

ESPs Hold Our Schools Together

Everyone who works in public education wants pretty much the same things. Respect for their contribution to the care and education of students. Fair compensation for their work, including affordable health care. Safe working conditions.

Unfortunately, most education support professionals (ESPs) don't get enough of any of those. They are the first people students see in the morning and the last adults they see when they leave in the afternoon, but it often feels like they're forgotten when the district makes decisions about working conditions.

Thousands of ESPs don't have enough left in their paychecks after deducting for health insurance to pay for a week of groceries, much less daycare. And when they're at work, they're often told to supervise far too many students at one time.

It doesn't have to be like this. Strong, active unions of ESPs command respect from their administrators and give them a voice in decisions on staffing levels and working conditions. Pay and benefits can improve if we elect the right leaders to state and federal governments – then hold them accountable for their promises.


Three things education unionists believe:

- ESPs play a vital role in children's lives, especially in their health and safety. We need qualified, caring people in every job in every school.
- Districts should pay their ESPs a living wage. Every school employee should have the right to spend time at home with their children, without working two or three extra jobs to survive.
- Teachers can't function at their very best if ESPs aren't there to help them. Without ESPs, teachers would have less time to do what they do well in the classroom.

Take charge

- ESPs represent nearly 10 percent of Education Minnesota's members. Coming together in union is the best way to demand respect and negotiate for better working conditions, including safer staffing levels.
- Vote for legislators who will increase the state's investment in public education. ESP paychecks are connected to the state budget.
- Decisions made in Congress and the state Legislature affect ESP health insurance, including the size of the deductible and whether it covers preexisting conditions. Vote for leaders who will fight for affordable health care and rein in insurance companies.

www.edmnvotes.org

Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.  1663



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