A National Snapshot of ESP Earnings and How to Advocate for a Livable Wage
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Presented by:
Lisa Connor, NEA ESP Quality
Marcy Magid, NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy
Dave Kamper, Economic Policy Institute

With Special Guests:
Saul Ramos, MA
Catina Taylor, MN
William Schwandt, MN

Who has joined us?
Before we start, please put your name and state in the chat.

Let’s inspire each other!
While in the chat, please also share an ESP-specific win you’ve had!
Background: Educator Pay Data
Two important resources!

A view to everything!

Quick link to ESP-specific data!


![QR Code](https://bit.ly/ESPearnings)
ESP Earnings: A National Snapshot

www.bit.ly/ESPearnings

34.6% of all ESPs working full-time earn less than 25K
- For K-12 ESPs, it’s 39.6%
- For higher ed ESPs, it’s 16.4%

11.7% of all ESPs working full-time earn less than 15K
- For K-12 ESPs, it’s 13%
- For higher ed, it’s 6.9%
All education support professionals (ESPs), in K-12 public schools and higher education. Based on income needed for family of one adult and one child to have a modest but adequate standard of living in the most affordable metro area, 2020 dollars. Source: NEA ESP Earnings Report, April 2023 & Economic Policy Institute Family Budget Calculator, March 2022

www.bit.ly/ESPearnings
Educator Earnings in Your State

North Carolina

- Average Teacher Starting Salary: $37,676
- Average Teacher Salary: $54,863
- Teacher Pay Gap: 76 cents
- Minimum Living Wage: $48,346
- Per Student Spending: $11,627
- Average K-12 ESP Earnings: $29,349
- Average Higher Ed Faculty Salary: $87,011

ESP Earnings: A National Snapshot

In a recent survey, over two-thirds (69%) of PK-12 ESP are currently having an issue earning a living wage.

THIS IS NOT OKAY.
Living Wage: The Basics

Sufficient earnings to cover basic needs:

- Food
- Housing
- Clothing
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Child care
- Health care
- Taxes
A Living Wage Campaign is...

• About seeking more than a modest raise.

• As much about grassroots organizing, long term planning, and union building as it is about gathering salary data and developing economic arguments.

• About winning professional, competitive pay by “surrounding” the employer with members and community allies.

• Bargaining for the Common Good
It takes more than a “handful” of members
Elements of a Living Wage Campaign

• Local buy-in
• Action plan/goals
• Data
• Internal organizing
• External organizing
• Messaging
• Follow through
• Celebrate
#1 Ensure Buy-in

- Make sure the local has buy in from all the key parties including:
  - Members, UniServ, State Affiliate
- Rely on bargaining surveys and prior discussions/bargaining
- Build support within the local and statewide
#2 Action Plan/Goals

- Conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
- Develop a strategic plan
  - Estimate costs
  - Include assignments and responsibilities
  - Affirm your salary philosophy
  - Identify ambitious salary objectives
  - Create an initial timeline
#3 Gather Data/Information

Gather solid, reliable data
- Pay in comparable districts
- Inflation
- Housing and other costs
- Management spending

Develop strong arguments for professional pay
- Recruitment and retention/employer turnover costs
- Employer’s “ability to pay”
- Local employees’ spending power
Living Wage Websites

Economic Policy Institute
- www.epi.org

United for a Fair Economy
- www.faireconomy.org

Universal Living Wage
- www.universallivingwage.org

Federal Poverty Line
- https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines

Jobs with Justice
- www.jwj.org
#4 Internal Organizing

Build a sense of solidarity:
- Within your local and within the district
- Among your neighboring districts
- State-wide
How do you build community partnerships?

- Assess your standing in the community and identify allies.
- Draw on existing coalitions such as with parents, other unions, community and faith partners or build new ones ahead of time.
- Survey members to identify their community connections.
- Identify “key communicators” in the community who are potential supporters.
Surround the Decision-Maker

External Organizing

- Faith institutions
- Other Unions
- Media campaign
- Board Actions
- Legislative Agenda

Civil Rights Style Tactics and on the job actions

Parent/Family Support

Political Allies

Community Support

Research

Legal Strategies
#6 Messaging

Take control of communications and communicate constantly!

- Publicize your members’ often unappreciated work.
- Develop a clear and simple salary message.
- Identify and train member spokespeople.
- Create a them, message, and media “buzz.”
- Work with your state communications unit for assistance on messaging and developing concise talking points.
Messaging – Creating a Theme

Ithaca Paraprofessional Association
#7 Follow Through

- Continue to apply incremental, strategic pressure on the employer.
- Approach and try to engage every member.
- Reach out to every likely supporter.
- Continue to “surround” and pressure decision makers.
#8 Celebrate!

- Celebrate small victories!
- Plan for the future and keep organizing!
What a win!

Worcester, MA

Saul Ramos
Worcester Education Association, 1st Vice-President
NEA Board of Directors, At-Large Director
Educational Association of Worcester (EAW)
Paraeducator Contract 2022-2026

ESP\text{s} need a LIVING WAGE
Platform & Advocacy

https://massteacher.org/about-the-mta/who-we-are/esp/esp-bill-of-rights
Educational Association of Worcester was live.

Posted by Lydia Wood
May 5

Live from the EAW press conference announcing members overwhelming vote of NO CONFIDENCE in Worcester school committee, city council, WPS Superintendent, Mayor, and City Manager.
## 2021-2022

### EAW Paraeducators Salary Schedule 2021-2022 (current pay)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>base</th>
<th>9 credits</th>
<th>18 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1098 hrs/yr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$20,254.02</td>
<td>$20,912.84</td>
<td>$21,352.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$21,963.16</td>
<td>$22,621.98</td>
<td>$23,061.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$23,771.66</td>
<td>$24,430.48</td>
<td>$24,869.66</td>
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<td>$25,282.05</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>$26,752.70</td>
<td>$27,411.52</td>
<td>$27,850.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$27,428.42</td>
<td>$28,087.24</td>
<td>$28,526.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$29,309.51</td>
<td>$29,968.33</td>
<td>$30,407.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$30,188.30</td>
<td>$30,847.62</td>
<td>$31,286.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$31,094.46</td>
<td>$31,753.28</td>
<td>$32,192.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2022-2023

EAW Paraeducators Salary Schedule 3% retroactive to the first day of the 2022-2023 school year. Also one-time payment of $1,600.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>base</th>
<th>9 credits</th>
<th>18 credits</th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>MA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$659/Annual</td>
<td>$1,098/Annual</td>
<td>$1,500/Annual</td>
<td>$2,000/Annual</td>
<td>$2,500/Annual</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$27,658</td>
<td>$28,317</td>
<td>$28,756</td>
<td>$29,158</td>
<td>$29,658</td>
<td>$30,158</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$28,354</td>
<td>$29,013</td>
<td>$29,452</td>
<td>$29,854</td>
<td>$30,354</td>
<td>$30,854</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$30,292</td>
<td>$30,951</td>
<td>$31,390</td>
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<td>$32,792</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$31,197</td>
<td>$31,856</td>
<td>$32,295</td>
<td>$32,697</td>
<td>$33,197</td>
<td>$33,697</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$32,130</td>
<td>$32,789</td>
<td>$33,228</td>
<td>$33,630</td>
<td>$34,130</td>
<td>$34,630</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Major Paraeducator 2022-2026 Contract Highlights

• 2022-2023
  • 3% retro of this year (2022-2023)
  • New differential/columns on top of base for:
    • AA $1,500
    • BA $2,000
    • MA $2,500
    • All paid this year as lump sum
  • Drop Steps 1-4 (a handful of staff on 4 move to 5)
  • $1,600 one-time payment (2022-2023)
  • June 2023 Summer Pay jumps from $17.50/hour to $30/hour
  • Increase “6-hour meeting pay” from $105 to $205
## 2023-2024

**EAW Paraeducators Salary Schedule:** 3% plus reconfigured scale, effective the first day of the 2023-2024 school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete Years of Service</th>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>base</th>
<th>9 credits</th>
<th>18 credits</th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>MA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Hires</td>
<td>New 1</td>
<td>$33,094</td>
<td>$33,753</td>
<td>$34,192</td>
<td>$34,594</td>
<td>$35,094</td>
<td>$35,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3% above old step 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 yrs</td>
<td>New 2</td>
<td>$33,922</td>
<td>$34,581</td>
<td>$35,020</td>
<td>$35,422</td>
<td>$35,922</td>
<td>$36,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 yrs</td>
<td>New 3</td>
<td>$34,770</td>
<td>$35,429</td>
<td>$35,868</td>
<td>$36,270</td>
<td>$36,770</td>
<td>$37,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-19 yrs</td>
<td>New 4</td>
<td>$35,639</td>
<td>$36,298</td>
<td>$36,737</td>
<td>$37,139</td>
<td>$37,639</td>
<td>$38,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+ yrs</td>
<td>New 5</td>
<td>$36,530</td>
<td>$37,189</td>
<td>$37,628</td>
<td>$38,030</td>
<td>$38,530</td>
<td>$39,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New 6</td>
<td>$37,443</td>
<td>$38,102</td>
<td>$38,541</td>
<td>$38,943</td>
<td>$39,443</td>
<td>$39,943</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Major Paraeducator 2022-2026 Contract Highlights

• 2023-2024
  • 3% increase on the base
  • Complete revision of scale
    • Former top step 9 becomes new step 1
    • 6 steps total, 2.5% between each step
    • Current staff placed on higher steps based n years of service
  • Annual salaries will range from $33,094-$39,943
  • $1,000 stipends for:
    • Sub separate assignments
    • Bilingual titles
    • Alternative school assignment
### EAW Paraeducators Salary Schedule 3% effective the first day of the 2024-2025 school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
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<td>$2,000/Annual</td>
<td>$2,500/Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 1</td>
<td>$34,087</td>
<td>$34,746</td>
<td>$35,185</td>
<td>$35,587</td>
<td>$36,087</td>
<td>$36,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 2</td>
<td>$34,939</td>
<td>$35,598</td>
<td>$36,037</td>
<td>$36,439</td>
<td>$36,939</td>
<td>$37,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 3</td>
<td>$35,813</td>
<td>$36,472</td>
<td>$36,911</td>
<td>$37,313</td>
<td>$37,813</td>
<td>$38,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 4</td>
<td>$36,708</td>
<td>$37,367</td>
<td>$37,806</td>
<td>$38,208</td>
<td>$38,708</td>
<td>$39,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 5</td>
<td>$37,626</td>
<td>$38,285</td>
<td>$38,724</td>
<td>$39,126</td>
<td>$39,626</td>
<td>$40,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 6</td>
<td>$38,566</td>
<td>$39,225</td>
<td>$39,664</td>
<td>$40,066</td>
<td>$40,566</td>
<td>$41,066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Paraeducator 2022-2026 Contract Highlights

• 2024-2025
  • 3% increase on the base
  • Annual salaries will range from $34,087-$41,066
  • Summer pay increases to $35/hour June 2025
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
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<th>9 credits</th>
<th>18 credits</th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>MA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New 1</td>
<td>$35,280</td>
<td>$35,939</td>
<td>$36,378</td>
<td>$36,780</td>
<td>$37,280</td>
<td>$37,780</td>
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<tr>
<td>New 2</td>
<td>$36,162</td>
<td>$36,821</td>
<td>$37,260</td>
<td>$37,662</td>
<td>$38,162</td>
<td>$38,662</td>
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<tr>
<td>New 3</td>
<td>$37,066</td>
<td>$37,725</td>
<td>$38,164</td>
<td>$38,566</td>
<td>$39,066</td>
<td>$39,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 4</td>
<td>$37,993</td>
<td>$38,652</td>
<td>$39,091</td>
<td>$39,493</td>
<td>$39,993</td>
<td>$40,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 5</td>
<td>$38,943</td>
<td>$39,602</td>
<td>$40,041</td>
<td>$40,443</td>
<td>$40,943</td>
<td>$41,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 6</td>
<td>$39,916</td>
<td>$40,575</td>
<td>$41,014</td>
<td>$41,416</td>
<td>$41,916</td>
<td>$42,416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Paraeducator 2022-2026 Contract Highlights

• 2025-2026
  • 3.5% increase on the base
  • Annual salaries will range from $35,280-$42,416
Major Paraeducator 2022-2026 Contract Highlights

• Update Title for Instructional Assistants (IAs) to Paraeducators
• Esp Sick Leave Bank
  • Open to ALL ESP UNITS (expanding from only Paras to include other ESP units)
  • Donate 5 days to join
• Change for sick leave in first 3 years of employment: won 15 days to start the school year
Major Paraeducator 2022-2026 Contract Highlights

- Paras can take a leave of absence to become a long-term teacher sub, preserving the rights and benefits upon return. We no longer have to resign and re-apply after sub-position ends.
- Bereavement leave expanded (will match AB)
- Updated language on Maternity/Paternity leave
ESP\text{s} need a \text{LIVING WAGE}
Economic Policy Institute Data Tools

• https://www.epi.org/ - Organized labor’s think tank!

• Use us for:
  • Employment and wages
  • The power of unions
  • State-level analysis through our EARN network - https://earn.us/
  • Connection to other kinds of data analysis
**EPI’s Family Budget Calculator**

### Monthly Costs

#### 2 adults and no children

- **Housing**: $1,083
- **Food**: $572
- **Child Care**: $0
- **Transportation**: $915
- **Health Care**: $614
- **Other Necessities**: $600
- **Taxes**: $597

**Monthly Total**: $4,381

**Annual Total**: $52,571

#### 2 adults and 2 children

- **Housing**: $1,344
- **Food**: $902
- **Child Care**: $2,036
- **Transportation**: $1,122
- **Health Care**: $1,041
- **Other Necessities**: $014
- **Taxes**: $1,113

**Monthly Total**: $8,370

**Annual Total**: $100,445
EPI’s Family Budget Calculator

Try It Yourself!

https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/
Some of our work on ESPs and other educators

Bus drivers, teachers, and school custodians have experienced particularly large declines in employment during the pandemic
Percent change in employment levels from October 2019 to October 2021 for select K–12 public education occupations

| All public K-12 employment | -4.7% |
| Teaching assistants        | -2.6% |
| School custodians          | -6.0% |
| Teachers                   | -6.8% |
| Bus drivers                | -14.7% |

Notes: Data reflect the 12-month average in employment ending in October 2021 relative to the 12-month average of employment ending in October 2019.

- **School staffing shortages** (good for showing the School Board how hard it will be to replace you)
- **The state of public education funding** (might be useful for property tax referenda)
- **The terribleness of vouchers**
Summer unemployment insurance for ESPs – Victory in Minnesota!

We provided:

- Initial analysis of the costs/benefits
- Testimony at 7 legislative hearings
- Letters to legislators explaining the differences between our numbers and the state’s
- Your state next?
Updated data on older reports
➢ Takes time
➢ As much as possible, go through NEA

Connection to our EARN network
➢ Best for state/local budget and tax work
➢ Best for state/local connections

Want something else? Ask for it!
➢ Dave Kamper, Senior State Policy Coordinator, dkamper@epi.org
What a win!
Education Minnesota

Catina Taylor
President, ESP Chapter President, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers

William Schwandt
President, Bloomington Federation of Paraprofessionals
Contact Us!

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Lconnor@nea.org

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