after study shows that safe schools contribute to improved attendance, increased student achieve-

ment, and enhanced community support. Security services members provide a vital link to that safety.

They also provide a peace of mind for many students. While Kentucky's Jones, an armed officer with the power to arrest if necessary, specializes in school-related problem areas such as crime, drugs, loitering, disorderly conduct and vehicular or pedestrian problems, he says many kids also talk to him about abusive situations or problems in class.

"I am a combination of counselor and big brother to the kids — a person they can come talk to when they need to bend an ear or vent frustrations," he explains.

John Goodie, School Security Chief at Arizona's Mesa High School, agrees. At 280 pounds and 6 feet 3 inches tall, he cuts a commanding figure. But students consider this pro football player turned school security chief a friend and confidant.

"I'm a big guy, but I speak softly," he explains. "I do not strong-arm anybody, but when I have to take care of business, it's all business."

A frequent community speaker on civil rights and anti-drug issues, Goodie works hand-in-hand with local police on gang prevention and has also established a silent witness program at school.

When he received NEA's Carter G. Woodson Award in 1999 for helping inspire his community to vote in favor of a Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday observance, more than 2,000 students threw a rally in his honor, proving what an important role he plays in the student success equation.

"My calling is dealing with young people," says Goodie, who is known for sharing his "Goodie Rap" with students on the virtues of staying in school. "I use a language teenagers understand. Some kids don't have anyone they can talk to. I'm glad to be that person for some of them."

One of his priorities for each new school year, he adds, is to connect at least once with every student at the high school — all 2,700 of them. He also makes himself available to facilitate student disputes at other nearby schools in the district.



WHO ARE WE?

- We comprise one percent of NEA ESP members — more than 3,300 people
- 84 percent of us work full time
- 77 percent of us do not have an advanced degree, but 26 percent of us plan to earn one within the next four years
- 71 percent of us have attended professional development training in the past two years
- 7 percent of us are currently attending school or college
- 63 percent of us are paid on an hourly basis, with an average wage of \$12.93 per hour
- Our average annual salary is \$20,762

*Source: 2002 Status of NEA K-12 ESP Membership Study

Experts say many school security officers — like J.D. Jones and John Goodie — perform their jobs using a “Triad Model” with a focus on three issues: law enforcement, student counseling, and law-related education.

MYTH #3

“Being a school security officer is an easy job.”

The Wichita, Kansas Public Schools Security Services Department is made up of 44 officers — the largest school security department in the state. The officers attend the Wichita Police Training Academy and are authorized to enforce the applicable laws of the city and policies of the Wichita Public Schools.

They respond to nearly 9,000 calls for assistance and prepare more than 2,000 reports annually. They patrol schools, and keep maintenance areas, bus garages and offices safe.

It’s a big job — 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, inside and outside, in more than 110 school district buildings. The officers are also responsible for providing security and metal detection scanning at all athletic events.

J.D. Jones knows how it feels. “I’m at work from 6:30 a.m. until at least 3:30 or even later, because I have to work extracurricular activities such as school dances and board meetings,” he says. “Any activity that involves public use of a school building.”

Like the Wichita security officers, he also has to be a team player, working closely with other support professionals and teachers.

“I tell them I’m there to assist if there is any activity in or outside of their classrooms that seems apart from the norm — anything from kids not listening to simple instructions like ‘get out of the hallways’ to kids suspected of drug use or weapons possession,” he explains.

In fact, experts say all school staff — not just security personnel — should be trained to recognize and respond to problem behaviors in youth. They should also be

taught conflict resolution and peer mediation skills. Jones agrees: “In schools where there have been shootings, comments and threats were often overlooked or ignored,” he says. “We need more sensitivity training for teachers, administrators



TRAINING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

School security personnel should be thoroughly and continually trained in numerous areas. The syllabus of the School Security Officer Training Program of National School Safety and Security Services contained such a complete listing of the areas where staff development was needed that much of it is listed below:

- Role, job description, and duties of the school security officer
- Legal system operations and procedures (juvenile and adult)
- Abused and neglected children (including how to identify and report suspected abuse under state law and school board policy)
- Legal procedures for search and seizure
- Testifying in court
- Human relations and cultural diversity
- Overview of child psychology
- First aid/CPR
- Self defense and Verbal de-escalation skills
- Weapon possession and concealment techniques
- Handling fights, conflict situations, and weapon-related offenses
- Current school crime trends
- Recognizing and managing gangs
- Drug abuse, possession, and sales
- Intervening with angry parents
- Stress management
- Security’s role in crisis preparedness (bombs, bomb threats, hostage situations)
- Special event security/monitoring and supervising crowds
- Media relations
- Police, parent, staff and community relations



DID YOU KNOW?

In March 2003, Federal officials announced that schools can draw upon \$30 million in federal money to help them prepare for emergencies. Funds can be used to train school personnel, parents and students in crisis response; coordinate with local emergency responders including fire and police; purchase equipment; and coordinate with other groups and organizations. For more: www.ed.gov

and support staff to pick up on negativity, read potential problems at an early stage, and try to prevent the frustration and rage from escalating into violence.”

Back in New Jersey, Joe Galego provides this type of training to teachers, who earn six hours of professional development credit for taking his workshop.

He adds: “It’s important for everyone to know how to handle these situations because it is our reactions that can seriously affect the outcome.”



Security Services Resources

U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

This governmental agency will release a national school crisis plan in late-2003, which will offer tips on how school leaders can respond to terrorism such as biological and chemical attacks.

www.dhs.gov

U.S. Department of Education. In an effort to provide school leaders with more information about emergency preparedness, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge unveiled a new section on the U.S. Department of Education Web site which is designed to be a “one-stop shop” to help school officials plan for any emergency, including natural disasters, violent incidents and terrorist attacks.

www.ed.gov/emergencyplan

National School Safety and Security Services

(NSSSS) is an organization led by Ken Trump, a career school security professional with 20 years experience in school-specific security and crisis preparedness, gang intervention and prevention, and

related youth violence training and safety consulting programs. The Web site contains useful information on preparing schools for dealing with terrorism.

www.schoolsecurity.org

National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO)

is the nation’s largest not-for-profit organization for school based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and school security/safety professionals working as partners to protect students, faculty and staff at the schools they attend.

www.nasro.com

National Alliance for Safe Schools (NASS)

was founded in 1977 by a group of school security directors to provide training, technical assistance and publications to school districts interested in reducing school based crime and violence.

www.safeschools.org

National School Safety Center (NSSC)

provides school communities with information, resources, consultation and training services, including a free brochure titled “Working Together to Create Safe Schools.” The Center also identifies and promotes strategies, promising practices and programs that support safe schools for all students as part of the total academic mission.

www.nssc1.org

NEA Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit.

Published in January 2000, this toolkit provides guidance to schools through elements such as school safety checklists, developing violence prevention plans, and encouraging community support and involvement.

www.nea.org/crisis

NEA School Safety contains links to recent research and many school safety resources.

www.nea.org/schoolsafety



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Questions to Help Us Review Current Professional Development Policies and Practices

Directions: Use this tool as a guideline to measure your current professional development programs and needs. These questions are designed to stimulate your thinking and give you the information you need to lay a foundation for growth.

1. How is professional development defined by staff, district administrators, state officials and legislators? How is it defined in our bargaining agreement and in law and regulation?

- What activities fall within these definitions?
- Are prevailing definitions consistent with current thoughts about high-quality professional development?
- Is participation in professional tasks that lead to acquisition of new knowledge or skills treated as professional development?
- How much responsibility for professional development is placed on a teacher, on a support professional, on the school, and on the district?
- Who currently decides the amount and content of professional development?

2. What growth opportunities are currently being provided for support staff?

- Is support provided for new ESP employees (for example: mentoring)?
- Are growth opportunities built into our current workdays?
- Do support professionals have regular opportunities to work together?

- Are support professionals performing professional or administrative tasks requiring significant skills?
- How much time is set aside for professional development?
- Do the state colleges and universities provide courses accessible to ESP?

3. What are the incentives for support professionals to participate in professional development and to improve their practice?

- Is professional development linked to personnel evaluation and certification?
- Does the district reimburse college tuition for graduate study?
- Are ESP salary increases linked to professional development?
- Does professional growth bring increased responsibility, status, or recognition?
- How do the incentives affect support professionals in different career stages?

4. Who sponsors and provides formal professional development?

- In terms of professional development, what are the roles played by the school, district, higher education institutions, state education agencies and our association?
- Is there collaboration among these agencies to improve quality and reduce redundancy?

5. How is ESP professional development planned and coordinated?

- Is there a state plan and are there state priorities?
- Do schools and/or districts have to develop plans? If yes, what are the criteria for approving the plans?
- Are local professional development activities tied to school improvement?

6. What is regarded as “good practice” in ESP professional development?

- Are there “standards” or guidelines?
- What do outstanding districts or local associations do?
- What activities do support staff feel have the most value?

7. To what extent are current ESP activities consistent with principles for effective professional development? Do they:

- Happen on an ongoing basis?
- Support school or district initiatives?
- Offer support professionals opportunities to be active learners?
- Offer intellectual engagement with ideas, materials and colleagues?
- Demonstrate respect for support staff as professionals and adult learners?
- Provide for sufficient time and follow-up support for support staff to master new strategies and content, and integrate them into their practice?
- Ensure that professional development is accessible and inclusive?

**Note: This material was adapted from “Helping Teachers Teach Well: Transforming Professional Development” by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (1995).



(Your Local Association Name Here)

PROFESSIONAL NEEDS SURVEY

DEADLINE FOR RESPONSES: (Date Here)

1. What is your current job classification?

Please Check One

- General Education
- Clerical
- Special Education
- Custodial/Maid
- Career Technical
- Bus Driver
- Guidance/Counseling
- Paraprofessional
- Administration
- Child Nutrition
- Library Media
- Maintenance
- Other

2. Please assist us with identifying job specific needs by listing your top three job related concerns that we may address through professional development opportunities or other resources.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. What do you want to learn this year?

4. What resources or support do you need to be able to learn that?

Please return to:

Name: _____

Worksite: _____

Thank you for helping improve our professional development program!

NOTE: A compiled report will be provided in a newsletter prior to [fill in date here].



WILL THIS WORK?

10 Questions to Help Us Review and Assess Current Professional Development Programs and Opportunities

Directions: This tool is designed to help you research and evaluate current professional development programs and ideas presented in the NEA Action Guide.

1. What program/workshop/training/seminar do we like?
2. Where else has this program/workshop/training/seminar been tried?
3. How are these local associations/schools/districts similar or dissimilar to ours?
4. What are the benefits of this professional development approach?
5. What are the weaknesses of this approach?
6. What will this approach cost in money and staff time?
7. Are there currently resources we could tap to implement this approach?
(for example: State Association staff, NEA trainings or grants)
8. What reasons might this approach work for us?
9. What reasons might this approach not work for us?
10. What are some alternatives to this approach that we might research further?



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL OF US

Association and Other Resources for Meeting Our Professional Development Needs

ESP Technology Grants

NEA ESP technology grants are awarded to educational support professional Associations (not to individual members) to help them use the ESP Information System and other online resources to carry out NEA's strategic focus. Awards range from \$250 to \$3,500. The application process is open to all local associations that have not received an ESP technology grant in the past three years.

www.nea.org/esp/espnea/howtoapp.htm.

NEA Foundation Grants

The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) offers two grants: Innovation Grants or Learning and Leadership Grants. Innovation Grants provide an opportunity for education support professionals, teachers, and higher education faculty to develop and implement programs that significantly improve student learning. Learning and Leadership Grants provide funds for professional development. Grant amounts range from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

www.nfie.org.

ESP Conference

This yearly NEA Education Support Professionals (ESP) Conference is designed to help NEA ESP members enhance their ability to impact student

achievement, build strong internal and external relationships and organizing skills, and provide opportunities for professional development. It is held in March. For more information, call the Education Support Professionals Quality Program at (202)822-7131.

Education Support Professionals: Working Together to Improve Schools.

This handbook reviews some of the key ideas that guide efforts to improve education. It shows how ESP can be, and in many places already are, part of a total team effort to achieve educational excellence.

www.nea.org/esp/home/nearesources/improve.html

Results-Oriented Job Descriptions. This brochure describes a new approach to job descriptions for Educational Support Professionals.

www.nea.org/esp/resource/rojobdes.htm

Educational Support Professionals: A Quality Workforce analyzes state and Federal licensing, certification, and training mandates for ESP.

Educational Support Professionals: Working Together to Improve Schools shows how ESPs are part of a total team effort to achieve educational excellence.

www.nea.org/esp/resource/quality1.htm

Topic	Possible External Partners and Resources	Association Resources
<p>Health issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor air quality • Asbestos • Repetitive motion syndrome • Bloodborne pathogens • Ergonomics • Safe work environment and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Cross • State OSHA • Local and state health departments • Local hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA Health Information Network publications (HIN) • EPA/NEA Tools for Schools Kit • State association legal services
<p>Communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Sending and receiving messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local electronic and print media • Higher education facilities • Civic, service, religious and social organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State association communication departments • NEA Vital Link programs • Members who teach high school
<p>Enhancing the Home-School connection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTA or PTO • School district community liaisons • School board • Civic, service, religious and social organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mega Skills Program • NEA Family-School-Community Partnership • Members who are parent liaisons, guidance counselors, social workers
<p>Diversity, including ethnic, class, gender, English language learners, and communication styles issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State department of education • School district policies and personnel • Higher education • Local advocacy and education groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA Human and Civil Rights programs on gender equity or diversity • State association legal services
<p>Personal and professional development and advocacy skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team building • Stress management • Conflict management • Leadership skills • Professional ethics • Time management • Dealing with difficult people • Assertiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education facilities • Mental health providers • Employee wellness and assistance programs • Private providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Leadership Training Program • State association UniServ department • Local associations • Members who are guidance counselors, school psychologist, social workers

Topic	Possible External Partners and Resources	Association Resources
<p>Legal rights and responsibilities of employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual harassment • Family and Medical Leave Act • Recognizing and reporting child abuse • Americans with Disabilities Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Labor regional office • State children’s services department • Child advocates • State department of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA Educators Employment Liability policy • State association legal department
<p>Students’ Legal Rights, including IDEA, ESEA, ADA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability advocacy groups • State department of education • Other education stakeholders, school board policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA IDEA cadre NEA and state association ESEA programs • State association legal services
<p>Student discipline, including issues about student-to-student sexual harassment and bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student handbooks • School board policies and programs • State laws and regulations • Local law enforcement and justice or religious organizations • Student mentoring programs • Lee Canter programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members with expertise in conflict resolution • Peer mediation • NEA Teaching Guides: <i>Flirting or Hurting, Bully Proof, Quit It!</i>
<p>Personal and Professional Financial Skills: stretching your budget, understanding your pay stub, dealing with credit, preparing for retirement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State pension systems • Non-profit consumer counseling organizations • School district personnel and business staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA Member Benefits • Endorsed providers • Local association
<p>School safety and security, including threat assessment, crisis preparedness and response, natural disasters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School board policies and administration • Law enforcement, justice system, weather bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEA safe schools publications • Local association • State association
<p>Overview of district school improvement initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administration • Higher education facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and state associations • Members with school improvement expertise
<p>Technology, including appropriate use, using technology to enhance career, school district specific</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system personnel higher education • Business partners, students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members with technology expertise • State association technology services • NEA IT and Education Support Professionals Information System (EPIS)
<p>Wage and hour regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Labor regional and local offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State association legal services



ACTIVITY PLANNER

Professional Development Content and Activity Spreadsheet

Topic	Activity (workshop, training, etc.)	Deadline Goal	Required Resources (Facilities, funding, expertise)	Financial Resources Available	Professional Organization Involvement?	Community Resources Available	Expert Sources to Assist
Example: CPR Training	Certification class for custodians, paraeducators and secretaries	End of December	Approval to use cafeteria at Jones School. Normally costs \$30 per person. No subs needed because we will complete after school.	Received \$500 grant from state association for professional development needs and will use this money.	Local community college is supplying adult and child-size mannequins for use during training.	Local chapter of Red Cross will provide the training and certificates.	Our UniServ director will be in attendance and will facilitate a conversation about student safety prior to training.



ACTIVITY PLANNER

Sample Communications Plan

1. RESEARCH

Include information here about survey results and include descriptions about any programs you evaluated using Action Tool 3.

2. OBJECTIVES

Using bullet-points, list what you are trying to accomplish and who your target group is. Explain why professional development will help advance the school and/or district goals.

3. PROGRAM

Using your conclusions from Action Tool 5, describe the program you would like to implement and what resources you will use to do it.

4. EVALUATION

Describe how you will evaluate your program and report findings.

5. TIMELINE

Include a timeline by month of what you will accomplish.



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LEARNERS

As noted throughout this publication, it is important to create professional development programs for support professionals, but it is equally important to ensure that such programs will provide meaningful help in their daily work lives.

According to Frances C. Welch and Cherry Daniel in an article entitled “Staff Development for Classified Staff: One School District’s Approach”

(*The Journal of Staff Development*, Winter 1997, Volume 18, No. 1, at pages 12-15) there are certain essential elements necessary in any adult learning process. The authors described the staff development program for the classified staff in the Dorchester School District Two in Summerville, South Carolina. The program in Dorchester was based on “the five characteristics of adult learners.” The characteristics of adult learners include:

7 Issues for Successful ESP Staff Development

The conclusions and recommendations for staff development for support employees reached by Welch and Daniel include seven considerations:

1 TIMING

Timing has two components — one, making the time for staff development programs for classified staff; and two, considering the overall schedule for all school and district programs so as to limit conflicts for participants. Additionally, as a survey of your members should show, a training or workshop should be scheduled at a time that works best for the respective support staff group. An example the authors noted was that custodians’ staff development should occur when school is in session, as on days when students are not present they perform services that cannot be done when students are in the school.



2 COMPENSATION

The authors found some form of compensation should be provided to those classified staff members who engage in staff development programs, or participation in training should be made a condition of employment.

3 FUNDING

Sources of funds to meet the needs of training should be a consideration during the planning sessions, with possible funding sources being adult education, the district’s staff development, or the target group’s budget.



4 SELECTION OF PRESENTERS

Consideration should be given to using internal presenters who will save costs and reinforce the employees who are having success in the approach they are using by giving them peer recognition. For example, paraeducators who are introduced to an innovative program created by another paraeducator are going to be much more likely to realize they too have the capacity to add to the overall instructional program.

1. Adults will commit to learning when goals and objectives are understandable, important, and have immediate application.
2. Staff development should be non-threatening and promote a positive view of self.
3. Adults will learn, retain, and use what they perceive to be relevant to their personal and professional needs.
4. Staff development should include concrete, practical, and applied learning in real or simulated work settings.
5. Staff development planners need to give participants some control over what, when, and where they learn.

5 CONNECTION TO THE OVERALL DISTRICT AND GOALS There should be link between how the particular staff development program will help meet the district's goals. The authors suggest that having a district administrator present at the training session will reinforce the link between support professionals and the district. Further, a representative from the district's administration can convey that staff development for support staff is valued and that their participation is appreciated.

6 FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION Participants should be included in formulating follow-up activities and designing the evaluation process. The authors note that "participants are more committed to the entire process when they are involved in deciding the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their staff development activities." Additionally having data that shows the effectiveness of the staff development programs is reinforcing to all involved.

7 EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Staff development for support professionals must emphasize that continued learning is important and valued in the district. ESP should be encouraged to apply this learning with others, resulting in the overall improvement of education. Considerations for staff development programs for support personnel are centered on the involvement of the participants to create their own destinies for lifelong learning. Equally important is making clear to participating employees the link between their staff development program and the overall goals of the district. Staff development programs are also an opportunity for districts to express recognition and appreciation to the often unsung heroes who are the ESP.





MODEL LANGUAGE AND SAMPLE CONTRACTS

Use the four examples below to help you bargain model professional development language into your next contract. The key issues you should plan for include:

1. The design of professional development programs
2. Pay and release time
3. Eligibility
4. Funding.

Optimal elements include:

- The local association has a strong role in the design of training programs, including course offerings, scheduling, and the choice of instructors.
- All association-represented employees are eligible to attend the training sessions.
- Training sessions are held (as much as possible) on school district premises during working hours.
- Employees are paid for attending course offerings off-site and/or outside of their regular working hours.
- Approval for attendance is granted automatically upon request.

Model Language Examples:

1. New Jersey: NJEA Sample Inclusive

Local Agreement

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ DISTRICT IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS

A. The Board shall pay the full cost of tuition and other reasonable expenses incurred in connection with any courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, in-service training sessions, or other such sessions which an employee elects to take and/or is requested by the administration to take. Said employee shall also be compensated for all

time spent in actual attendance at said sessions beyond his/her regular working day and year at his regular rate of pay or overtime, whichever is applicable.

B. The Board shall provide in-service improvement programs for all job categories which shall be cooperatively planned to meet priorities jointly determined by the Association and the administration. For all job categories, in-service programs shall be conducted during a regular work day if employee attendance is required. Employees who participate in an in-service program shall be given credit for each program as provided in the appropriate schedule.

C. The Board shall expend up to (\$) dollars each school year to purchase books, equipment and/or other resource materials for use by the staff after consultation with the Association. The Board shall provide adequate space for housing said books and materials in convenient and readily accessible locations.

D. The Board shall expend (\$) dollars to establish_____ number of grants to employees interested in designing and implementing innovative ideas and techniques in accordance with procedures jointly developed with the Association for all school employees.

E. Representatives designated by the Association will be involved in the planning of any inservice program for district employees. Such representation shall be in ratio to the numbers of each employee category in the district. At least one (1) inservice program during the regular workday shall be provided for all categories of employees each year.

2. CAESAR RODNEY SCHOOL DISTRICT-PARAPROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

A. Should it become necessary for a paraprofessional to have specific training to meet the expectations of the District, the District will be responsible for providing such training at no cost to the paraprofessional.

B. The Board acknowledges that paraprofessionals are significant in assisting the educational process within the District. Should it become necessary for a paraprofessional to have specific training to meet the expectations of the Board, the Board will be responsible for providing such training at no cost to the paraprofessional.

C. Paraprofessionals shall be permitted to access CREA travel funds under the guidelines established by the Association.

D. The Board agrees to confer with the Association in arrangement of in-service programs designed to improve the job performance of paraprofessionals. Such activities shall be coordinated through the Instructional Council.

3. COLONIAL PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION INSTRUCTIONAL PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Instructional Paraprofessional Training

The district shall offer a training program to all instructional paraprofessionals beginning in the spring of 2000. The content and scope of this program shall be determined cooperatively by the district and the CPA. Paraprofessionals who complete

this program will be designated as Level I Paraprofessionals and shall be paid an additional \$750 stipend beyond their regular salary as of September 1 each year. The stipend shall remain in effect during the paraprofessional's continuous service in the Colonial School District.

The district shall further offer a second level training program to all instructional paraprofessionals beginning in the fall of 2000. The content and scope of this program shall be determined cooperatively by the district and the CPA. Paraprofessionals must complete the first program successfully before enrolling in the second level. Paraprofessionals who complete this second-level program will be designated as Level II Paraprofessionals and shall then be paid a \$1750 stipend beyond their regular salary as of September 1 each year. (For the 2000-2001 school year only, the district and the Association agree that a proportional amount of this stipend shall be awarded to Level II Paraprofessionals as of January 1, 2001.) This stipend shall remain in effect during the paraprofessional's continuous service in the Colonial School District and replaces the Level I Paraprofessional stipend stated above.

The following terms and conditions shall apply to the training:

- The programs shall be offered periodically throughout the period of this agreement, but at a minimum of once each year.
- The programs will be provided outside the regular workday, and paraprofessionals who participate will not be paid for their hours of participation. Classwork or homework assigned through the program shall also be completed outside the regular workday.

- The district shall provide the instructor/facilitator, the facility, and any instructional materials, except that any paraprofessional who does not complete the training shall return instructional materials or reimburse the district for the materials.

Beginning in September, 2000, all new hires under this contract shall be considered probationary until they have completed the Level I training and their probationary performance period as specified in 11.1 is completed.

4. PENNSYLVANIA: PSEA COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REFERENCE GUIDE

Staff Development Programs

A staff development committee to determine the professional needs of employees in the bargaining unit shall be created.

The committee shall be comprised of persons from within the bargaining unit who are representative of the different educational functions within the unit. Standards and procedures for staffing the committee shall be determined by the Association.

The committee shall formulate Staff Development Program offerings with employee options responsive to the needs of the unit. The cost of formulation shall be borne by the employer.

The calendar for implementing the Staff Development Program shall be structured jointly by the Association and the employer. Their work shall be completed not later than the 160th day of the school year preceding that for which the program is intended.

During the employees' first meeting each school year, the committee's program for the current year shall be presented to the staff for review and approval. The approved program shall be implemented by the employer. The cost of implementing the program shall be borne by the employer.



FINAL CHECKLIST: THE BASICS

1. We have included or informed all stakeholders about our professional development and related school improvements (for example: school staff, students, parents, principals, district professional development staff, community members, local association).
2. Our stakeholders support our professional development efforts.
3. We have examined our school's goals and have tried to align our professional development goals with them.
4. Our school leadership and staff understand what skills, knowledge and competencies/behaviors are needed to close gaps between school goals and actual performance.
5. Our school leadership understands the actual current skill, knowledge and competency level of our staff, as well as our target knowledge and competency level.
6. We have researched best practices and have developed a plan that marries best practices with actual needs expressed by staff in the survey.
7. We have used a variety of media to inform our stakeholders about our professional development efforts and have shared the results with our school community.
8. We have committed to evaluating our professional development actions and using feedback to continuously improve our goals.

development
idea

success

tools

resource



Great Public Schools for Every Child

