

## 2021 Legislative Session Issue Brief

# Education Support Professionals Bill of Rights

Everyone who works in public education deserves the same things. Respect for their contribution to the care and education of our students. Fair compensation for their work, including affordable health care. Safe working conditions. Unfortunately, most education support professionals (ESPs) across Minnesota don't get enough of any of those. These critical educators are disproportionately women and people of color, performing multiple jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic and most at risk of exposure to the virus.

They are the first people students see in the morning and the last adults they see when they leave in the afternoon. But 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. Many are told to supervise far too many students at one time.

All education support professionals deserve the pay and benefits to sustain a family, safe work environments and a voice in their working conditions.

Education Minnesota supports the following legislative proposals to improve pay and benefits for ESPs and elevate their voice in decisions on staffing levels and working conditions:

- Require school districts and charter schools to pay their ESPs at least \$20 an hour. Every school employee should have the right to spend time at home with her or his own children, without working two or three extra jobs to survive.
- Help educators and all Minnesotans get high quality, affordable health care. This includes allowing people to buy into MinnesotaCare and fighting for other public options.
- Provide up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers through a payroll deduction and employer tax.
- Defend the law that protects workers from wage theft and crack down on employers who circumvent wage and benefit standards and laws, don't pay overtime, etc.
- Establish reporting and transparency requirements to identify issues of concern for ESPs on the worksite. This could include staffing levels, pay scale, safety, fair scheduling, etc.
- Require paraprofessionals who work directly with students to receive 16 hours of paid training prior to the beginning of each school year.

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*Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.  1759*



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EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**