



# Dispatch

P E N N S Y L V A N I A   S T A T E   E D U C A T I O N   A S S O C I A T I O N - E S P

Winter 2023

A publication for education support professionals of PSEA

## Message from your president

# Recognizing the Value of Support Staff: A Persuasive Case for a \$20 Starting Wage

**W**e celebrated National ESP Day on Nov. 15. Do you know why? Because we set aside a day to recognize the individuals who are working tirelessly in our public schools to make sure that they are safe and healthy places for our students to learn. It is crucial that we acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of every support staff member.

I would like to express my gratitude to PSEA’s delegates for passing three crucial New Business Items (NBIs) during the recent House of Delegates on Dec. 1-2. PSEA’s dedication to increasing wages for support staff is commendable, and I believe these items will play a significant role in raising awareness about the importance of earning a living wage.

The three new business items that passed are:

- NBI #2 – PSEA advocate for legislation establishing a living wage as the minimum salary for all education support professionals and educators.
- NBI #5 – PSEA explore facilitating a march and/or

rally and a lobby day at the state Capitol to promote the establishment of a living wage for education support professionals and educators.

- NBI #8 – PSEA engage in a media campaign that highlights the Fall 2023 ESP wage survey results in communications with members as well as to the public.

These three NBIs will serve as powerful tools in our pursuit of fair wages for ESP members, because they will encourage dialogue among stakeholders, policymakers, and the public. By raising awareness about the challenges our members’ face, we can work toward creating a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

By setting a minimum wage of \$20 per hour for support staff, we are not only acknowledging their value but also providing them with a living wage. Many of these workers struggle to make ends meet, despite their vital contributions to our communities. Fair compensation will alleviate financial burdens, allowing them to focus on their work without the added stress of financial instability.



**Rudy Burruss**  
*ESP Region President*

When we invest in our support staff, we are investing in our students. A motivated and dedicated support staff will undoubtedly contribute to a positive and nurturing learning environment, benefiting students and the entire educational community. Basketball coach Phil Jackson said, “The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”

Thank you once again for your unwavering commitment to the well-being of our members. Your efforts are truly appreciated, and I am confident that together, we can achieve meaningful change.

Enjoy the holidays with your family and friends and have a spectacular 2024.

# Dolores McCracken ESP of the Year

**D**enise Kueny, a special education instructional aide at Tohickon Middle School in the Central Bucks School District, is the PSEA 2023 Dolores McCracken Education Support Professional of the Year.

Denise was honored and presented with the award during the PSEA House of Delegates on Dec. 1. She will also represent PSEA at the national level where she will be in the running to be

the NEA Education Support Professional of the Year in 2024.

Kueny assists students in learning skills and lessons, while offering plenty of guidance and encouragement along the way. Kueny is also a building rep for the Central Bucks Education Support Professional Association and has been involved in the Relay for Life, a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society that is held at Tohickon Middle School each spring.



*The 2023 Dolores McCracken ESP of the Year Denise Kueny and her husband Marty at the December PSEA House of Delegates.*

## PSEA-ESP Elections

**E**lections for the following officer and committee positions will take place at the ESP Region House of Delegates at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Cranberry/Mars on April 19, 2024. Members who wish to run for any of these positions should complete the attached Statement of Candidacy form. Candidate forms submitted to the Credentials and Elections Committee will be published in the March issue of *Dispatch* and the candidates will have their names printed on the election ballots.

**Statements of Candidacy are due Feb. 5, 2024.**

- **Region Officers - Term 2024-26**
  - Vice President
  - Officer-at-Large
- **Resolutions Committee - Term 2024-26**
  - Two (2) Committee members
  - Two (2) Alternate members
- **Instruction and Professional Development Committee (IPD) - Term 2024-26**
  - One (1) Committee member
  - One (1) Alternate member
- **Legislative Committee - Term 2024-26**
  - Two (2) Committee members
  - Two (2) Alternate members

## Dates to Remember

**PSEA Political Institute**  
Jan. 12-14  
Harrisburg

**ESP Local Audit Certificate Due**  
Jan. 30  
PSEA Harrisburg

**PSEA Spring Leadership Conference**  
March 8-9  
Bethlehem

**NEA ESP Conference**  
March 22-24  
Las Vegas, NV

**PSEA Special Education Conference**  
April 12-13  
Hershey

**ESP Region Leadership Conference/  
House of Delegates**  
April 19-20  
Doubletree by Hilton, Cranberry/Mars



**Winter 2023**

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 400 North Third Street, P.O. Box 1724  
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-1724*

**Aaron F. Chapin** - PSEA President  
**Jeffrey D. Ney** - PSEA Vice President  
**Rachael M. West** - PSEA Treasurer  
**James G. Vaughan** - PSEA Executive Director

**Rudy Burruss** - PSEA ESP Region President  
**Marc Howshall** - PSEA ESP Region Vice President  
**Deneen Dry** - PSEA ESP Region Secretary  
**Adam Lanza** - PSEA ESP Region Treasurer  
**Peg Rockwell** - PSEA ESP Region Officer-at-Large



**NOTICE TO PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES REGARDING UNION SECURITY CLAUSES**

Negotiating and enforcing collective bargaining agreements comes with costs. To spread these costs fairly, private-sector employees who benefit from their collective bargaining agreements but do not join their local associations, PSEA, and NEA can be required to pay an agency fee to maintain employment if their collective bargaining agreement contains such a requirement. These requirements or provisions are known as union security clauses.

The agency fee, as calculated by PSEA each year, is a percentage of PSEA dues reflecting only expenditures that PSEA makes on activities or projects germane to collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance processing.

PSEA's practices regarding the calculation and collection of agency fees comply with the decisions of the National Labor Relations Board and the courts which have held that unions cannot require agency fee payers to financially support union activities not directly related to the core representational responsibilities of collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance processing.

Each year, PSEA calculates the agency fee (the chargeable percentage of PSEA dues) as follows:

- The chargeable percentage includes PSEA's expenditures related to negotiations with employers, enforcing collective bargaining agreements, informal meetings with employer representatives, discussions of work-related issues with employees, handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance procedure, administrative agencies or informal meetings, and aspects of union administration. In the past, approximately 70-75% of PSEA's expenditures have supported such activities.
- The chargeable percentage does not include PSEA's expenditures related to charitable activities, lobbying or other legislative activities, support of political candidates, participation in political events, recruitment of members to the labor organization, and members-only benefits (including members-only social events). In the past, approximately 25-30% of PSEA's expenditures have supported such activities.

Each year, PSEA will provide a notice

to agency fee payers informing them of the amount of the fee, providing a full explanation as to the calculation of the fee and listing in detail the categories of expenditures deemed to be "chargeable" and "nonchargeable." The notice will include PSEA's audited financial statements. After receiving the notice, agency fee payers may challenge PSEA's calculation of the chargeable percentage by filing an objection with PSEA, following the instructions contained in the notice. The objection will be resolved by an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association, and the agency fee will be held in a segregated account until the decision is rendered. In addition, agency fee payers with conscientious religious objections to financially supporting a labor organization can notify PSEA of their objection and arrange to make a charitable contribution equal in amount to the agency fee, instead of paying the agency fee.

Any questions regarding agency fees can be directed to PSEA UniServs or to PSEA's Financial Management Division at 1-800-944-7000, Ext. 3001.