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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 2022

A publication for education support professionals of PSEA

Message from your president

A Better Tomorrow

We celebrated National ESP Day on Nov. 16, and we also honored the ESP of the Year. Do you know why? Do you know that person in your life who is always there for you? Well, they're not just a good friend or family member —they're your education support professionals! These hardworking individuals work tirelessly throughout Pennsylvania to make sure students are healthy, safe, and educated professionally. We believe in a better tomorrow for everyone.

ESP members answer those urgent phone calls and emails; fix pesky internet bugs when someone can't be bothered with it themselves (I hear ya); feed kids' nutritious meals so their minds will stay focused on learning instead of what's happening outside class ... and keep our schools clean by

making sure all areas look spick-and-span before children come trudging through them every morning.

I know that you are a partner in this educational process, and it's wonderful to have such an important role. Your work with students helps them reach their full potential, which will serve as one of the many ways they will contribute to our communities! I want to thank you personally because having people like you who care about education makes all our efforts worthwhile.

As we approach the holiday season and start a new year, let's keep in mind that not everyone has enough to eat or live on. PSEA members can make a difference by giving your time and talents as unpaid volunteers with local charities within your community



Rudy Burruss
ESP Region President

like the United Way — they need you now more than ever!

It was great to be back together in person at PSEA events this school year. We've had a lot happen over the past few years, but we proved that resilience and fighting for a better tomorrow is something all of us have inside us!

I want to wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season and the healthiest new year. I look forward to seeing and hearing from you in 2023!

Dates to Remember

ESP Local Audit Certificate due at PSEA Headquarters
Jan. 30

Read Across America Day
March 2

PSEA Spring Leadership Conference
March 17-18

2023 NEA ESP Conference Seattle, Washington
March 24-26

2023 ESP Region Leadership Conference and House of Delegates
The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center
April 28-29

Education Support Professional of the Year

Angela Vigna, a paraprofessional and union leader in the Leechburg Area School District in Armstrong County, is PSEA's 2022 Dolores McCracken Education Support Professional of the Year. The announcement came during American Education Week.

Vigna said she was honored to receive this award and that there was no better time than American Education Week to celebrate Pennsylvania's hardworking education support professionals.

"I am honored to be named PSEA's 2022 Dolores McCracken Education Support Professional of the Year," Vigna said. "I see it as an opportunity to shine a light on the impactful work that thousands of support professionals like me do every day to ensure that students meet their educational goals.



"I love my job. Working with students has changed my life. It's important work, taking care of our most vulnerable students who have the highest levels of need. This award helps to restore dignity to the position, and I'm just so appreciative."

Vigna has worked as a paraprofessional in the Leechburg Area School District for the past 19 years. In this role, she has served as a classroom aide providing academic support to students with special needs. During her tenure, Vigna had the opportunity to work with one student from first grade all the way through to graduation.

School colleagues praised Vigna for her dedication and ability to draw out the very best in her students. In addition to working as a paraprofessional, Vigna serves as the president of the Leechburg Area Education Support Professionals Association. In that role, she has welcomed countless new members to the association, helping them understand their contract and encouraging them in their new roles.

PSEA-ESP Elections

Elections for the following officers and committee positions will take place at the ESP Region House of Delegates at The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center on April 28-29, 2023. Members wishing to run for any of these positions should complete the Statement of Candidacy form. Candidate forms submitted to the Credentials and Elections committee will be published in the March issue of *Dispatch*. The candidates will have their names printed on the election ballots.

Statement of Candidacy is due by 4 p.m. on Feb. 6, 2023.

- **Region Officers**
Term 2023-25
 - President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
- **Resolutions Committee**
Term 2023-25
 - Three (3) Committee members
 - Three (3) Alternate members
- **Legislative Committee**
Term 2023-25
 - Three (3) Committee members
 - Three (3) Alternate members
- **Instruction and Professional Development (IPD)**
Term 2023-25
 - One (1) Committee member
- **PACE Chairperson**
Term 2023-25
 - One (1) Position

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Richard W. Askey - PSEA President
Aaron F. Chapin - PSEA Vice President
Jeffrey D. Ney - PSEA Treasurer
James G. Vaughan - PSEA Executive Director

Rudy Burruss - PSEA ESP Region President
Marc Howshall - PSEA ESP Region Vice President
Cindy Lawn - PSEA ESP Region Secretary
Holly Harrington - PSEA ESP Region Treasurer
Peg Rockwell - PSEA ESP Region Officer-at-Large



NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES SUBJECT TO PSEA SECURITY CLAUSES

Negotiating and enforcing collective bargaining agreements comes with costs. To spread these costs fairly, private-sector employees who do not join the Local Association, PSEA, and NEA but who still benefit from their collective-bargaining agreement can be required to pay an agency fee to maintain their employment, if such a requirement is contained in their workplace's collective bargaining agreement. These provisions are known as union security clauses. These clauses are not uniform in their wording, but no provision can require anything more than payment of an agency fee to retain employment.

Many private sector labor unions establish agency fees that are equivalent to membership dues, but the agency fee of PSEA-represented employees will be a percentage of PSEA dues reflecting only the expenditures that PSEA annually makes on activities or projects germane to collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment.

PSEA's practices regarding agency fee comply with the decisions of the National Labor Relations Board and the courts which held that unions must allow agency fee payers to object to the payment of fees to support activities not directly related to the core

representational responsibilities of collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment.

The following summarizes those practices:

1. Where the collective bargaining agreement contains a union security clause, bargaining unit members who chose not to join the Local Association, PSEA and NEA will be charged an amount equivalent to a percentage of membership dues reflecting only the expenditures that the Local Association and PSEA annually make on activities or projects germane to collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment. The chargeable percentage will include expenditures related to negotiations with employers, enforcing collective bargaining agreements, informal meetings with employer representatives, discussion 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.

Among other things, agency fee payers are not charged for charitable activities, lobbying or other legislative activities, support of political candidates, participating 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.

2. Each year, the Local Association and PSEA will provide a notice to you as to the amount of the fee, along with a full explanation as to the calculation of the fee. That explanation will include a more detailed list of the categories of expenditures deemed to be "chargeable" and those deemed to be "nonchargeable," along with audited financial statements showing the expenditures on which the fee is based. Each year, agency fee payers will have the option of challenging the calculation of the reduced fee 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 your agency fee will be held in escrow 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 agency fee, instead of paying the agency fee.