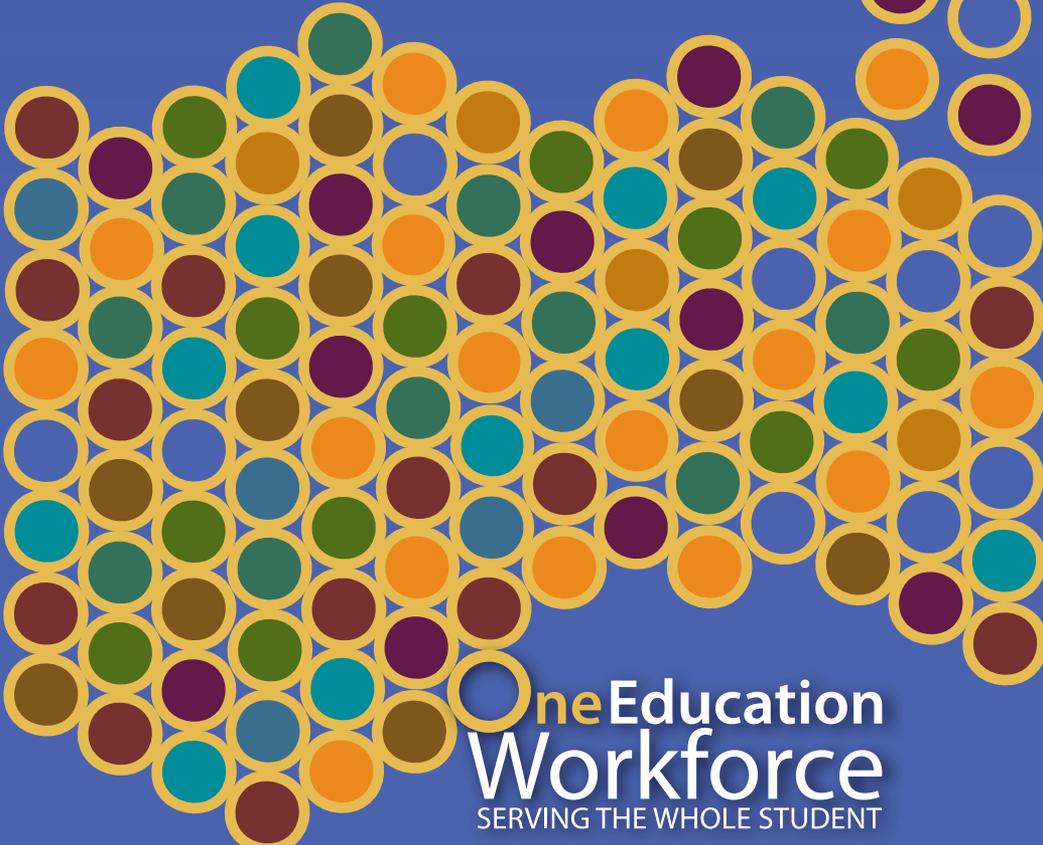


A GUIDE TO

Celebrate

National Education Support
Professionals Day



One Education
Workforce
SERVING THE WHOLE STUDENT

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3 million education support professionals, elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become educators.

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Princess R. Moss, Secretary-Treasurer

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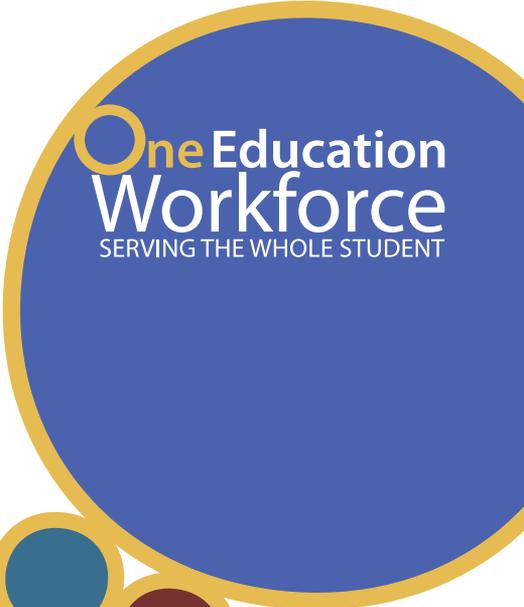


ABOUT NEA

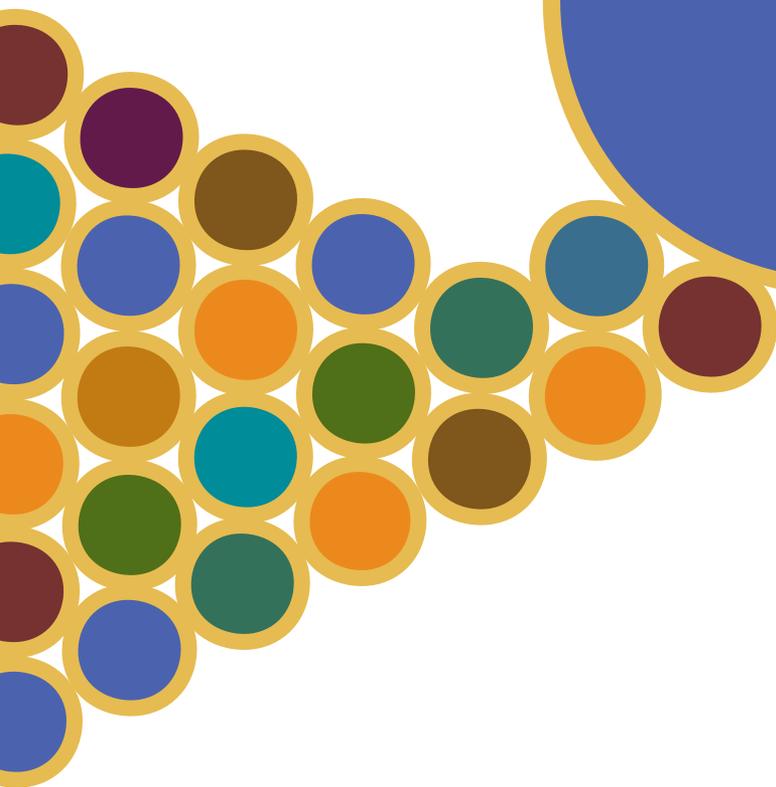
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A
GUIDE
to Celebrate
National Education Support
Professionals Day



**One Education
Workforce**
SERVING THE WHOLE STUDENT



ABOUT This Guide



Introduction

National ESP Day honors and recognizes the contributions education support professionals (ESPs) make to public education. It is a time to strengthen support and show respect for ESPs, who are equal and essential partners in public education.

This booklet is a guide to celebrating National ESP Day. It provides activity ideas and sample documents to jumpstart National ESP Day.

Thank you for recognizing and celebrating the contributions made by ESPs.

National ESP Day is the Wednesday of American Education Week, which is celebrated the first full week before Thanksgiving. The actual dates vary from year to year.

NATIONAL ESP DAY 2014–2018

NOVEMBER 19, 2014

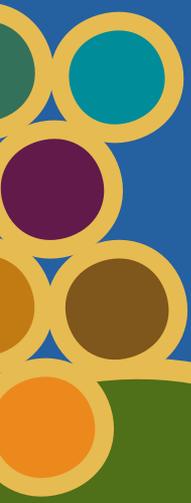
NOVEMBER 18, 2015

NOVEMBER 16, 2016

NOVEMBER 15, 2017

NOVEMBER 14, 2018





WHERE
to
Find

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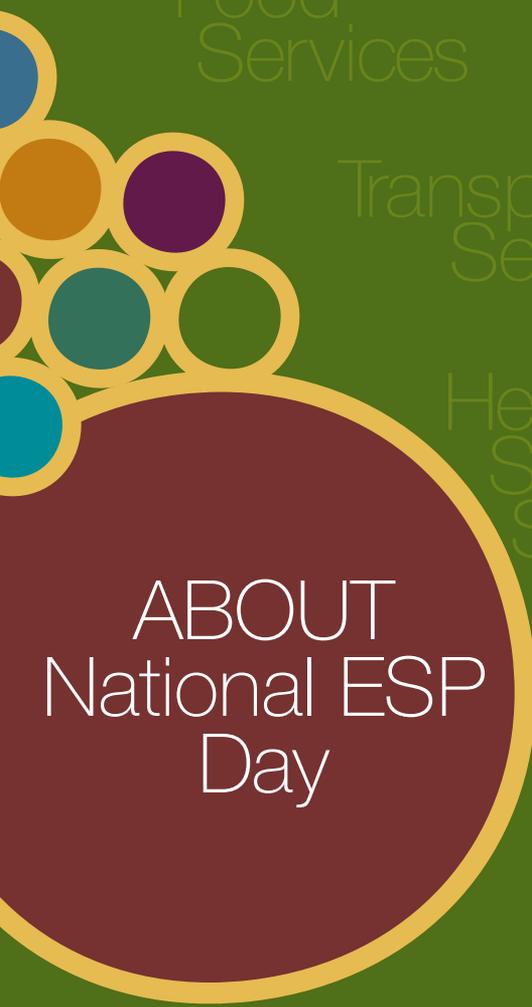


Food
Services

Clerical
Services

Transportation
Services

Health and
Student
Services



ABOUT
National ESP
Day

Skilled Trades

Technical
Services

Custodial and
Maintenance Services

Paraeducators

Security
Services

History

In 1987, the NEA Representative Assembly called for the creation of a special way to honor the contributions of public school support staff. National Education Support Personnel Day was established and celebrated that year. Since then, it has been observed on the Wednesday during American Education Week.

NEA's National Council of Education Support Professionals (NCESP) successfully campaigned at the 2002 Representative Assembly to change ESPs' formal name from "Educational Support Personnel" to "Education Support Professionals."

The name change reflects a growing pride in the essential role ESPs play in creating great public schools for every American student. From instructional assistants and paraeducators to office workers, health and student services employees, and food services workers; from custodians, maintenance workers and bus drivers to security guards, technology specialists, and skilled trades workers, today's support professionals provide invaluable services that enable students to learn in positive, supportive environments.

Proclamation

A proclamation is a way to declare an official public announcement. Elected officials make proclamations to commend people or announce upcoming special events.

Decide on which of your elected officials you would like to ask to sponsor a proclamation for National ESP Day.

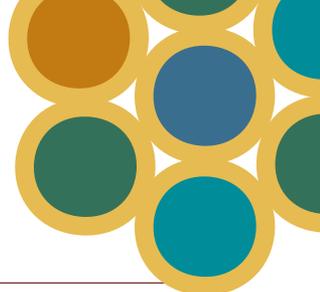
They can be any of the following:

- ▶ Federal or state representative
- ▶ Federal or state senator
- ▶ Governor
- ▶ Mayor
- ▶ City Council member

Send your elected officials a letter requesting a proclamation for National ESP Day. Inform them what ESPs do for public education and the children of your community. State what you would like the proclamation to say. You can customize the sample proclamation on page 3.

Follow up with the elected officials or someone from their staff to confirm their willingness to create the proclamation.

Make an appointment to meet with the elected official(s) for the signing of the proclamation. This should be done in a formal and public setting. Be sure to have ESPs present and have their pictures taken with the elected officials.



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Whereas, public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation’s precious values of freedom, civility, and equality; and

Whereas, Education Support Professionals are integral to the education process; and

Whereas, Education Support Professionals provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students; and

Whereas, Education Support Professionals work tirelessly to serve our children and communities with care and professionalism;

Now, therefore, I _____,
serving as _____,
of _____,
do proclaim [date], _____ as

National ESP Day

And recognize and acknowledge the importance of Education Support Professionals in our public schools, colleges, and universities.

Signed this _____ day of
_____, [month, year].

Media Outreach

Media is the means of mass communication that reaches and influences people widely. Today, media is often spoken of in terms of traditional versus dot-com. Mainstream traditional media is television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. In recent years, we have seen the rise of new media in the form of social media and digital content. Whether using traditional or social media, outreach is essential to promote National ESP Day. It is also a way to educate the community about the contributions that ESPs make to public education.

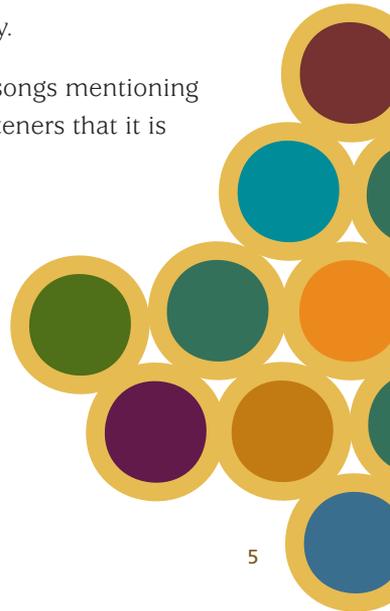
A good relationship with members of the media is important, whether that be producers, editors, reporters, bloggers, or your Twitter followers. You can bolster the capacity of your local through partnerships with media.

Remember to:

- ▶ Be responsible and do not misuse the media.
- ▶ Don't tweet or post anything that you don't want going public.
- ▶ Respect and honor a reporter's deadlines.
- ▶ Contact reporters and bloggers only with information that genuinely serves the public.
- ▶ Be prepared to explain in detail what you are promoting.

Some ideas to get you started are:

- ▶ Develop a social media presence by using services such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- ▶ Invite a local newspaper reporter, editorial writer, or TV or radio news personality to spend a day working as an ESP and to then report what it was like doing that job.
- ▶ Run an ad in your local newspaper celebrating National ESP Day to remind your community that ESPs are equal and essential partners in the education process.
- ▶ Contact a popular local radio station about airing public service announcements (PSAs) to get the word out to your community about National ESP Day. Script the spots and offer to record them yourself or have students record them.
- ▶ Suggest that local media outlets either publish or broadcast quick interviews in which local citizens tell which ESP had the greatest influence on their lives and why.
- ▶ Ask a local radio station to play an hour of songs mentioning ESPs or schools in the lyrics and remind listeners that it is National ESP Day.



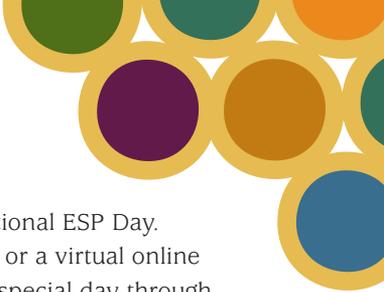
Social Media

In recent years, we have seen the rise of web-based media in the form of social media and other digital tools. According to Internet Usage World Stats, there are approximately 2.4 billion Internet users worldwide with 78% of North Americans currently using the Internet. Americans are now using tablets, smartphones, and other portable devices in increasing numbers to access news, shop, watch videos, and network. If you want to connect to the largest audience possible, you cannot ignore these new communication platforms.

A social media presence is crucial for maximizing engagement, interaction and content distribution. Consider establishing the following:

- ▶ Set up a Twitter account and spread your message about National ESP Day across the most viral platform on the Internet. Learn how to get started with Twitter at <https://support.twitter.com/> and <https://twitter.com/>.
- ▶ Create a Facebook event and promote National ESP Day. Facebook events can be public or private. Learn how to get started with Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/help/events> and <https://www.facebook.com/>.
- ▶ Tell your story through images using Instagram. Share your photos, add a caption or anecdote and Twitter hashtag and then share on Twitter or Facebook. A picture is worth a thousand words.

To learn more about how NEA uses social media, visit <http://www.nea.org/socialmedia>.



HOW TO CREATE A FACEBOOK EVENT.

Facebook events are a great way to publicize National ESP Day. Whether you are planning a live social gathering or a virtual online celebration, you can spread the word about this special day through Facebook. Your National ESP Day event will ensure your attendees know the date, location, and significance of the day.

When naming the event, keep the title short and the description concise. Once the event is created, maintain a regular rate of posts tagging the event and increase the frequency during the final days leading up to National ESP Day. Keep your event attendees engaged by posting videos, photos, blogs, and quotes highlighting the contributions ESPs make to student success. Ask event attendees how their school or local is celebrating National ESP Day. Ask them to share how ESPs are impacting school safety, bullying, student achievement, or community outreach in their schools.

HOW DO I CREATE AN EVENT?

1. Logon to Facebook and then click "Events" in the left menu of your homepage.
2. Click "Create Event" in the top right. Fill in the event name, details, location, time and then choose your privacy settings. Please note that you must include an event name and time.
3. Click "Invite Friends" to add friends to the guest list. Check the names of the people you want to invite and then click "Save."
4. Click "Create."

HOW DO I INVITE PEOPLE TO MY EVENT?

1. Go to the event's page and click "Invite Friends" in the top right. Select the friends you want to invite from the suggestions or search for more names and then click "Save."
2. Click "Invite Friends" while creating an event.
3. Allow guests to invite their friends to an "Invite Only" event by clicking "Edit" in the top right of your event and choosing "Guests can invite friends." If you've chosen "Friends of Guests" for your event's privacy, your guests' friends can join the event.

News Release

A well-written news release is a good way to alert print and broadcast media outlets of the National ESP Day observance in your community. Mail, email, fax, or deliver the news release far enough in advance to allow for the development of story ideas and the scheduling of coverage.

Here are some tips to make your news release more effective:

THE “HOOK”

The hook is the opening sentence of your news release. It should immediately capture the interest and attention of the reader. This is essential to creating an effective release. The first paragraph of your news release should state who, what, when, where, and why.

THEME

The theme is the unifying idea. “One Education Workforce Serving the Whole Student” or “Great Public Schools for Every Student” are examples of effective themes for National ESP Day.

VISUAL

A visual is an illustration, graphic design, or photograph that can be effectively used to gain the attention of the reader.

WEBSITE

A website provides readers access to more information about National ESP Day and about your Association.



SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release [date]

For Further Information

Contact: [name, phone number]

[Date of National ESP Day]

[Theme for the Day]

Education support professionals (ESPs) in [name of town or district] and in communities across the nation will be in the spotlight on [date], as students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and the general public learn more about and celebrate ESPs.

“Education support professionals are essential partners in providing great public schools,” notes [full name], president of the [name of local education association or other sponsoring group]. “National ESP Day is a good time to celebrate the contributions ESPs make to our community every day.”

“Education support professionals are often the first people our schoolchildren encounter on a daily basis,” says [last name]. “They are the people who drive our children to school, help them cross the street, provide them a nutritious meal, and keep their school buildings clean and safe. ESPs are the unsung heroes of public education. It’s time we recognize their hard work and expertise by telling them ‘thank you.’”

Visit www.nea.org/esp [or state and/or local Web site] to learn more about education support professionals and the work they do.

Among the local events planned for [date] are: [list ESP Day events, times, places here — in bulleted form].

Groups and individuals interested in helping develop these or other activities for National ESP Day may contact [name] at [phone/email address].

#

Note: Placing “# # #” or “-30-” at the end of the release indicates its conclusion.

Letter to the Editor

A letter to the editor can effectively get a message to your community. It is brief, to the point, and can serve as public notice of an event.

A letter to the editor carries credibility since it comes from citizens. You can usually find the recipient's address on the editorial page of the paper. It often is possible to submit your letter to the editor via email.

When you send in your letter you must include your name, address, and daytime phone number. Your name is needed because a letter without a name is less credible, and newspapers often discard anonymous letters. Your address is required because newspapers prefer to print letters from local readers. Your phone number should be included in order for the newspaper to verify that you actually wrote the letter.

Note: The newspaper does not include your phone number if the letter is printed. It will list only your city of residence underneath your name.

Tips to remember when writing a letter to the editor:

- ▶ If possible, address the letter to the newspaper editor.
- ▶ Keep the tone objective and professional.
- ▶ Be clear but concise.
- ▶ Check for spelling and grammatical errors.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

[Date] will mark the annual observance of National Education Support Professionals Day — a time for saluting public school support staff and the contribution they make to public education. The interaction between children, parents, and ESPs is vital to the continued success of public education.

Today, ESPs do more than provide nutritious meals and transport our children to and from school; they also serve as positive role models for students.

Parents and community members, I invite you to visit your child's school and learn for yourself how ESPs serve as essential partners in One Education Workforce Serving the Whole Student. A simple 'thank you' or card presented to these hardworking professionals would be welcomed and greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking time to read this letter. I'm proud to have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children.

[Signature]

[Your name]

[Address]

[Phone number]

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Local radio stations allocate a certain percentage of their free airtime throughout the broadcast day to promote special events and nonprofit organizations.

Unlike commercials, PSAs are free grassroots “spots” that range from 15 seconds to one minute. PSAs are effective because they disseminate important information economically.

First, contact the advertising manager at the radio station to find out the appropriate format in which material will be accepted. Second, inquire about any restrictions. Lastly, determine how far in advance material should be submitted in order to ensure a timely broadcast.

While 15-60 seconds may not seem to be sufficient, you will be surprised by how much can be covered in that amount of time. In developing your PSA, use the same approach as a news release by identifying who, what, when, where, and why.

When you submit your PSA, be sure to include:

- ▶ Name of your organization
- ▶ Email or website
- ▶ City, state, zip
- ▶ Name of a contact person at your organization
- ▶ Contact's phone number
- ▶ Dates for use

30seconds

15 seconds

SAMPLE PSA #1

THANK YOU

(15 seconds)

Hello, my name is _____, a [job classification] in the _____ school district.

Thank you for supporting our local public schools.

Together, we're providing great public schools for every student.

Celebrate, with us, National Education Support Professionals Day, [date].

A message from [station call letters] and the [sponsoring organization].

SAMPLE PSA #2

A COMMUNITY

(15 seconds)

Today is National Education Support Professionals Day.

This is a good time to remember that support professionals such as school secretaries, food service workers, custodians, and bus drivers are essential partners in public education.

We're part of One Education Workforce Serving the Whole Student. Together, we're providing great public schools for every student.

A message from [station call letters] and the [sponsoring organization].

0 seconds

30 seconds

SAMPLE PSA #3

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS IN AMERICA

(30 seconds)

Education support professionals work hard for public education and for the students we serve.

America's public school education support professionals transport children to and from school safely and on time.

We are the first to greet children at the school door.

We maintain safe and clean school buildings.

We provide nutritious meals for schoolchildren.

We assist teachers in classroom instruction.

Education support professionals are essential to public education. We're part of One Education Workforce Serving the Whole Student.

And just like you, we're parents and community members.

Join us in celebrating National Education Support Professionals Day on [date].

A message from [station call letters] and the [sponsoring organization].

Ways to Say “Thank You”

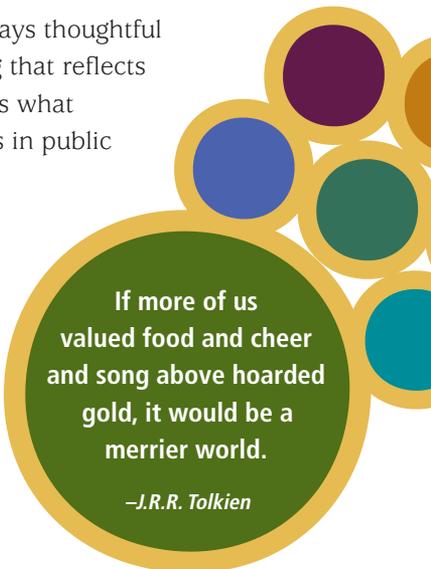
All year long, education support professionals keep schools running efficiently and effectively. Now it is time to say “thank you” for all their hard work, long hours, and dedication. National ESP Day is the perfect opportunity to recognize and celebrate their contributions.

Sending flowers, cards, and candy are always thoughtful ideas. You also may want to do something that reflects your colleague’s personality and celebrates what ESPs do to be equal and essential partners in public education.

This list provides a variety of ways to say “thank you” to ESPs.

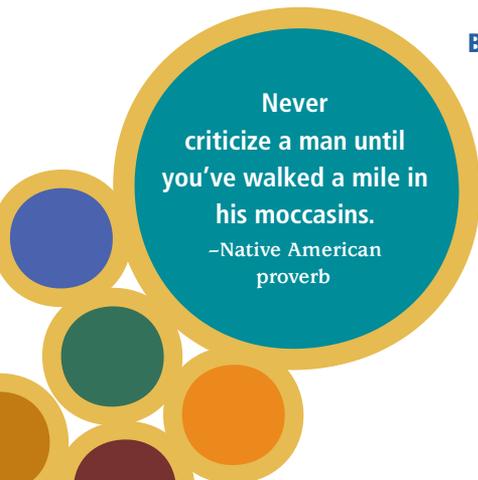
FOOD, FOOD, FOOD!

Providing a breakfast and/or lunch for the ESPs in your building is a great way to show your appreciation. You can also say “thank you” by bringing an ESP some home-baked cookies or bread. Sharing homemade food and socializing with your colleagues is a great way to get to know ESPs.



If more of us
valued food and cheer
and song above hoarded
gold, it would be a
merrier world.

—J.R.R. Tolkien



Never
criticize a man until
you’ve walked a mile in
his moccasins.

—Native American
proverb

BE AN ESP FOR A DAY

Show your support and admiration for ESPs by experiencing the school day as an ESP. Even if it is only for a small amount of time, your participation will be greatly appreciated.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Donating to an ESP's favorite charity is a nice way to say "thank you" while helping the community. Often the organizations will provide you with a card saying that a donation has been made in someone's name.

The best way
to find yourself is
to lose yourself in the
service of others.

—Mahatma Gandhi

Music is ...
A higher revelation
than all wisdom
and philosophy.

—Ludwig van Beethoven

LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES

Surprising an ESP with tickets to a concert, movie, or show is a great way to express appreciation. A nice gesture would be to provide enough tickets for their significant other and/or family.

GIFT CERTIFICATES

Providing a gift certificate to a favorite clothing, record, or bookstore shows you have thought about an ESP's interests and allows her/him to pick an ideal gift. If you are not certain which store an ESP favors, provide a certificate to a local mall or shopping center. Mall certificates usually can be used at any store in the complex.

The man who
does not read good
books has no advantage
over the man who
cannot read them.

—Mark Twain

SPA TREATMENT

Relaxing should be part of everyone's day, and there is nothing better than a massage, facial, or manicure/ pedicure to do the job. Ask your co-workers to chip in and surprise an ESP with a little lunchtime or after-work pampering.

Take rest; a field
that has rested gives
a bountiful crop.

—Ovid

ADVOCATING FOR A WAGE INCREASE

Recommending a wage increase to a building principal or district administrator is one way to show support for ESPs. It may also be a perfect administration-sponsored gesture.

Money talks...
but all mine ever
says is goodbye.

—Anonymous

Our ambitions
must be broad enough
to include the aspirations
and needs of others,
for their sakes and
for our own.

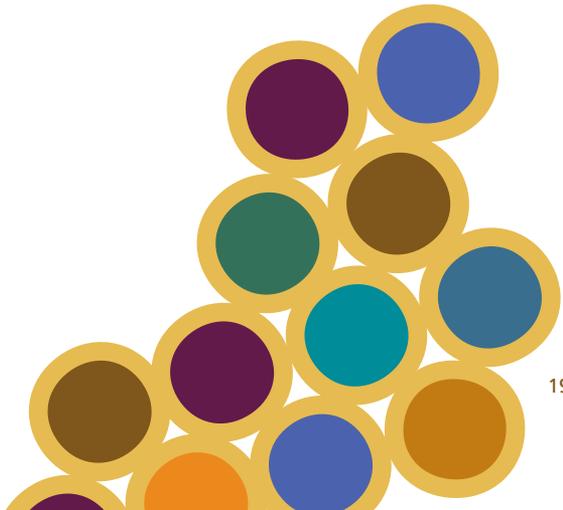
—César Chávez

Celebrating Success

BELOW ARE SOME IDEAS ON CELEBRATING NATIONAL ESP DAY SUBMITTED BY NEA MEMBERS AND LOCAL AFFILIATES.

- ▶ We were honored by being relieved from our cafeteria and recess duties. The teachers of that grade filled in our spots. Then we went to Pizza Hut to have lunch together. It was nice eating with all the ESPs in the building. It was also nice to have the extra free time.
- ▶ Our local gave each of us a “thank-you” card and a lottery ticket. The local also held a raffle in each building, and the winning ESP member received a \$50 gift certificate to a local restaurant. Many buildings held breakfasts, lunches, and other unique programs for and about ESP members. I’m proud of the things my local does to highlight all our members.
- ▶ As president of our ESPs, I wrote a letter to our EA president. I asked if he could ask the teachers to send letters of appreciation to our school board about any support staff that had helped them in some way. He copied my letter and distributed it to the teachers. The appreciation letters they wrote were heartwarming.
- ▶ For ESP Day, our district gave us bagels, rolls, and juice for breakfast. We also received a note saying, “You are worth a million but we can only afford 100 Grand,” with the candy bar attached. It was really nice and much appreciated by all of us.
- ▶ In our local, we received a button that was designed by the ESP Council. It read, “People who care,” with a red heart in the middle with children holding hands. All ESPs received a red plastic apple with a lottery ticket and candy inside. It read, “You are the core of our success.”

- ▶ Over 2,000 teachers honored us with individual “thank-you” notes.
- ▶ Our local sent out Payday candy bars, with a note saying, “We have an extra payday for you.”
- ▶ My local Association gave out stemmed rose buds to the ESP staff, with a note: “For all you do, this bud’s for you.”
- ▶ Students wrote us letters thanking us for our hard work and expertise. It meant a lot that the children recognized our contributions to the school.
- ▶ In my own department I provided a bagel breakfast, along with an ESP pin and a certificate. It was a great day of recognition, and everyone felt special.
- ▶ Our local sent out Three Musketeer bars with a note: “All for one and one for all.”
- ▶ My Association purchased travel mugs and sent them to all support staff along with a “thank you.” They were well-received.



Quotes/Talking Points

Quotes and talking points are helpful tools in celebrating National ESP Day. They can be used for newsletters, Facebook status updates, tweets, bulletins, and speeches.

Below are some quotes and talking points that discuss how ESPs make public schools great.

“We really are One Education Workforce working together for student success! Education support professionals are some of the most dedicated people you will ever meet. And, while you don’t often hear a lot about them, it is absolutely clear that each and every one of them plays a vital role in student success.”

–Paula Monroe, Former NEA Executive Committee Member

“Children need all school workers. A person is not ‘just’ a janitor, not ‘just’ a custodian. Janitors can see children when teachers don’t see them. And bus drivers recognize that children who are disruptive on the bus are likely to be disorderly in the classroom. They are partners in education. We need each other to make this work.”

–Rev. Jesse Jackson

“Too often ESPs’ contributions are overlooked or considered insignificant, but that trend is changing. As we move toward school reform, ESPs are there, on the front lines. The end result? Where ESPs are involved in the school/community team, you have better schools and more successful students.”

–Laura Montgomery, President, National Council of Education Support Professionals (NCESP)





“Support staff represent nearly half of all employees in our nation’s school districts. Simply put, schools can’t operate without us; teachers can’t teach without us, students can’t succeed without us.”

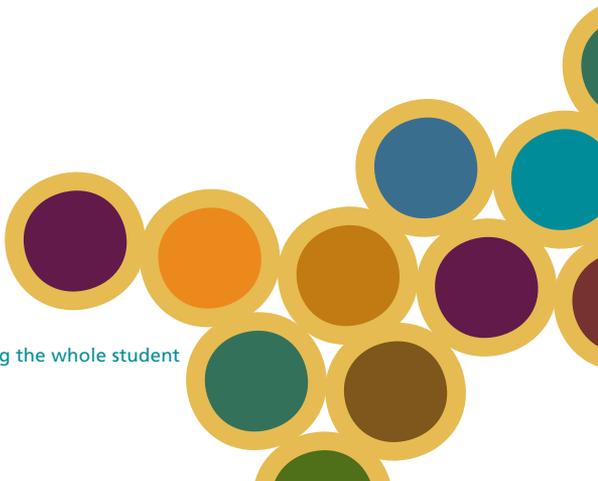
–Kathie Axtell, 2009 NEA ESP of the Year

“People don’t seem to comprehend that ESPs have invested their lives in education. We have a stake in education and want to be part of the discussion. It’s not just a job for us. It’s a career.”

–Donna Schulze, 2013 NEA ESP of the Year

- ▶ We are a big part of our schools and a big part of our communities... everything we do is for the kids.
- ▶ Support staff—hand in hand with teachers, administrators and parents—all help set examples for students.
- ▶ Every ESP on staff should be treated with respect and the knowledge that they are a valued member of our schools.
- ▶ Driving a bus is like having to keep track of 65 students in a classroom with nothing but a rearview mirror.
- ▶ ESP staff have a really important role to play in supporting student achievement.
- ▶ We must work as teams to improve education for all of our students, no matter what we do for a living.

- ▶ By providing personal attention and helping build up students who come in with low self-esteem, I make a difference. We all make a difference.
- ▶ It's all about helping these children succeed. If they can succeed in school, then chances are good they will succeed in life.
- ▶ The bottom line is that we're not in this job to get rich; we're in this job for the kids, and it doesn't matter what role we play. This job is about teamwork.
- ▶ We're behind the scenes keeping everything running, and people need to realize that.
- ▶ If you haven't already been, in the future you will be an angel in some child's eyes—for as long as you remain part of the public education system.
- ▶ Someone once asked me, 'How do you know if you have made a positive impact on the students you transport?' Two sisters who were elementary students told me that when they play school bus driver, they fight each other to be me. I took that as a great compliment.



EDUCATION SUPPORT

ESP

PROFESSIONALS

One Education Workforce
Serving the Whole Student

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