



ESP: Faces of Education

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Idaho Education Association

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ESPs DESERVE A LIVING WAGE

Approximately 35 ESP and teacher members from Meridian and Boise attended a **Living Wage** training at Mountain View High School in Meridian on Saturday, January 23rd. The purpose of the training was to prepare for the implementation of a **Living Wage** campaign.

We were very fortunate to have the expertise and knowledge of NEA Staffer, Jorge Rivera, one of the NEA's most passionate trainers when dealing with the **Living Wage** issue. Many thanks to the MEA, Sue Scott and Shannon Nicholson for giving BEA the opportunity to be part of this effort.

As part of the training, we learned about the problems and sacrifices ESP from all different departments in both districts must make because of low wages and reduced hours. It became very clear that many of us cannot afford basic necessities because we DO NOT make a **Living Wage**.

The first step in a campaign is organizing ESPs around their concerns. We will do one-on-one interviews with each of our ESP colleagues and ask them these questions:

- 1) Why do you do your job?
- 2) Do you need to work more than one job in order to live?
- 3) Are you interested in learning more about a living wage?

We also learned that **Living Wage** is a social justice issue. Most ESP's are women and women are marginalized when it comes to fair wages. Many ESP's are embarrassed to share that they have to live from paycheck to paycheck. I am one of these people.

What is your story? It is time we share these stories and become united by sharing our difficulties, our sacrifices and strive towards adequate compensation for the work we perform.

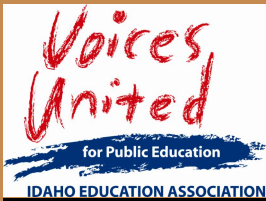
We need to share the importance of getting our stories out, building relationships, and finding out what people's connections are. All of us belong to clubs, organizations, churches, etc. We need to start educating our colleagues, friends, and neighbors about the importance of paying our people a decent wage so that they can live adequately in our country. This includes all classified employees, not just members. **100% engagement** is the target for the best results.

We will keep all IEA Regions updated on our quests, obstructions and accomplishments.

Scott Bennett, IEA ESP At-Large



- ❖ Wages that are sufficient to pay for rent, food, health care, transportation, utilities, taxes, and child care are considered a **Living Wage**. We believe that public schools should not provide wages that force employees onto public assistance or multiple jobs.



FOCUS ON YOUR ESP COMMITTEE

Trish Borchers, the IEA ESP representative for IEA Region 2, has been a member of the IEA for four years, having worked for the Moscow School District as an Instructional Assistant for the English Department at Moscow Junior High School. This is a unique position in the district, which entails working for all of the English teachers at the junior high in addition to assisting with both the publications and drama classes. Trish also helps out with the Basic English program at the school, does lunch duty, and puts together the annual slide show for the end-of-the year freshmen assembly.



"I have the best job in the world," said Trish who added that the job keeps her on her toes. She enjoys all aspects of her job, but especially the publications class where she gets to use her skills as a writer. Trish has a B.A. in journalism, and prior to becoming a stay-at-home mom in 1996, worked both as a newspaper reporter and as a technical writer. She loves helping the students develop and hone their writing skills.

Trish joined the IEA because she felt that it was important to join a professional organization, especially one that supports all education professionals. As an ESP representative, she continues to learn a great deal about the challenges faced by both certified and classified staff. In her position as an ESP representative, she hopes to encourage more ESP to join this worthwhile organization.

COALITION OF UNIONS WORKS FOR ESPs

On October 29th and 30th, IEA Vice President, Marty Meyer, attended a meeting of the **National Coalition of Classified Education Support Employee Unions**. NCCSEU represents 1 million classified employees throughout the United States.

The purpose statement of the coalition, as defined at the meeting is to "maximize the power of our united voice to gain **respect, rights** and **recognition** for classified education support employees and to win the resources needed to rebuild the world class public schools our children deserve."

The meeting was highlighted by a visit from Joe Anderson of the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Congresswoman, Diane Titus, of Nevada. Both are currently working on legislation that would institute a National ESP of the Year Award.

The NCCSEU Plans to meet again in May of 2010 to continue its work on national legislation of interest to school classified employee's.

Marty Meyer, IEA Vice President and BOD Liaison

RESPONSIBILITY OF A DA DELEGATE

The Delegate Assembly (DA) meets every April to determine the policies and programs of the IEA. As a delegate you are the voice of your local members, so your vote is their vote. You are helping to decide how the IEA will continue running and/or what needs to be changed.

How important is that?! It sounds like a huge responsibility, but we the members are the voice of the Idaho Education Association. All delegates gather together as one, not only for the main meeting, but in spirit. It is a time for members to get acquainted, to buy some cool things to benefit the IEA Children's Fund, to share information on what is happening around the state, and to act on proposed amendments to our constitution.

There are also mini meetings during Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. One of those will be the **ESP Hearing**. The time and location will be in the packet that you receive at your region mini-delegate assembly. I encourage you to attend the **ESP Hearing** as well as the other meetings to get a better understanding of your organization.

Please stop by and see us at the ESP Table in the lobby of the convention hall. Thank you for all that you do.

Kim Bermensolo, IEA ESP Committee Chair.



If you have suggestions or questions that you would like to see addressed in **ESP: Faces of Education**, feel free to contact Kim Bermansolo, Chair, at: (208) 529-6641 or mommakim@hotmail.com or our Staff Liaison, Ellen Currie, at ecurrie@idahoea.org or 1-800-727-9922