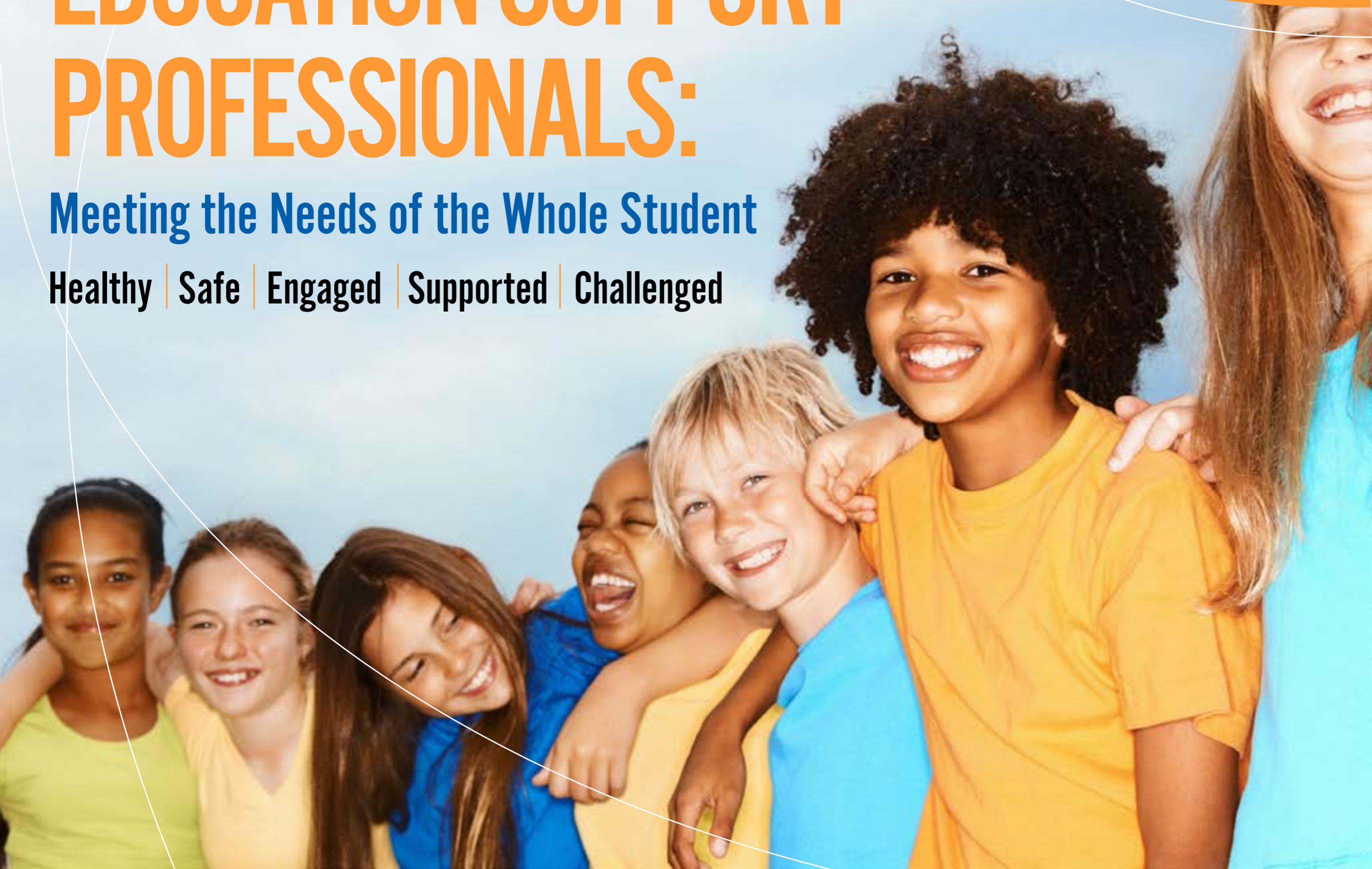


EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS:

Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student

Healthy | Safe | Engaged | Supported | Challenged



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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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

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THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a great public school for every student.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

OUR CORE VALUES

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

Equal Opportunity. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A Just Society. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

Democracy. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

Professionalism. We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

Partnership. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

Collective Action. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Donovan King, our friend and colleague, who dedicated his life to serving others and making the world a better place. He worked tirelessly for worker rights and social justice and was a devoted husband and father. This book is also dedicated to the nearly 500,000 National Education Association Education Support Professionals who work in our nation's public schools, ensuring a great public school for every student.

Special Thanks

A special thank you to the following state associations, organizations, and individuals who generously donated time and resources to make our digibook a success.

- ASCD (formerly the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development)
- Mike Wetzel and the Colorado Education Association
- Dale Folkerts and the Washington Education Association
- Jean Conley and the Massachusetts Teachers Association

A message from the President of the National Education Association

Lily Eskelsen García



Education Support Professionals have a wealth of knowledge, experience, ideas, and passion. You are a rich human resource that schools and communities cannot afford to waste. We must take advantage of all you have to offer!

— Lily Eskelsen García

Lily believes in the sacred duty of all educators to be professionals and to care for the whole student—mind, body and character—no matter how students arrive, and no matter what their learning conditions, their home conditions, or their health conditions. And she believes that professionalism carries the responsibility to take action, individually and collectively, to fight to make the promise of public education a

reality, and to prepare the whole and happy child to succeed in becoming a whole and happy adult.

Lily Eskelsen García is president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest labor union. Lily began her career in education as a school lunch lady, and now leads a professional association of three million educators. She is the first Latina to lead the NEA and is one of the coun-

try's most influential Hispanic educators. Prior to assuming the top post, Lily served two terms as NEA Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer.

Lily is a graduate of the University of Utah, graduating magna cum laude in elementary education, and later earning her master's degree in instructional technology. She was named Utah Teacher of the Year in 1989.

Education Support Professionals in all roles have made ASCD's Whole Child vision—that each child must be Healthy, Safe, Engaged, Supported, and Challenged—a key part of your daily student interactions. The impact you make on children each day will guide them for years to come.

— Judy Seltz

THE WHOLE CHILD FRAMEWORK IS BUILT UPON THESE FIVE TENETS:

1. Each student enters school **HEALTHY** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
2. Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **SAFE** for students and adults.
3. Each student is actively **ENGAGED** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
4. Each student has access to personalized learning and is **SUPPORTED** by qualified, caring adults.
5. Each student is **CHALLENGED** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

A Message from the Executive Director of ASCD
(formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Judy Seltz



Judy Seltz is Executive Director of ASCD, a global community dedicated to excellence in learning, teaching, and leading. Comprising 125,000 members—superintendents, principals, teachers, and advocates from more than 138 countries—the ASCD community also includes 56 affiliate organizations. ASCD's innovative solutions promote the success of each child. Seltz became Executive Director in June after previously serving as ASCD's chief officer of constituent services and deputy executive director.

For more information about ASCD, visit <http://www.ascd.org>



Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child

The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model (WSCC), developed and released by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and ASCD, is the next evolution for coordinated school health, and establishes a model for ensuring that students and the school environment are healthy, safe, and supported. Education Support Professionals (ESPs) play a crucial role in ensuring the success of each school health component.

Some of the actions are obvious. Health and student service ESPs are key players in the components of Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services, and Health Services. Food service professionals, as well as custodial and transportation staff, play distinct roles in the components of Nutrition, Environmental Services, and Physical Environment. However, the role of ESPs impact all components, and in particular the components of Community Involvement, Employee Wellness and Social and Emotional Climate.

Community Involvement - ESPs are frequently the most immediate and direct conduit into the school community. The majority of ESPs not only work, but also live in the local community where the school is located. Additionally, they frequently serve more than one school site and act as a liaison between schools, as well as between school staff and community agencies.

Employee Wellness - ESPs who cater to the health and wellbeing of students (Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services; Health Services; Physical Environment) also cater to the wellness of staff. These roles ensure that those who work and study in this environment do so with a focus on health and safety.

Social and Emotional Climate - All staff, including ESPs, play a key role in establishing, developing and maintaining connections with the students themselves. All adults in the school setting are crucial to establishing positive school climates, and enhancing connect- edness between staff and students.

To learn more about this model, [click here](#).





Let's Learn about Education Support Professionals

The 2011-2012 average earnings for the full-time ESP workforce is \$30,720

California, Texas, and New York lead in the total # of ESPs.

The average ESP is 45 years old.

71% of all ESP are female.

Seventy percent of the nation's ESPs live in households earning at least \$45,000 per year.

Over **2.9 million** ESPs work in the nation's public schools, with more than **75%** at the K-12 level



ESP in South Dakota and Mississippi have the lowest average earnings

The District of Columbia, New Jersey, Maryland, and California lead in average earnings for full-time ESPs



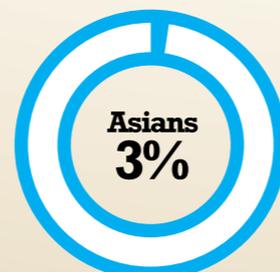
HOURS WORKED

Nationally, **51%** of ESPs work at least **40** hours per week.

24% work between **30 and 39** hours per week.

Paraeducators (**30%**) and clerical service staff (**24%**) are the largest groups

Minorities make up **34%** of ESPs



SOURCE: NEA ESP Data Book: A Work Force and Membership Profile of Education Support Professionals December 2012

WHY LUNCH LADIES ARE HEROES



Photos by Paul Specht

**READ HOW THIS
ESP SUPERHERO
IS SERVING UP
JUSTICE...
AND LUNCH.**

Get it here!



“We wouldn’t have been learning in our classrooms if she hadn’t been filling our bellies.”

-Jarrett J. Krosoczka

Learn more at **TED.com**

HEALTHY

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

To the doctor, the child is a typhoid patient; to the playground supervisor, a first baseman; to the teacher, a learner of arithmetic. At times, he may be different things to each of these specialists, but too rarely is he a whole child to any of them.

-White House Conference on Children and Youth, 1930

Education Support Professionals (ESPs) keep students physically and emotionally healthy. In order for students to achieve at their highest levels, they must first have their most basic needs met. Students who cannot see the blackboard, whose chronic illness is not being managed properly, who may suffer from an undiagnosed mental disorder, or come to school hungry, cannot learn. With a majority of public school students now coming from low-income homes, and 22 percent of all children in the United States living in poverty, our students are at ever increasing risk for poor health.

Every day, in every public school, ESPs are keeping students healthy. Whether it is the school nurse who

attends to sick students throughout the day; paraeducators who pack backpacks with food for students to take home over the weekend; the custodian who keeps an asthma-friendly school; the school secretary, who in the absence of a school nurse, must inject diabetic students with insulin; the food service professional, who ensures that every child has breakfast, whether or not they are late to arrive at school; or the technical service professional, who intervenes on the spot when a child is being bullied, ESPs make significant contributions to the health of students. Health is one of the major causal pathways to student academic success, and yet this linkage is often ignored. For many students, their health may be the missing link to their success.

School Support Staff Can Help Increase the Odds that Children Succeed

By Charles Basch, Richard March Hoe Professor of Health and Education at Columbia University's Teachers College

The Children's Health Fund is piloting a new program in three New York City elementary schools serving approximately 2000 students from high poverty communities. The philosophy behind the Healthy and Ready to Learn program is that, in order to be ready to learn, students need to be healthy. Poor vision, poorly controlled asthma, hunger, dental pain, and mental and behavioral problems undermine students' motivation, attendance, and ability to learn. These educationally relevant health barriers are the focus of Healthy and Ready to Learn.

As one of the main social institutions in our society, schools can play a central role in addressing these health problems. Healthy and Ready to Learn provides direct health services and fosters linkages with existing community resources, and also entails teacher and school support staff development; increased parental awareness, interest, and engagement; morning and afternoon physical activity breaks; and cultivation of students' (and adults') social and emotional skills.

An important goal of Healthy and Ready to Learn is establishing a school community where students feel safe, supported, and connected. Teachers, school leaders, health and student services staff, food service specialists, custodians, paraeducators, clerical and administrative staff, security personnel, as well as those responsible for transportation, all have important opportunities to contribute.

Being in a clean physical environment filled with children's artwork and exhibits of cultural pride lets students know they are valued and have a lot to be proud of. Good ventilation, clean cold water, and an environment free of physical toxins are all essential for a healthful and safe learning environment.

As one of the main social institutions in our society, schools cannot and should not be expected to tackle health barriers to learning alone. Solving these problems requires the involvement of families, health care providers, community organizations, governmental policies and investments, media, businesses and corporations, and religious and other solidarity groups.

Nevertheless, schools can and must play a central role in addressing the unmet health needs of youth that undermine their ability to succeed in school and in life.

It is well known that when people are involved in developing and "owning" an

idea, and the policies and programs that go with it, it is not only more likely to be implemented and succeed, but it is also more likely to be sustained.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

HEALTHY Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

1. Our school culture supports and reinforces the health and well being of each student.
2. Our school health education curriculum and instruction support and reinforce the health and well being of each student by addressing the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of health.
3. Our school physical education schedule, curriculum, and instruction support and reinforce the health and well being of each student by addressing lifetime fitness knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills.
4. Our school facility and environment support and reinforce the health and well being of each student and staff member.
5. Our school addresses the health and well being of each staff member.
6. Our school collaborates with parents and the local community to promote the health and well being of each student.
7. Our school integrates health and well being into the school's ongoing activities, professional development, curriculum, and assessment practices.
8. Our school sets realistic goals for student and staff health that are built on accurate data and sound science.
9. Our school facilitates student and staff access to health, mental health, and dental services.
10. Our school supports, promotes, and reinforces healthy eating patterns and food safety in routine food services and special programming, and events for students and staff.

Source: ASCD (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) (2013). Whole Child Indicators.

Carmen Hill, School Nurse

Gateway Elementary School, St. Louis, Missouri

Carmen has had to begin her workday earlier this year. She knows the sheer necessity of coming in early because once the school day starts, Carmen is the only medical professional in her school building who can provide medical services to sick students. At a time when more and more children with chronic medical conditions are enrolled in public schools, school nurses like Carmen are busier than ever before.



Throughout the day, Carmen is dispensing medication, monitoring students with asthma, diabetes, and severe allergies, performing first aid, helping children with ADHD or bipolar disorder, and attending to the students with coughs, fevers, and sore throats, who possibly should not have attended school that day. Carmen also assesses students for possible abuse, counsels students that are bullied, and even provides snacks to those students who are just hungry: “I usually buy some snacks and cereal to have in my office so if a child comes in hungry, they have something to eat.” Carmen also says the children have such enormous needs that it’s easy to become overwhelmed, but they keep her motivated. “I have to take care of my kids so they can go back to class and learn,” she says. “There are many schools that don’t have a school nurse at all, but my school is fortunate to have a school nurse full time. If I wasn’t here, who would take care of the sick kids? The other school staff would have to provide medical treatment, and they do not possess the training needed to do the task!”

Each year, Carmen also works with community foundations, charities, and businesses to get her kids the dental and vision care they need. She teams up with the [Kids Vision 4 Life program](#) for vision screenings, eye exams and new eyeglasses, while Gateway Dental provides free dental checkups and procedures on site. Throughout the school year, [Healthy Kids Express](#) comes to Gateway Elementary to provide education and resources for the children and their families suffering from asthma. They also provide free asthma supplies including inhalers and spacers.

Carmen is not only concerned about her students’ physical health. Every Thursday, nineteen girls make their way to Carmen’s office after the school day ends. They are part of Girls R Inc., and under her leadership, they get the extra support and encouragement they need to grow into independent and resilient young women. There are five components to Girls R Inc. They are: beauty, health and hygiene; growth and development; nutrition and exercise; fashion and etiquette. Carmen teaches them both the big and small lessons in life. Whether it’s about coping with stress and anger, eating the right foods, or even the importance of brushing your teeth every day, each one of her lessons makes an impact! One recent lesson on puberty was met with reactions of “yucky and gross,” until Carmen explained that the changes and maturing of their bodies were beautiful and natural. “I always had great mentors growing up,” says Carmen. “I’m just giving back.”

So why does Carmen do it? It’s simple. She loves children. “I’ve been a hospital nurse for 38 years and a school nurse for 20 years, and I love to nurture in both the school and hospital setting—it’s part of my genetic make-up. I love to provide the hugs, encouragement, and inspiration that all children need.”

Profiles in HEALTHY

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.



Pat Nicholson, Head Custodian, Jackson Park Elementary School, Bremerton, Washington

Donna West, Child Nutrition Manager

Brownwood Elementary School, Scottsboro, Alabama

Sugar snap peas got a thumbs down by a first-grade class at Brownwood Elementary School this week, but Donna West is not discouraged. She knows that her students may not like everything that’s offered through the school’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program, but part of the battle is just introducing them to new foods. “Twice every week, our school provides fresh fruits or vegetables to every classroom during snack time. This is separate from their breakfast and lunch. We’ve given our students papaya, avocado, kiwi, star fruit, mangoes, and even fennel and arugula,” Donna says. “This program is near and dear to my heart because they get to learn about healthy eating, and it also provides for those who can’t always bring in a snack from home,” she says. “That’s why we always make sure to mix in the new stuff with healthy favorites like red grapes, apples, and carrots. We know they’ll eat those!” Next week on the snack menu? Tangerines!



As explained by Melva Rodgers, Child Nutrition Director, Scottsboro City Schools, this program is funded by a grant through the [USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#). The program is seen as an important catalyst for change in efforts to combat childhood obesity by helping children learn more healthful eating habits. At Brownwood Elementary School, along with receiving a healthy snack, students learn where the fruit or vegetable is grown, the different varieties that are available, and how eating the healthy fruits and vegetables promotes healthy bodies.



Janis Bianco, Retired Senior Stenographer

Rondout Valley Central School District, Accord, New York

Janis Bianco worked as a senior stenographer for the Rondout Valley Central School District for 32 years. She retired in 2012. That same year she and other retired educators and community volunteers at the Roundout Valley Food Pantry helped develop the “Backpack” program, which compiles and sends home backpacks full of food for students to take home over the weekends.

“From our work with students, we knew that many Rondout Valley children were not getting the food they needed when they went home for the weekend,” said Janis. The backpacks include two breakfasts, three entrees, a loaf of bread, juice boxes, a card for a gallon of milk, fruits, veggies, and snacks, along with some personal care items that volunteers feel would benefit the children.

“We began with about 30 students. As of today we are up to 60 students that we service in our two elementary schools, intermediate school, and junior high school.” The demand for the backpacks isn’t going away. “Believe me, if there were more funds available we would be doing many more backpacks!” said Janis.

The group works to secure grant money and raise funds through donations from area teachers, school support personnel, school clubs, organizations, and local churches. “Without the help of the community, this program would not exist,” she said. Janis expressed how happy the students are to receive their backpacks. “Their families are doing the best they can with the hard times they are experiencing, and we are just putting out a little extra helping hand and love to help them out,” she said.

Christie Thereault, Planning Room Supervisor

Brattleboro Area Middle School, Brattleboro, Vermont

Today was one of the worst days at the psychiatric and addiction treatment center where Christie Thereault works as a mental health worker. At the treatment center’s children’s program, a large fight broke out among ten of the children, leaving the charge nurse with a broken nose. Working at centers like these is not for the faint-hearted, but Christie is not fainthearted. “I’ve been kicked and bruised many times. That’s part of the price you pay working in a treatment center. The staff supports each other and we know that it’s part of the risk of trying to help children with severe emotional problems.” At the center, children as young as five come for treatment for a variety of emotional and behavioral health issues. “These kids are hurting. Their behaviors are sometimes a result of mental illness and other times, it’s environmental. I’m passionate about working with children, because if we can help them now, maybe they have a better chance in life as an adult. The older they get, the more entrenched these behaviors can become,” says Christie.

Christie’s experience at the treatment center, along with her degree in psychology, has helped her with ensuring the emotional health of her own students at Brattleboro Area Middle School. Students there also have challenges of their own to overcome, but they know Ms. T. is always there for them. “I’m like a bad penny. I’m everywhere. I’m in the cafeteria. I’m in the hallways. I’m in the classroom. I make sure to go to their dances too,” she says. Recently, when an eighth grader committed suicide, she was able to use her skills and knowledge to help her students through the emotional crisis. Christie, along with two school counselors, operated three crisis rooms where students were allowed to come to grieve and adjust to the loss of their friend. “We wanted to be available to students, to sit down and talk to them, or just listen in a supportive way. It was also important for us to let the students know about the permanence of what their friend did. That he didn’t need to have made that choice. We knew a few of the kids were emotionally vulnerable and we were especially concerned about them,” Christie said.

Christie regularly puts her professional expertise and knowledge to work, but she knows that sometimes kids just need someone to listen and pay attention to them. “Some kids will see me and just want a hug. I have to tell you that sometimes I need that hug as much as they do.”

Breakfast in the Classroom and on the Bus!



Every student should start their day with breakfast. If breakfast isn’t served in your school, or is only served in the cafeteria, talk with your school nutrition director and school administrators about starting a program. Many hungry students

may not receive their breakfast due to an inability to get to school early, pressure to go directly to the classroom upon arrival at school, and a stigma that only low-income students go to the cafeteria for breakfast. For breakfast on the bus, breakfast is handed out in brown bag style to students as they step onto the bus. Students eat breakfast during the time spent riding to school, avoiding use of the instructional day. Breakfasts are convenient, hand-held, and can be enjoyed before arriving at school. Trash disposal is either located on the bus or at drop off.

To make these programs successful, you must involve all affected employees in planning the program before it is rolled out. Working with custodial and food service staff is particularly important to develop a plan for kitchen operations and proper cleanup and sanitation!

Additional Resources: [Breakfast in the Classroom \(BIC\) Program](#), [BIC Resource Center](#), and [Breakfast on the Bus](#).



**Education Support Professionals (ESPs)
make up one-third of the education workforce.**

Source: NEA K-12 ESP Membership Survey, Spring 2012, and NEA Elevating ESP Careers research study, 2012.

SAFE

Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

-Nelson Mandela

Education Support Professionals (ESPs) keep students physically and emotionally safe. In order for students to achieve at their highest levels, they must first have their most basic needs met. Far too many of our children live in communities where safety is not the norm. And while the school can be a haven, it is still ultimately a direct reflection of the community. Children who are exposed to serious safety risks, which include environmental pollution, crime, violence, and abuse, cannot learn. Students who must walk to school through gang-infested neighborhoods, who are LGBT or even perceived to be LGBT and are bullied and ostracized as a result, and students who are surrounded by drugs and alcohol, struggle to learn.

Every day, in every public school, ESPs are keeping students safe. Whether it is the school bus driver who knows the proper evacuation routes and safety

procedures on the bus; the school security staff who keep the school campus free of drugs, crime, and illegal substances; the trades staff who keep a clean and safe campus; the student services professional who lobbies and advocates for greater mental health resources; the secretary who intervenes in bullying situations not only to help the victim, but also the bully; the custodian who is a member of the school safety committee; or the school nurse who looks for red flags for students who may have an eating disorder or a drug addiction; in all these ways ESPs make significant contributions to the safety of students. School safety and a positive school climate do not start and end at the classroom. They continue on the bus, the playground, the halls, and the cafeteria; ESPs are present throughout the whole school, keeping students safe. Sometimes, ESPs make the ultimate sacrifice and put themselves in harm's way to protect their students, but ultimately, it is the daily and routine positive interactions and our belief in our students that they can succeed that will save them.

The Role of School Support Staff in School Safety

By David Esquith, Director of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students

Helping schools to keep students safe is a challenge that I face as the director of the Office of Safe and Healthy Students at the U.S. Department of Education. And keeping my own two children—third-grade girls—safe is a worry I have in common with parents all over our country. In my professional life, I have a vantage point that enables me to be comforted by the data, which show that schools are safer now than they have ever been. As a parent, I am comforted knowing that the entire staff of dedicated professionals who work in my girls' school are doing everything they can to ensure the safety of my children and all the children there.

The good news that our schools are increasingly safer is tempered by the progressively complex threats to safety that students and staff face on a daily basis. While technological advances have enhanced our ability to improve teaching and learning, they have also increased our children's vulnerabilities and hastened their entry into adulthood.

Schools, as self-organized learning environments, have responded to new and old threats by wisely engaging every adult in the school as equal partners in their efforts to keep students safe.

We know that certain locations in and around a school (e.g., bathrooms, cafeterias, and locker rooms) may be more unsafe than others, and that students may be more at risk in terms of their safety just before and after school. Considering what we know about the places and times when students are at higher risk, it is common sense that school support staff play a key role in school safety.

Whether it is the computer technical staff person who recognizes that a school's computer network is being used for cyberbullying, the bus driver who resolves a conflict before it escalates into a fight, or a custodian who makes sure that doors to the school building are kept securely locked from the outside—support staff play vital and unique roles in preventing violence and keeping schools safe. That they carry out this role so well is a tribute to their professionalism and dedication.

As a parent, I am comforted knowing that the entire staff of dedicated professionals who work in my girls' school are doing everything they can to ensure the safety of my children and all the children there.

SAFE Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

1. Our school building, grounds, playground equipment, and vehicles are secure and meet all established safety and environmental standards.
2. Our school physical plant is attractive; is structurally sound; has good internal (hallways) and external (pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle) traffic flow, including for those with special needs; and is free of defects.
3. Our physical, emotional, academic, and social school climate is safe, friendly, and student-centered.

4. Our students feel valued, respected, and cared for, and are motivated to learn.
5. Our school staff, students, and family members establish and maintain school and classroom behavioral expectations, rules, and routines that teach students how to manage their behavior and help students improve problem behavior.
6. Our school provides our students, staff, and family members with regular opportunities for learning and support in teaching students how to manage their own behavior, and reinforcing expectations, rules, and routines.
7. Our school teaches, models, and provides opportunities to practice social-emotional skills, including effective listening,

conflict resolution, problem solving, personal reflection and responsibility, and ethical decision making.

8. Our school upholds social justice and equity concepts and practices mutual respect for individual differences at all levels of school interactions—student-to-student, adult-to-student, and adult-to-adult.
9. Our school climate, curriculum, and instruction reflect both high expectations and an understanding of child and adolescent growth and development.
10. Our teachers and staff develop and implement academic and behavioral interventions based on an understanding of child and adolescent development and learning theories.

Source: ASCD (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) (2013). Whole Child Indicators.

Karen Barnes, School Bus Coordinator

Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) educates approximately 85,000 students and embraces 129 diverse school communities. AISD also transports thousands of students along more than 370 school bus routes daily. Luckily the AISD has ESPs like Karen Barnes to ensure that students are safe when riding to school.

Safety is Karen's primary concern. As a school bus coordinator, she has earned certifications from both the National Association of Pupil Transportation and the Texas Association of Pupil Transportation. "I've been working for over 20 years in school transportation, but there are still things that I can learn, and the kids deserve to have people who want to do the very best possible job for them," says Karen.

While Karen doesn't drive regularly anymore, she is responsible for the professional development and training of the 150 school bus drivers and the 70 to 80 school bus monitors at the Nelson Bus Terminal in Northeast Austin. This includes everything from teaching appropriate CPR and first aid procedures to wheelchair and car seat securement. "One of my greatest passions is making sure children with special needs are able to safely ride in our buses,"

Karen says. She is also known to visit students' homes for wheelchair maintenance, and advocates for students with wheelchair companies.

Karen recently took the initiative to design and build a special needs wheelchair securement training station, which allows her to train more employees at one time. The station has become so popular that Karen built a duplicate station for the district's south terminal.

Some of the students she transports carry more than their books with them to school. At certain participating high schools, young mothers can bring their infants and babies to school. These schools accommodate the mothers with on-site daycare to avoid disruptions in their education. Karen is responsible for installing and securing their infant car seats. In fact, the AISD will only utilize their own infant car seats, to ensure that they meet all safety regulations. "I would love to be able to transport these mothers and infants together on coach buses so they would always have air-conditioning in this Texas heat and could make connections with other young mothers determined to get their education," says Karen.

Karen is proud of being an ESP and proud of being part of a team that ensures thousands of students make it to school safely every day.

Sharon Faul, Special Education Paraeducator

Jennie Rogers Elementary School, Danville, Kentucky

Sharon has devoted her entire career in education to keeping students healthy and safe. She has worked with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), receiving a grant that allowed middle and high school students to create alcohol and drug prevention programs for the community. Due to their efforts, they were awarded one of the highest awards by MADD Kentucky. Sharon was also very active in the fight to pass a social host ordinance in Danville Kentucky that allows an officer to issue a citation to any adult who doesn't take sufficient measures to prevent underage drinking from occurring in their home or on their property—even if they are not home when the drinking occurs.

With her guidance, her students were also instrumental in identifying and raising awareness among local school personnel, law enforcement, and city officials about alcoholic drinks that were being sold as energy drinks to youth. Sharon also coordinated a project with her students called Sticker Shock. Students canvassed community businesses and stores and, with the permission of the business owner, placed stickers on the alcoholic beverages to remind patrons that it was a misdemeanor to serve alcohol to underage youth. "It's important to me to do everything I can to prevent youth alcohol, tobacco and drug use, and to show our youth that they can make a difference. I don't want to see these things steal the successful future of our youth," Sharon says.

Currently, Sharon is hosting and promoting the Special Persons Advocacy Network Special Needs Pageant, founded by the Stars Angels Network, where participants can shed the burdens of their disabilities for the day and just have fun!



Nearly nine in ten NEA Education Support Professionals (ESPs) say they chose education so they could make a positive impact on students.

As many as 83 percent of NEA ESPs work full time, and 85 percent are female. Their average age is 52.

Source: NEA K-12 ESP Membership Survey, Spring 2012, and NEA Elevating ESP Careers research study, 2012.

Profiles in SAFE

Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.



Victor Marquez, School Security Officer Citrus Valley High School, Redlands, California

Jean Fay, Special Education Paraeducator

Crocker Farm Elementary School, Amherst, Massachusetts



Jean Fay and David E. Sullivan

The Northwest District Attorney for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, David E. Sullivan, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the National Education Association, and other partners sponsored the Third Annual Safe School Summit in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

As a member of the District Attorney's Citizens Advisory Board, Jean was instrumental in the planning and design of the summit. The summit brought together educators, elected officials, law enforcement personnel, judicial staff, social and health service providers, parents, and community members to network, learn, and exchange ideas. Since the tragedy at Sandy Hook, Jean Fay has been committed to doing everything she can to ensure that schools are safe and that students have access to resources for physical and mental health. She has been a staunch advocate for common-sense gun laws and has made her voice heard both nationally and locally, pushing for more whole-child strategies to make students safer in their schools and communities. Recently, she was appointed by Governor Deval Patrick to his newly commissioned cross-secretariat Task Force on School Safety and Security. Jean was also appointed to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Safe and Secure Schools Commission.

Additional reference articles on Jean Fay: [Promise to my Mom](#), and [How to Arm Our Schools](#).

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FALLEN HEROES

Kimberly Riddle

Paraeducator, Knox County Schools, Tennessee



Up until her death, Kimberly Riddle's life was all about children. On weekdays, she taught children the ABCs and other subjects at Sunnyview Primary School. On Sundays, she taught the gospel to children at her Mount Calvary Baptist Church. Riddle died along with two students when two Knox County School buses collided in December.

Those who knew Riddle said the wife, mother of two, and educator was passionate about children and had the biggest heart. The Rev. Leroy Franklin, pastor at Mount Calvary, said Riddle had been on his staff as a youth pastor for so long he couldn't recall when she was hired. He said she got her "dream job" when she was hired as a teacher's aide at Knox County Schools. Riddle's name will be added to the [Memorial for Fallen Educators](#) in June alongside Charles Poland's, another ESP who died while serving students.

Charles Albert Poland, Jr.

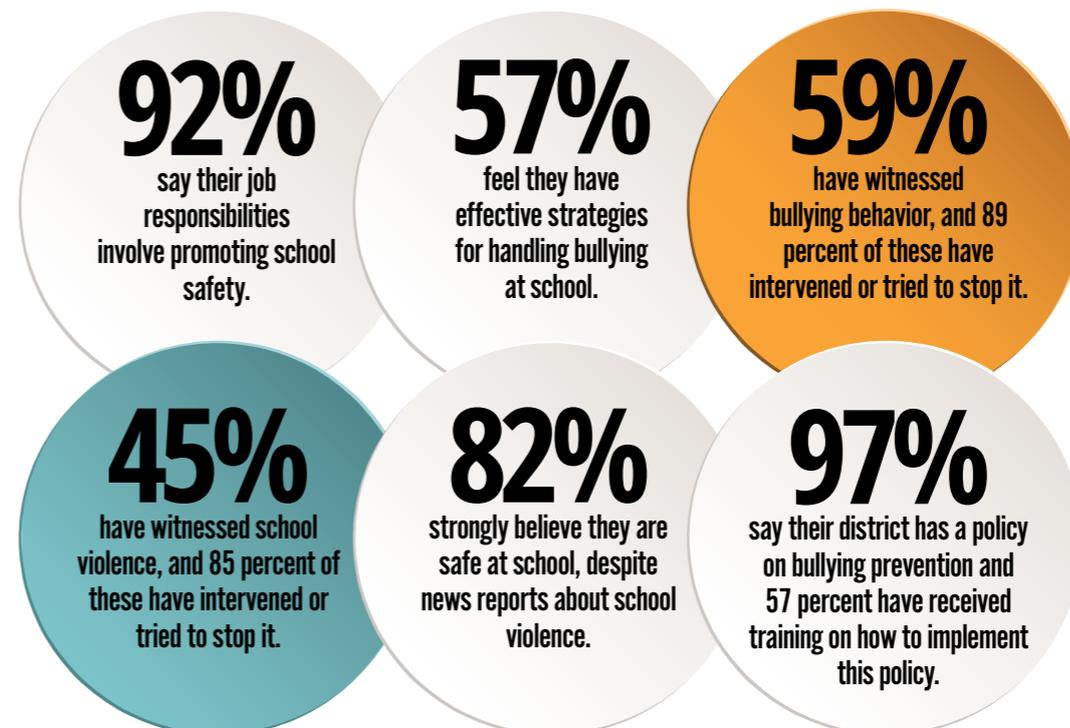
School Bus Driver, Dale County Schools, Alabama

Charles Albert Poland's last moment on earth was spent saving the lives of 21 students. On January 29, 2013, Charles went to work, as he did every day, as a school bus driver for Dale County schools in the state of Alabama. He loved his work, and referred to the five- to seven-year-olds on his bus as his "youngins." One student in particular was special to him. Student Ethan Gilman always sat behind Mr. Poland on the bus, where Mr. Poland could keep a close watch on him. People say that although Mr. Poland cared for all of the students he transported, he and Ethan, who has Asperger's syndrome and Attention Deficit Disorder, had a special bond. So, when an armed gunman boarded Mr. Poland's bus that January afternoon and demanded to take two children as hostages, Mr. Poland refused. He not only blocked the gunman from the children but tried to talk and negotiate with him. Mr. Poland was shot and killed and Ethan was abducted.

However, 20 of his students had time to evacuate safely through the rear of the bus. In the end, Ethan was safely released, but had lost one of his best friends, and the Poland family lost their patriarch. What might the news headlines have read that day if Charles Poland did not selflessly place himself in harm's way? How can you measure the lasting impact of his actions that day? You cannot. Mr. Poland's dedication and his sacrifice are an inspiration to all devoted educators—bus drivers, teachers, custodians, secretaries, food service workers, paraeducators, and many others—who work tirelessly and courageously every day to educate, protect, and nurture our students in our nation's schools. We are surrounded daily by dedicated educators such as Mr. Poland.



Education Support Professionals: Keeping Students and Schools Safe





JOB CATEGORY

FUNCTION

Custodial & Maintenance Services	Building and Grounds Maintenance and Repair
Security Services	School Resource, Guard, Campus Monitors, Police & Security Specialists
Food Services	Food Planning, Preparation and Service
Health & Student Services	Nursing, Therapy and Health Support, Community & Welfare Services
Para-Educators	Instructional & Non-Instructional Support
Clerical Services	Secretarial, Clerical & Administrative Support
Skilled Trades Services	Trades, Crafts & Machine Operators
Transportation Services	Transportation, Delivery & Vehicle Maintenance Services
Technical Services	Computer, Audiovisual and Language Technical Support & Media, Public Relations, Writing & Art Specialties
Higher Education	All Higher ESP Performing in the Job Categories listed above

NCESP

The National Council of Education Support Professionals (NCESP) is a special interest council within National Education Association (NEA). Its general purpose is to represent its members in all matters relating to Education Support Professionals (ESP). NCESP works with NEA and education friendly organizations to further the needs and issues of ESP and all members of the education family.

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ENGAGED

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

If education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it in the bettering of man's future. For what is the use of transmitting knowledge if the individual's total development lags behind?

-Maria Montessori

Education Support Professionals (ESPs) keep students engaged and connected to the larger school community. When students are engaged, they are more likely to achieve at their highest levels. Students may struggle to learn when they cannot connect what they learn in school to the real world, feel indifferent and "stuck," and feel disconnected from their peers. In an age where the half-life of knowledge and information is decreasing, students must be lifelong learners and critical thinkers. They must want to learn and have high expectations for themselves.

ESPs keep students engaged daily in every public school. There are so many examples: the paraeducator who creates a school garden for her special needs students to create an opportunity for experiential learning, and serve as a point of school pride;

the student services professional who works with parent coordinators to engage families, parents, and the community to be involved and see the school as their own; the custodian who paints his floor scrubber as a school mascot and reinforces pro-social behaviors; the paraeducator who starts a hip-hop crew; the library technician who runs the Lego extracurricular after-school program; the food service worker who develops a lunch reading program in the cafeteria; or the school bus driver who encourages the older kids to read to their younger peers on the bus. This is how ESPs make significant contributions to the engagement of students. Students who are disconnected must be brought back into the larger school community. Building relationships and treating each student as a unique human being is an approach in which ESPs excel.

School Support Staff and Engagement

By Sean Slade, Director of Whole Child Programs, ASCD

Being engaged is about being a part of the learning process, but it is also about being a part of the school community. A student can be engaged both in the classroom and outside the classroom walls. It is about being a part of what you are doing and also of where you are.

And while school support staff can play a key role in the connections back to learning, it is the connections they can make to the students as individuals which are crucial to establishing a safe, secure, welcoming environment.

School support staff obviously play a large role when it comes to ensuring that students and the environment are healthy and safe, but they also play crucial roles in ensuring that students feel connected to their environment.

One of the key, yet often underappreciated, functions of all support staff is in establishing, developing, and maintaining connections with the students themselves. All adults in the school setting are crucial to establishing a positive school climate, and enhancing connectedness between staff and students. A strong bond with one responsible adult is all that is required for students to develop resiliency skills, and for many students that adult is a support professional. School support staff hold a special place in the school setting, as they are trusted, respected, and for many students, are an adult students can connect to more directly, since they are often outside the classroom setting.

Conversations inside the four walls of a classroom have meaning. The students feel engaged and feel that attention is paid to them. However, many students reported that when the same or a similar conversation takes place outside the classroom—even one step outside the door—the effects are magnified. When time is short and there isn't enough time for more detailed engagement, changing the location can often turn a "nice" conversation into a powerful one.

Across California in the early 2000s, researchers Bonnie Benard and Carol Burgoa held a series of interviews to hear student voices on the topics of belonging and connectedness. They wanted to find out how students know that someone cares about their wellbeing, and what that person does to demonstrate it. The students interviewed reported that they saw these "outside the classroom" interactions as something more real and genuine than other interactions. It was something outside (figuratively as well as literally) of the teaching and learning process and the normal functions of the school setting. In short, where the conversations took place was almost as important as the conversations themselves.

I really like these findings, because they show that when we make a simple change to what we do, it can have a great effect. Knowing this simple step, why wouldn't you take one step outside the classroom, or engage in a chat down the hallway? Why wouldn't an [adult] who wants to connect with a student or group of students increase the effects of their interaction by taking it outside of a lesson or the place where that lesson occurs? Same conversation, different location, greater impact.

[Via "Same Conversation, Different Location, Greater Impact," ASCD Whole Child Blog](#)

Understanding this role and encouraging this action should be both encouraged and acknowledged. It forms the basis for a climate and culture of belonging and ownership, and ensures that each student feels engaged in their school and their community.

One of the key, yet often underappreciated, functions of all support staff is in establishing, developing, and maintaining connections with the students themselves. All adults in the school setting are crucial to establishing a positive school climate, and enhancing connectedness between staff and students.

ENGAGED Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

1. Our teachers use active learning strategies, such as cooperative learning and project-based learning.
2. Our school offers a range of opportunities for students to contribute to and learn within the community at large, including service learning, internships, apprenticeships, and volunteer projects.
3. Our school policies and climate reinforce citizenship and civic behaviors by students, family members, and staff, and include meaningful participation in decision making.
4. Our school uses curriculum-related experiences, such as field trips and outreach projects, to complement and extend our curriculum and instruction.
5. Each student in our school has access to a range of options and choices for a wide array of extracurricular and cocurricular activities that reflect student interests, goals, and learning profiles.
6. Our curriculum and instruction promote students' understanding of the real-world, global relevance, and application of learned content.
7. Our teachers use a range of inquiry-based, experiential learning tasks and activities to help all students deepen their understanding of what they are learning and why they are learning it.
8. Our staff works closely with students to help them monitor and direct their own progress.
9. Our school expects and prepares students to assume age-appropriate responsibility for learning through effective decision making, goal setting, and time management.
10. Our school supports, promotes, and reinforces responsible environmental habits through recycling, trash management, sustainable energy, and other efforts.

Source: ASCD (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) (2013). [Whole Child Indicators](#).

Nancy Burke, Instructional Paraeducator Haverhill High School, Haverhill, Massachusetts

When Nancy first asked permission to use a vacant interior courtyard of her high school, she could never have imagined what would be there today.

This fall, she had a "Salsa Garden" with a variety of peppers, tomatoes and cilantro, and a "Stew Garden" full of carrots, onions, and many different types of potatoes.

These gardens have excited and engaged the 24 special needs students that she teaches every day. But the garden is about more than just growing healthy foods. It serves as a learning lab, a therapeutic garden, and a safe and relaxing space where Nancy and her students can get fresh air and connect with nature.

Nancy wanted to get her students out of the classroom more. This was not easy, since many of

her students were wheelchair-bound or had other physical limitations. Luckily, with the assistance of students from the general education classes and some Eagle Scouts, she was able to get raised bed gardens, benches, and a ramp for wheelchair accessibility built for her students. The raised beds were critical because her students in wheelchairs would not have been able to fully participate with in-ground gardens. Now, all of her students could get their hands dirty and appreciate everything the gardens had to offer.

The gardens benefited not only the special needs students in her classes but also the entire school. The "House Construction Class" at Haverhill High School is now building a shed to store garden equipment and the student council raked, cleaned, and then planted tulip and daffodil bulbs for the spring.

The benefits of school gardens are numerous. Now Nancy can offer her students hands-on, experiential learning opportunities in natural and social science, as well as nutrition. She can teach about water and energy cycles, pollination, and the reasons why we all need to care about the natural environment. Once restricted to the indoors, her students now have opportunities that only the outdoors can provide. There is also much evidence that active learning in less structured, participatory spaces is best,

and that students are also more likely to try eating vegetables they grow themselves! Nancy says, "The students and all the gardens are a focus of school pride. They encourage students to identify with and be proud of their school."

The garden keeps growing and now it is in use all year round. The school recently planted two evergreen trees, which they named Hope and Peace. "Things have gone well," Nancy says. "The students and all the staff love going out there. Our future plans are to put in a pumpkin patch and plant small sugar pumpkins and a variety of squash. We've had one student say he would never eat squash, so we figure if he plants them in the spring, perhaps he might just eat them in the fall."

Nancy and her students are waiting anxiously for the growing season. They have big plans this year, including submitting their produce to the Topsfield Fair, the oldest agricultural fair in New England.

Additional Resources: [Massachusetts Farm to School Project](#) and [MTA Funds Connect ESPs to Local Farms](#).

George "Al" Wood, School Bus Driver Morris School District, Morristown, New Jersey

Al has had to wear many hats in his job as a school bus driver for the Morris School District. For many years, he was the official Santa Claus for the school's fundraiser called "An Evening with Santa." This allowed the school to raise sorely-needed funds, and allowed Al to do something extra special for his kids.

"Fortunately, none of my students have caught on to the fact that I'm the Santa." Al has also worn a box decorated to be a

part of a school bus. Along with a number of other drivers who wore similar costumes, they formed the whole bus for a local hunger walk, where they collected several hundred pounds of food for local families. Al has even been the official "cookie man," as he took on the responsibility of delivering Girl Scout cookies to the girls who didn't have a way to get to the distribution site.

However, what he is most proud of is how he transports his handicapped pre-school students to and from school. "Depending on the day, I can be a singer, a songwriter, or a best pal to my students," Al says. He discovered that singing was the best way to engage his students while on the bus.

His parents have even commented that their children come home happy, singing, and looking forward to the next day when they can get back on his bus.

Depending on the day, I can be a singer, a songwriter, or a best pal to my students.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of NEA ESPs live within the boundaries of the school districts where they are employed.

NEA ESPs have been employed in public schools for an average of 13 years and 47 percent have an associate's or more advanced degree.

Source: NEA K-12 ESP Membership Survey, Spring 2012, and NEA Elevating ESP Careers research study, 2012.

Profiles in ENGAGED

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.



Ann Benninghoff, Dutch Creek Elementary School, Littleton, Colorado

Norman E. Cosgrove, American Sign Language Communication Aide Fort Greely School, Delta Junction, Alaska



If students at Fort Greely Middle School want to join the Delta-Greely Radio Controlled (RC) Fliers Club, they need to have at least a 3.0 GPA, cannot have any disciplinary reports at school, and must demonstrate a commitment to improving the community. Norman Cosgrove supervises what is arguably the most popular club at the school. Twenty-two students are currently members, but the RC Fliers Club has a waiting list of 60! Before club members can start flying the radio-controlled fixed-wing and gyrocopter aircrafts, they must train on a flight simulator with the same remote controls that are used for the aircraft, until they can make three consecutive take-offs and landings without crashing. Once a student successfully qualifies to fly, they are awarded a Delta-Greely RC Fliers Club pilot's license and metallic wings (donated by Alaska Airlines) at a school assembly. The Delta-Greely RC Fliers Club has officers and by-laws, and is even a member of the Amateur Modelers of Aeronautics. Student representatives have made presentations to the Delta-Greely School Board and the Moose Lodge. The club can even lead to career options for some students, such as working in the aviation industry. "We need to engage students on every level. I think there are more than a few kids in my school who are excited to come to school just because of this club. It makes me proud of my school and my kids," says Cosgrove.

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PROTECTING THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY™

SUPPORTED

Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.

A Child's life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark.

- Chinese Proverb

Education Support Professionals (ESPs) keep students supported and may be the one caring and nurturing adult that every student needs to succeed. This support is personalized and unique to that student's life circumstances. When no one knows a student's name or they have no positive role models at home, when that student needs specialized interventions, or when that child is homeless or a ward of the state, they are less likely to achieve at their highest levels. Students need adults to teach them how to be independent, resilient, and persistent.

Every day, in every public school, ESPs are keeping students supported. Whether it is the paraeducator who creates an annual party for special needs students; the student services professional who works with high-risk students and their families; the school nurse who

helps families navigate the labyrinth of community and school services they require to meet their ever-growing needs; the paraeducator who helps counsel students after their friend commits suicide; the custodian who starts a program to distribute coats and school uniforms to students in need; the school secretary who has toiletries at their desk to help those students who come to school disheveled and unkempt; or the school suspension monitor who encourages their students to do the right thing, ESPs make significant contributions to supporting our students. When students are marginalized or troubled, ESPs can make a huge impact on their lives. When more and more families struggle to meet all of the needs of their children, ESPs can fulfill a critical supportive role that will help students on their journey to becoming whole.

SUPPORTED Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults

1. Our school personalizes learning, including the flexible use of time and scheduling to meet academic and social goals for each student.
2. Our teachers use a range of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment tasks to monitor student progress, provide timely feedback, and adjust teaching-learning activities to maximize student progress.
3. Our school ensures that adult-student relationships support and encourage each student's academic and personal growth.
4. Each student has access to school counselors and other structured academic, social, and emotional support systems.
5. Our school staff understands and makes curricular, instructional, and school improvement decisions based on child and adolescent development and student performance information.
6. Our school personnel welcome and include all families as partners in their children's education and significant members of the school community.
7. Our school uses a variety of methods across languages and cultures to communicate with all families and community members about the school's vision, mission, goals, activities and opportunities for students.
8. Our school helps families understand available services, advocates for their children's needs, and supports their children's learning.
9. Every member of our school staff is well qualified and properly credentialed.
10. All adults who interact with students, both within the school and through extracurricular, cocurricular, and community-based experiences, teach and model pro-social behavior.

Source: ASCD (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) (2013). *Whole Child Indicators*.

The Lunch Lady

By Jarrett J. Krosoczka, Author and Illustrator

As an author and illustrator of books for young readers, I find myself visiting a lot of elementary schools. I love instilling a love of creativity and reading in the students on these visits. While I am typically invited in by the school librarian or a parent volunteer, the day itself runs smoothly because of the wonderful Education Support Professionals at the school. From coast to coast, I am always greeted with an enthusiastic smile from the front desk of the office. It's a wonderful way to start your day, to be cheerfully welcomed with, "You're the author! We've been waiting for you!" And this chipper greeting is offered while a line of kids are waiting to sign in and receive late slips. My presentations are often in the cafeteria, which means that a lot of folks have made accommodations for me. For one, the food service staff is preparing the day's meals while trying not to make too much noise. And the custodial team has broken down tables and chairs, only to put them back up again in the small window of time between the end of my presentations and the beginning of lunch. The custodians always ensure that I have everything I need. An extension cord? Turning the lights off? They always have my back. And my presentations rely on the technology working, so

the technology specialist is always on hand to make sure that my computer and their digital projector are communicating. An author visit is a special day for the school. I remember an author visiting my school when I was in the third grade—it made a tremendous impression on me. Now that I see the behind-the-scenes work, I really appreciate the effort that was put into that author visit back in 1986. And of course—every day of my education.

One of my more popular series is the Lunch Lady graphic novels. It's about a spatula-wielding crime fighter, and the comics were inspired by a chance encounter I had with my childhood lunch lady. Back when my first book was published in 2001, I returned to my old elementary school for my first-ever author visit. The school hosted my presentation in the cafeteria, and while I was setting up my slide projector, I saw her—Jeanne Cariglia, the beloved lunch lady of my youth. There she was, still preparing meals after all these years. After striking up a conversation with her, I learned about her grandkids. Which surprised me. Didn't she live in the school's kitchen? You mean she went home to a family? She had a secret life! Well that thought inspired me to develop the book series. Many years later when the first book, *Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute*, was published, I hosted a launch event at the Worcester Public Library. Jeanne was

there, along with her cafeteria cohort, Betty Pastore. I presented them with artwork and books to thank them for their years of service. They were tickled, and they even signed some books for the kids in attendance!

A few weeks later, I received a card from Jeanne. In it, she thanked me for the artwork and the books, but something else struck me. On this card she wrote, "I loved all of my kids." And of course she did—she took care of all of us. I always knew this, I just had never put it into words before. We wouldn't have been learning in our classrooms if she hadn't been filling our bellies.

And that is true of all of the School Support Staff. The clerical staff are there every morning to offer a sympathetic ear to the students who are late. The bus drivers get our students to school safely and on time. The custodians make sure that every room in the building is maintained and that our students are working in a healthy environment. Our nurses are making sure that the students themselves are healthy. Our paraeducators are ensuring that all of the educators in the building have the support that they need to serve our students. And all of this? It comes from love. Our ESPs love our kids, and our kids know that they are well taken care of. And because of this love—and a lot of hard work—our nation's future generations are receiving a superlative education.

Ted Chadoir, School Bus Driver and Playground Supervisor

Southern Door Elementary School, Brussels, Wisconsin

A few years back, I had a very squirmy four-year-old kindergartener on my bus. I tried different seating arrangements to try to keep him seated, but nothing worked. One day I said, "AJ, could you just please take a book out of your backpack and look through it while you're on the bus?" He said, "I don't have books in my backpack." Well, I checked, and sure enough, they didn't have books to take home. That realization stayed with me because a couple months later, when my wife, Dee wanted me to take our adult daughter Alisha's children's books to Goodwill, I had another idea. I thought I'd bring them on the bus and see if my students might want them. And did they ever! I told them that they could keep it if they liked the book. Within a couple weeks, I had found homes for all of Alisha's books. Well, a week or two later some kids started asking for more books. My wife Dee is also a school bus driver, and we agreed that we needed to get them more books! How could we turn a deaf ear to kids asking for books?

As the ESP president of my local Association, I attend the school board meetings, and it so happened that at the next board meeting, the school's reading specialist was giving a report to the board. I approached her after the meeting and told her what we were doing on the bus, and asked if she could find us some books. You'd have to know Missy Bousley to appreciate her response. She is this mile-a-minute walker and talker, and passionate about encouraging kids to read. Trying to talk to her can be like talking to the wind. She's busy! But my request stopped her in her tracks, and she said, "You're doing what?" After I told her how and why we were offering the kids books, and how the four- to eight-year-olds were eating it up, she almost spontaneously combusted right in front of me. "Get you books, oh, we can get you books. Can you get all the bus drivers to do this?" I said, "I don't know, but Dee and I sure could use some books now." She said, "I suppose you need picture books for your four- to eight-year-old kids?" I said, "Well, I have some middle school and high school kids reading to some of the little ones, so we could use some chapter books too." Missy says, "You have older kids reading to the younger kids? Peer mentoring, peer mentoring, you have peer mentors on the bus?" I said, "No, I got older kids reading to those that can't read." I could see the wheels turning in her head.

Within a week or two she had three different news outlets from Southern Door County interviewing me, where I was able to ask for children's books. We got books all right, but we also got a new outlook concerning this little

project we had started on the bus. The passionate response we got from the public about this "idea" inspired Dee and I to try to create a better working model for the other bus drivers to try. The box of books at the front of the bus was easy for students to access while getting on the bus, but during the route, when the kids want a different book, well, they're out of luck, as you have to be seated while those wheels are rolling. We tried Tupperware tubs and backpacks but they proved to be just too cumbersome for little kids to handle. I knew what would work though. We needed book pockets built into the backs of the seats, but they were expensive and we didn't have the funds.

Unbeknownst to me, this project that we started calling "Books on the Bus" was nominated for an award from the Wisconsin State Reading Association and it won! Well, it wasn't two months later that our very own Wisconsin Education Association Council Trust Benefits awarded Books on the Bus one of the two \$2,500 Forward Together awards. We now had the money for our seat pockets!

Books on the Bus requires someone with a passion for kids, because it will probably always be an unbudgeted program. We do not get compensation for doing this. It is ESPs going above and beyond their job-description to benefit students. It was the collaboration of our union to start funding this project that was key to getting it operating like it is. Now, we have kids donating their own books to the program. One morning my student Abbie, age five, brought me a bag of books and said, "I don't need these anymore." I said, "Great, I'll put them in the book box." That afternoon on the route home, I happened to notice her in my mirror. She was aware that kids were looking through some of her books and I could actually see the pride spreading across her face. I could hear her telling other kids that those were her books. As she got off the bus at her house she leaned over to me, and with a big smile she whispered, "I think they really liked my books!"

Want to learn more about Books on the Bus or donate books to this program? [Click here.](#)

It was the collaboration of our union to start funding this project that was key to getting it operating like it is.

Profiles in SUPPORTED

Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.



Laura Montgomery, Home School Consultant
The Pulaski County Special School District, Little Rock, Arkansas



Stephone Avery, Head Custodian

Camden Fairview Intermediate School, Camden, Arkansas



When Stephone Avery notices a student in need, he never ignores it. That is probably why he has become the de facto “go to” person at his school for student support. On one occasion, Stephone noticed a few boys who were coming to school not properly groomed, and looking embarrassed about it. He was able to contact their parents and arrange to have their hair cut by a neighborhood barber. Another time, he noticed a student with worn out and battered shoes. Again, with the permission of the parents, Stephone solicited anonymous donations from the school community to help this student in need. “Anonymous giving allows the students and parents to keep their dignity. My goal for these students was not just about their physical appearance, but also to prevent bullying from their peers. The focus needs to be on education and not what they’re wearing,” he expressed.

During the winter months, house fires are far too common in Camden. “There are a number of students who live in homes that have unsafe heater units. Financial struggles keep families from being able to replace them.” To deal with situations like these, and for the general need in his community, Stephone started the Coats for Kids program. After a coat is unclaimed from the school’s lost and found for two school years, it is dry cleaned and provided to kids in need. They also provide school uniforms through this program. As an educator and pastor in a community church, Stephone is always there to support families and students. It’s a moral necessity to him.

Ann Krampitz, Special Education Paraprofessional

Owatanna Public Schools, Owatanna, Minnesota

Ann Krampitz is a special education paraeducator with 23 years experience as an educator in the Owatanna, Minnesota school district. Ann wanted Owatanna’s special education students to have access to similar high school experiences as regular-ed students, such as proms and carnivals, and decided to do something about it. To this end, she and her colleagues created the “Annual Fall Party,” now in its ninth year, for the special education students, their parents, and supportive regular-ed students. “Students get a chance to interact with kids that are like them or are supportive, so they are comfortable and have a chance to bond with each other in a safe environment,” said Ann.

Parents are able to meet up with other parents of students with disabilities and collaborate, as well as see their own kids interacting with others in a positive way. Ann and her colleagues get donations from community members and local businesses for the dance, which provides music, food and entertainment for students, and is typically held in the school gym after hours. “We thought that our special needs students needed an outlet too—a place where they can go and have fun,” said Ann.

Sharon Sparks, Paraeducator

Rye Junior High School, Rye, New Hampshire

For many years, Sharon Sparks tutored students who were also patients at a Youth Behavioral Health unit at a nearby hospital. The youth that she encountered there were receiving intensive treatment and therapy for a variety of mental, emotional, and behavioral problems. She formed close bonds and relationships with a number of her students, so when she discovered that two of her LGBT students had committed suicide, she was utterly devastated.

If you were to attend one of Sharon Sparks’s professional association trainings on communication strategies on LGBT issues, you would learn that LGBT youth face social stigma, discrimination, and are often rejected by their own families.

In fact, they are at a much greater risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation than their heterosexual peers. You would also learn that 30 to 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBT.

Sharon felt that teaching educators would be the most effective way to promote more inclusive and supportive environments for LGBT students in the schools. “We can create educational environments that nurture everyone. No student should feel excluded, especially some of our society’s most vulnerable youth,” Sharon says. “Even if they are not accepted at home, they should have a safe place at school.”

So, whether Sharon is supervising a homework club, planning out extension activities for her students, helping the homeroom advisor teacher with goal-setting, or even training a ballroom of 50 educators on LGBT issues, she knows that she’s doing her part towards educating and meeting the needs of the whole child.

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of NEA ESPs have volunteered in the past two years to assist children and benefit the community.



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



Source: NEA K-12 ESP Membership Survey, Spring 2012, and NEA Elevating ESP Careers research study, 2012.

How important ESPs are to us!

Mojave Kendrick

Rafael Martinez

Tara Stanley

Mahogany Kendrick

Keshaun Ward

CHALLENGED

Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.

- Albert Einstein

Education Support Professionals (ESPs) keep students challenged by maintaining high expectations for every student. Students must understand the connection between education and lifelong success, and feel challenged and motivated for personal growth. When students are not challenged to be successful or lack adult guidance to further their education or career, they are less likely to succeed. ESPs can make those true connections with students that increase their self-esteem and provide them the confidence to dream.

Every day, in every public school, ESPs are keeping students challenged. Whether it is the Native American specialist who provides extra supports to students from a historically marginalized community; a Brailleist who

works with hearing-impaired students to become independent and self-reliant; the paraeducator who creates a website that reinforces curricula; or an instructional paraeducator who is a member of the school's data team and uses quantitative data to support student academics and interventions, ESPs make significant contributions to challenging our students. When the needs of our students are increasing, and their barriers to learning are becoming more and more complex, the whole school community must collaborate on behalf of the student. Working in isolation is no longer acceptable inside or outside the school. It takes the whole school and whole community to ensure the needs of the whole child.

Excerpts from: *The Engaged Community: School Collaboration for Developing the Whole Child*

By Carol A. Kochar-Bryant, author of *Effective Collaboration for Educating the Whole Child* and Senior Associate Dean and Professor, Special Education and Disability Studies at George Washington University.

Collaboration and coordination among the community of professionals within schools are arguably the most important factors in addressing the comprehensive needs of students, families, schools, and communities. Since the education system has a mandate and a shared responsibility to fully prepare students for college, career and citizenship—the “whole child”—collaboration and coordination are the pivots upon which that mission turns. Yet these are among the most challenging goals for professionals to achieve. Every aspect of educational improvement involves the ability of people to effectively work together for positive change. With skilled leadership that harnesses the creativity and basic motivation of people to apply new knowledge in solving problems, collaboration can result in powerful and positive long-term change.

Who Is Involved In School Collaboration?

No longer a trite notion, educational leaders and parents know that it does indeed take a whole school to work toward successful collaboration for building a student-centered holistic approach to education. At the heart of effective and long-lasting school collaboration are effective relationships among all professionals within the school environment—administrators, teachers,

parents, the students, general and special education teachers, paraeducators, related-services specialists, nurses, counselors, librarians, physical education teachers, technical specialists, custodians, food service personnel, and trades professionals. Outside of the school setting, human service agencies essential for comprehensive planning for students include community mental health services, social services, family services, public health services, alternative school programs, substance abuse services, post-secondary institutions, and career-vocational services. Each of these groups within and outside the school community must be engaged to support the development of the whole student.

Why is Collaboration Central to Achieving the Whole Child Approach?

The traditional structure of schools can promote isolation among professional groups and impede collaboration. These gaps occur when components of the educational system do not connect in a manner that promotes the child’s fullest potential within the educational continuum. For example, special and general educators have traditionally taught in separate rooms or buildings. Guidance counselors and school counselors have traditionally functioned

independently of the instructional program. These separations are partly due to the fact that historically, different components of the educational system have evolved separately. Factors that separate them and prevent them from effective collaboration are rooted in differences in their roles, professional “languages” or terminology, expectations for students, policies that guide them, practices, and backgrounds and training of personnel.

Collaboration Creates a Shared Responsibility and Improves Conditions for Learning

Collaboration has gained increasing attention because research demonstrates that people accomplish more and make better decisions when they work together intentionally on behalf of students. Collaborative teams have many advantages over individuals working in isolation, since people with different expertise and perspectives on students tend to be better at solving problems and have a higher level of commitment to new ideas and strategies.

Research also indicates that active parent and family engagement strongly predicts students’ school success. Efforts to build respectful, cooperative relationships among parents, families, teachers, and school

administrators help family members feel more capable of contributing to their child’s education and connected to their child’s school. When families are supported in their parenting role, their involvement in their children’s learning increases and student performance is strengthened.

A shared responsibility and shared approaches to addressing student educational and developmental needs—helping the “whole child”—bring to bear the combined thinking, planning, and resources of all who support the development of students and families (Conzemius & O’Neill, 2001).

In summary, the concepts of collaboration and coordination lead to innovative practices, new relationships, and improved outcomes for students and families. Clear objectives, goals or ends are essential, as clarity of purpose is often the key ingredient in the success of a collaborative effort for a whole child initiative.

To read the full article and for a list of references, [click here](#).

SUPPORTED Each graduate is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

1. Each student in our school has access to challenging, comprehensive curriculum in all content areas.
2. Our curriculum and instruction provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills, problem solving competencies, and technology proficiency.
3. Our school collects and uses qualitative and quantitative data to support student academic and personal growth.
4. Our curriculum, instruction, and assessment demonstrate high expectations for each student.
5. Our school works with families to help all students understand the connection between education and lifelong success.
6. Our curriculum and instruction include evidence-based strategies to prepare students for further education, career, and citizenship.
7. Our extracurricular, cocurricular, and community-based programs provide students with experiences relevant to higher education, career, and citizenship.
8. Our curriculum and instruction develop students' global awareness and competencies, including understanding of language and culture.
9. Our school monitors and assesses extracurricular, cocurricular, and community-based experiences to ensure students' academic and personal growth.
10. Our school provides cross-curricular opportunities for learning with and through technology.

Source: ASCD (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) (2013). *Whole Child Indicators*.



Saul Ramos, Paraeducator, Brailist, Artist Worcester Public Schools, Worcester, Massachusetts

Saul has worked with visually impaired students in the Worcester Public Schools for the past 15 years. While his responsibilities as a Brailist include producing school materials into Braille, the main goal of his work is to ensure that his students are fully integrated into their neighborhood public schools, become familiar with their surroundings, and become as independent as possible. His students, who are blind or visually impaired, require adaptations to the environment and hands-on curriculum. Saul is there to ensure that they have what they need to excel and that they are motivated and challenged to reach their full potential. Saul has strong ties with his students, having worked with one student from kindergarten until he graduated from high school four years ago. He is an advocate for English Language Learners and special education students, as well. "I know that with a lot of patience, understanding, and guidance, my students are capable of accomplishing anything any other student can," Saul says.

Just as any one of his students cannot be defined purely by their impairment, and should be seen and treated as a whole child, Saul too is more than just an educator. Saul is also an artist and a proud Latino, born in San German, Puerto Rico, and raised between Worcester, Massachusetts and San German. "As a Latino, I am proud of my roots and the beautiful mix of cultures we all come from. I am a mixture of my mother's Spanish heritage and my father's African and Taino heritage. I am a passionate advocate for keeping our culture alive and making sure our community, especially our youth, are in touch with their roots and embrace the beauty of it," Saul says. Saul has found a way to make this happen through education and art. "One way I do this is through the ECAS Theater in Providence, Rhode Island. We are the leading nonprofit indepen-

Profiles in CHALLENGED

Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.



Cecil Crawford, Native American Specialist
Missoula County Public Schools, Missoula, Montana

dent Latino arts organization in New England, dedicated to providing access to Spanish-language and bilingual theater through live performances, workshops, and cultural education, while helping adults and young Latinos discover hidden talents, build self-confidence, and solidify their cultural and individual identity. Through our youth, we can make sure to keep our culture alive."

Saul knows the value of the arts to education and society as a whole. "We need Einsteins in this world, but we also need poets, photographers, writers, carpenters, musicians, and painters too. Art is one of the greatest ways that humans can express their whole spirit. I hope that all educators will remember that among their students, they may have a budding artist that should be challenged and motivated to explore their craft."

Katherine Davis, Data Manager

Table Rock Middle School, Morgantown, North Carolina

Keddsnews was created by Katherine Davis with the collaboration of teachers at Table Rock Middle School to challenge her students to learn and grow. The site is jam-packed with interactive lessons, tutorials, and games for students in math, language arts, and science. In the Welcome to the Jungle section, students can find a year's worth of lesson plans, and there are also resources available to assist students looking for scholarships and financial assistance. Katherine is also a computer instructor and is the administrator of a number of computer programs used at the school for promoting early literacy.

"I want my students to know that they can create who they want to be," Katherine says. Along with her regular school duties, Katherine also mentors young girls through her Princess club. They have sponsored father-daughter luncheons, held fashion shows, and invited guest speakers to speak to her girls on everything from entrepreneurship to etiquette.

[Check out keddsnews here.](#)

I want my students to know that they can create who they want to be.

Lynn Goss, Instructional Paraeducator

Menomonie Middle School, Menomonie, Wisconsin

Menomonie Middle School students are told that they can achieve and excel, even if that means that they need additional instruction or support. The Menomonie Middle School program called "What I Need" is based on the concept that different students have different paths to learning, and that sometimes that requires personalized instruction and intervention. For those students who may need greater levels of support, educators like Lynn Goss are there to help them with their academic challenges. "No one understands that 'learning is not a race' better than Lynn Goss. She has an uncanny intuition, coupled with an enormous knowledge base that empowers her to make a significant difference in the academic lives of students identified for additional time and support," says Stacey Everson, principal of Menomonie Middle School.

At Menomonie, they have also been trying to remove the social stigma that comes with

students who may need remedial help. "We've been trying really hard to remove this stigma. We've started being honest and more transparent with students. In the past, we may have sugar-coated things for them and I think they understood that to mean that their special needs were something to be ashamed of. I think once you are honest and tell students where they are academically and where they need to be, their feelings of ownership over their own learning increase. I think this develops the sense of responsibility and self-determination they need to reach their academic goals," Lynn says.

Lynn is part of her school's data team, which includes the school principal, two core team teachers, the school psychologist, and the special education teacher. An important aspect of identifying students who need extra support and intervention is accurate and timely data collection. The team works together to interpret the data and detect patterns, trends, and any achievement gaps in English language arts and math. This also allows them to identify specific students they need to target for one-on-one support.

So, sometimes these kids just need me to listen to them. It's not something that a book or a computer program or drilling them on fractions is going to solve.

"After we investigate what is going on with a specific student, we find out that that student is having problems with vision, or that they're depressed because their father just lost their job, or they're being bullied," Lynn says. "So, sometimes these kids just need me to listen to them. It's not something that a book or a computer program or drilling them on fractions is going to solve. I'd say that having a supportive and caring relationship with them is just as important as anything else."

Did you know that . . .



of NEA ESPs provide care to students with special needs.



of NEA ESPs plan to stay in the profession, and 75 percent plan to stay with their current jobs until they retire.

Source: NEA K-12 ESP Membership Survey, Spring 2012, and NEA Elevating ESP Careers research study, 2012.

Anthony Marie Johnson, Paraeducator

Argentine Middle School, Kansas City, Kansas

Anthony Marie Johnson is a paraeducator, working with special needs students in social studies and science. Her primary responsibility is to ensure that students are actively involved in the learning process, and learning at the highest levels. As important as her job as an educator has been, her work in the community has been just as vital for her students and the community where she lives.

Anthony Marie has served on the Single Parent Scholarship Committee that selects and honors single parents who are furthering their education by attending a local junior college or college/university. She has volunteered as an outreach social worker with a teen pregnancy center to provide support to teens during their pregnancy. She is a member of the KCK Black Chamber of Commerce, which supports the Summer STEM program for students in the third through eighth grades. She also works with students in the reading and math tutoring program run by a non-profit organization at a community center near school. Participation at the center increased dramatically once students recognized that Ms. Johnson was at the center. "I am a face they know in the community and I look like them," she says. Anthony Marie knows that increasing connections and fostering collaboration between school, parents, and the community is the only way to educate the whole child. It really does take a village.

Keeping Education Support Professionals Whole

“They love working with kids. It’s great they love what they do, but they still have to live.”

ESPs across the country are working together in their unions, schools and communities to fight for what they need to be whole.

In order for ESPs to meet the needs of the whole child, ESPs must also be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. A major component of feeling whole is earning wages and benefits that reflect their workload, commitment, and experience. It also means workplace recognition and positive reinforcement, respect from colleagues and administrators, and access to quality professional development.

In Yakima, Washington, that means fighting for a living wage that can sustain them and their families. Most Yakima ESPs were living below the poverty level at a base pay of \$11.86 an hour. In fact, Yakima’s paraeducators have historically been the district’s lowest-paid employees for decades. Many Yakima support professionals have depended on public food and housing assistance.

Many ESPs work less than full time hours and may only work nine months out of the year. They are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits for the remainder of



the year when school is out of session. Mike Horner from the Washington Education Association underscored that Yakima ESPs knew they could be making a higher salary working outside of education, but chose to stay because “they love working with kids. It’s great they love what they do, but they still have a right to live.” According to Horner, the Yakima school district has many students who live in poverty. With a high number of children with special needs, and many students who may get their only meals of the day at school, a dedicated support staff is that much more essential.

But last year, inflation and years without a pay raise left Yakima ESPs not even

making a poverty-level wage. Obtaining an actual living wage seemed nearly impossible to Buffy Phillips, a Yakima ESP who was on the district’s bargaining team. “There’s such a tremendous love for the students and the pride in doing that, and yet there’s the fear at home. How am I going to buy the groceries? Where am I going to go?”

Yakima ESPs, in coordination with Washington Education Association, began a living wage campaign by making community members aware of just how far behind ESPs’ pay was compared with the wages needed to live in Yakima. “We started with the stories, our stories,” said Phillips. “There were fliers handed out at football games.

We went to neighborhoods to let the community know what was going on with our district.”

They also emphasized the crucial role ESPs play in students’ school experience and in their community. “Think of the bus driver – this is the person that picks a child up and drops them off. That secretary, the clerical worker knows the families, knows those kids, their moms, their dads. The cafeteria workers know about who gets fed or not. They know these children better than any administrator or director. They should really be paid more. They care for hundreds of kids. It is a disservice to public education when we don’t support them,” said Phillips.

In Yakima, thanks to the collective action of the ESPs, the base pay is now \$13.68 an hour. “It’s an honest thing we’re after. More money for our families, more money in our pockets,” said Kristie Maxwell, a classroom paraeducator. “We didn’t deserve to be poverty-level people. I work hard all day with my kids, and I deserved my living wage.”

Being whole also means feeling safe, and for workers that means having

job security. Unfortunately, many districts have converted to, or are considering, privatizing or “contracting out” many education services into the hands of private, for-profit corporations.

While most of the attention has been on the traditionally contracted-out job categories of transportation, custodial, and food services, no ESP jobs are safe. Districts often contract out because private contractors nearly always promise cost savings, although they rarely deliver. Bids often do not take into account all the costs involved, and contractors may “low-ball” initial bids to win a contract, with costs rising significantly as time goes on. And there is more to the work of ESPs than just costs, and much more at stake when jobs are contracted out—the quality of education and even the safety of our children can be at risk. Private contractors may bring in strangers from outside the community with no connection to the students and families they serve, and cost-cutting can threaten student and employee health and safety.

Defeating privatization begins with educating school boards, parents, and our communities about the vital roles ESPs



play in our students' educations and lives. There is no magic wand to wave—beating privatization takes hard work.

Members of Clearview Education Association (CEA) in New Jersey know this all too well. CEA is a merged local with 330 members, including about 100 ESPs whose current contract runs through June 30, 2015. Last year on March 20, with 15 months remaining on that contract, Superintendent John Horchak of the Clearview Regional School District told custodians and paraprofessionals that their jobs might be privatized.

"I was so broken up when I heard the news," says Mike Larmond, a custodian for more than 20 years, known to students as Mister Mike. "I love getting up in the

morning and going to work. I want to give my retirement speech at Clearview, not somewhere else."

"The sooner you realize your school board is considering privatization, the better prepared you can be to fight it," says Scott Wagner, a teacher for 32 years and CEA president. "You need to stay ready."

Within a week, Superintendent Horchak began advertising bids for the ESP jobs. "Our people were told they could probably have a job with the private company, but for probably less pay, fewer hours, and no benefits," Wagner says. "I don't think any of the ESPs were going to apply for those jobs."

"I didn't see that one coming," says Diane D'Agostini, a Clearview paraeducator for

18 years, whose four children graduated from Clearview Regional High School. "It was on my mind 24/7. I couldn't sleep a wink."

Soon after the March meetings, CEA launched an anti-privatization campaign with support from members, parents, students and the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA). "We were able to act fast with the help of NJEA," D'Agostini says. "They met with us and gave us ideas and attended board meetings."

One of those ideas included D'Agostini working with an art teacher to create 8 by 10-inch cardboard certificates printed in the school colors of green and gold. The 30 certificates were not for framing. Long green ribbons were threaded in punched holes in the top corners of each certificate, creating miniature billboards that members could sport at board meetings.

The certificates read: "Proud to be a Clearview employee for __ number of years." The number was filled in per ESP, as well as blown up using enormous block glittery figures, which shimmered in the light. "Those numbers stood out in a crowd and most were double digits," says D'Agostini. "We bleed green and gold, and have always been proud supporters of our schools."

CEA also created 250 lawn signs in green and gold announcing the campaign's theme: "No Strangers in Our Clearview Schools."

Trustees eventually decided at an April 24 board meeting not to privatize paraeducators. One indication of CEA support occurred at the meeting when more than 200 CEA members, parents, and students showed up. Officials were forced to relocate the meeting from the library to the school auditorium. "It would have been a fire code violation to stay in the library," Larmond says. "Everybody came to our board meetings, even ESPs and teachers from other districts. Nobody wants strangers in their school."

On May 7, board members also withdrew their proposal to subcontract custodial services. "It was announced in the middle of a three-hour budget meeting," says Wagner, who was prepared to challenge the proposal at the meeting, but instead took the podium and thanked the board for withdrawing it. "People gave the announcement a standing ovation."

ESPs Play a Vital Role in Bullying Prevention



Many schools are finding that the most effective approach to bullying prevention is one that is inclusive of all school staff, parents, students, and the community.

Reports show that student-on-student bullying frequently occurs during lunch and recess, between class periods in hallways, and on bus rides before and after school—all places where ESPs have a unique and privileged role to see and intervene in bullying behavior.

“ESPs are usually the first-line responders to students who are being bullied,” says Lorie Miner, special education assistant at Mat-Su Day School in Wasilla, Alaska. “We are in the hallways, bathrooms, cafeterias, playgrounds, buses, and locker rooms.”

However, bullying can be hard to spot and identify, and many victims are still too

ashamed or afraid to ask adults for help. Bullies too can change their bullying behavior to be less conspicuous.

For these reasons NEA took a proactive approach and created training cadres to train teachers, administrators, and education support professionals on how to identify and effectively intervene in instances of bullying. NEA developed the NEA Bullying Prevention Kit and anti-bullying website, “NEA’s Bully Free: It Starts with Me,” to provide resources to educators and parents. The kit and website provide the best available research on bullying prevention. They also provide guidance for educators wondering:

How do I advocate? How do I intervene? What is bullying?

In addition, NEA actively sends expert trainers out to communities and districts hit hard by bullying and bully-related suicide.

“One caring adult on a school campus can make an enormous difference in the life of a bullied child,” says Miner, who facilitates a workshop titled, “The Important Role of ESPs in Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention.” One workshop strategy she stresses: Quickly recreate a bullying incident with the students involved. “Then role model the appropriate interaction between the individuals,” Miner says. “We encourage students to resolve conflicts and not feel ashamed about discussing it with staff.”

In Tooele, UT, parents and students in the Tooele County School District (TCSD) had

been complaining that bullying had become a persistent, district-wide problem that needed immediate administration attention. On October 31, 2014, in partnership with TCSD, the Tooele Education Support Professionals Association (TESPA) and the Utah School Employees Association (USEA) came together to provide a comprehensive training for school support staff on bullying and suicide prevention. The training marks the launch of a year-long anti-bullying campaign in the district.

“Education support professionals such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers and paraeducators are often in a position to see bullying in places that are not seen by teachers and other school staff,” said Mike Garcia, TESPAs President, who spoke at the Tooele training. “They need training to help understand what bullying is, what it’s not, and what to do about bullying when they see it.”

Nearly 400 ESPs attended the one-day training. “Such a great turnout means that support staff want to do their best to keep their students safe and bully-free,” said USEA President Jerad Reay. “I am proud that the Tooele ESP Association identified this need and provided a great training for its members. I know that Tooele’s ESP community now has the knowledge to spot suicidal tendencies before they become a tragedy.”

To take NEA’s Bully-Free pledge and find anti-bullying resources, [click here](#).

Students cannot solve the problem of bullying on their own. That's why they need the help of all adults in the school community.

If you do not intervene, you enable the school system to perpetuate this behavior and remain unhealthy and unsafe for all students.

Caring means demonstrating the will to stay aware and to act in a protective fashion, and in doing so, creating an emotionally supportive school.

If adults do not provide the intervention students need, then students will take matters into their own hands—generally for the worse, not the better.

Bullying can be subtle and hard to detect, making it a challenge for adults to intervene. That's why bullying identification, reporting, and intervention training are crucial to ensure an adequate adult response.

Having an ESP support and care for a student outside the classroom can seem more authentic, as it is seen not as an obligation to reach out to the student, but more as a choice.

Although student leaders can play a part in reducing bullying behavior within the school, adults must fill a crucial role.

It's critical that schools maintain an adequate adult-to-student supervision ratio.

A whole school policy is the foundation of anti-bullying interventions. There must be a school-wide commitment to addressing bullying.



The Whole School Must Protect the Whole Child Against Bullying

ESPs Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student

I meet the needs of the whole student by making them a healthy and nutritious meal every day for breakfast and lunch. I always make sure to have a positive attitude and a smile on my face when the students pass through my lunch line. — **Rosa Oropeza, Texas**



I meet the needs of the whole student by supporting a school culture that values each student. I look for creative ways to support and expand on students' learning experiences. We have fun learning together! — **Esther Shephard, Oregon**



I meet the needs of the whole student by structuring my support as a teaching assistant around their various and unique needs. I do this by ensuring that they are in a safe environment, and by preparing them for real life experiences by being a good role model and building their self-esteem. — **Margie Brumfield, New York**



I meet the needs of the whole student by matching my teaching to each student's talents and interests. Practicing our empathetic listening skills, each educator enhances students' drive by connecting our teaching to their developing dreams. As a teaching tool, we must link our students, whenever possible, to community. — **Christopher Halpin, Vermont**

I meet the needs of the whole student by insuring that their records are accurate and complete, reflecting the successes and progress made here at school; I make sure that each student feels welcome with each visit to the office and that, in me, they have an advocate who provides a happy, welcoming, and safe place during the school day. — **Bobbie Steffensen, Idaho**



I meet the needs of the whole student by always giving them a sense of security and warmth from my heart that makes them want to come to learn. I want them to be happy to see me anytime, and to let them know that people like me (Education Support Professionals) believe in them. — **Wilma Bunting, Oklahoma**

I meet the needs of the whole student by assisting students' selection of library materials based on their interests and reading levels. I create an environment where every child is valued and feels welcome. Each child is treated as an individual who brings a unique personality into the learning environment. — **Karen Westerman, Illinois**



I meet the needs of the whole student by looking for opportunities to uplift and encourage the students whenever they come in contact with me or my coworkers. We all have a deep responsibility to ensure that students are treated with tenderness, respect, and dignity. We must ensure that they are made to feel safe from intimidation and indifference so they can thrive while in our care. — **Roger Pate, UT**

I meet the needs of the whole student by providing supervision for elementary school students exiting the morning buses and escorting the kindergarten bus students to class. I also meet the needs of the whole student by teaching math and reading skills in a small group setting to support students with behavioral challenges. — **Eden Dias, Montana**

I meet the needs of the whole student by greeting them with happy smiles as they enter the office daily. I give them hugs as well as encouragement, when they come to school not wanting to separate from mom or dad. Oftentimes I sit and comfort students that were not picked up on time, or if the bus has returned them because no one was home to receive them. — **Benita Townsend, Tennessee**



I meet the needs of the whole student by providing wisdom, technical knowledge, assistance, support and respect to all students. Perhaps most importantly, I listen to each student so that I can understand what he or she needs to succeed, and I attempt to steer them in that direction. — **Lois Powers, Massachusetts**



I meet the needs of the whole student by assessing their strengths and needs whether it be physically, socially, emotionally, or educationally. — **Kristin Chase, Rhode Island**

What If?

**A Poem by Dave Arnold
Former Custodian, Brownstown Elementary School, Illinois**

Let's suppose just for a moment, what if there weren't any ESPs?
What would become of our schools and where would education be
If not for the dedication of each Education Support Professional.
How could our schools ever survive or even function at all?

For the bus driver wouldn't be there to pick up children along the way
The doors wouldn't be unlocked, the lights on, or the buildings heated each day.
The aides wouldn't be there to help those children with a special need
Or the cooks wouldn't have a hot and tasty meal ready for all to feed.

School security wouldn't be there to watch over the children with care
Each child's records wouldn't be the secretary's load to bear.
The computers would crash without the technician to keep them up-to-date
And if not for the maintenance personnel, one can only guess the school's fate.

And there are many more that give so much, each in a different capacity.
For to each ESP, education is far more than just another job or utility
Education is each child's future, the hope and prayers of our nation.
For that future, each day, ESPs give their work, love, and dedication.

Congratulations to the 2015 NEA Education Support Professional of the Year Nominees!

Norman Cosgrove, Alaska	Yvonne Borghetti, New Hampshire
Sharon Martin, Alabama	George "Al" Wood, New Jersey
Steven Young, Arkansas	Delphina Garcia, New Mexico
Janet Eberhardt, California	Andy Piper, Nevada
Ann Benninghoff, Colorado	Margie Brumfield, New York
Barbara MacGeorge-Sorg, Delaware	Della Sampsel, Ohio
Anne Hagie, Iowa	Wilma Bunting, Oklahoma
Bobbie Steffensen, Idaho	Esther Shephard, Oregon
Karen Westerman, Illinois	Kristin Chase, Rhode Island
Anthony Marie Johnson, Kansas	Constance Jacoby, South Dakota
Lois Powers, Massachusetts	Benita Townsend, Tennessee
Angela Stuart, Maryland	Rosa Oropeza, Texas
Lori Croman, Maine	Roger Pate, Utah
Cindy Brose, Minnesota	Christopher Halpin, Vermont
Jane McWilliams-Sykes, Missouri	Marguerite Jones, Washington
Eden Dias, Montana	Thaddeus Chaudoir, Wisconsin
Katherine Davis, North Carolina	Elizabeth Crislip, Wyoming
Julie LaFrance, North Dakota	

