

2023 Legislative Session Issue Brief

Education Support Professionals Bill of Rights

Education Support Professionals are the glue that keep schools together. Teachers can't do their work without support staff. Many ESPs currently make less than a living wage and lack access to healthcare and insurance.

These critical educators are disproportionately women and people of color, and are the first people students see in the morning and the last adults they see when they leave in the afternoon. Though the importance of their work is apparent, thousands of ESPs don't have enough left in their paychecks after paying for health insurance to pay for a week of groceries, much less childcare. Many are told to supervise far too many students at one time.

The low pay and uncertainty of summer employment are forcing many to leave the profession for more secure jobs. School staffing shortages are at an all-time high and we need to move quickly to ensure we can recruit and retain quality school staff for our kids.


Education Minnesota supports the following legislative proposals to improve pay, benefits, and working conditions for ESPs:

- Require school districts and charter schools to pay their ESPs at least \$25 an hour. Every school employee should have the right to spend time at home with their own children, without working two or three extra jobs to survive.
- Ensure our hourly school workers, who perform critical jobs and are underpaid, are eligible for unemployment insurance.
- Require paraprofessionals who work directly with students to receive 16 hours of paid training prior to the beginning of each school year, to set them up for success.
- Ensure high quality, affordable health care for ESPs.
- Provide up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers through a payroll deduction and employer tax.
- Protect 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.

School staff in Minnesota deserve better.

Updated: Jan. 18, 2023

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Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.  3372



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EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**