

# 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.

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. We need to start treating ESPs like the professionals they are and give them the respect they deserve.

All ESPs deserve the pay and benefits to sustain a family, safe work environments and a voice in their working conditions. Here is what the Minnesota Legislature can do to make things happen and some improvements we can make when we join together and negotiate.

## Pay and benefits to sustain families

Every school employee should have the right to spend time at home with their own children, without surviving paycheck-to-paycheck and working two or three extra jobs.

- Require school districts and charter schools to pay their ESPs at least \$15 an hour. (HF2842)
- Help educators and their families get quality, affordable health care by allowing any Minnesotan to buy into MinnesotaCare and ensure those who buy health insurance on the individual market spend no more than 10 percent of their income on health care. (Gov. Tim Walz budget proposal)
- Provide up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers through a payroll deduction and employer tax. No one should have to make the choice between losing a paycheck or caring for a new child, themselves, or an aging loved one. (HF5/SF1060)
- Protect workers from wage theft. This means cracking down on employers who circumvent wage and benefit standards and laws, don't pay overtime, etc. (HF6)
- Ensure ESPs don't lose pay because of school closures. (HF1982)

## Safe work environments

Many of our ESPs are working with students with disruptive and sometimes violent behavior. Just like every student deserves a safe learning environment, every educator deserves a safe working environment.

- Expand state law so that educators who are assigned to work directly with students with histories of violent behavior are properly briefed; current law only requires notifying teachers.
- Paraprofessionals who directly work with students will receive 16 hours of paid, mandatory training before students report in the fall. (HF1559)



## **Voice and respect on the job**

ESPs work closely with our student inside and outside the classroom. They should have a seat at the table when decisions are made about their schools and profession.

- 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.
- Ensure ESPs have a voice in their local school district's policies and decisions by requiring representation on district committees. (Demand at the bargaining table)