

We make schools WORK

Texas AFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel

The following is an abbreviated version of the new outreach brochure for PSRPs. To order copies, call 800-222-3827.

Our Work

There are thousands of paraprofessionals and support personnel across the great state of Texas. We share a pride in our work and our schools, but our students are always first in our minds and our hearts.

Our jobs are varied—there are hundreds of job titles describing the work we do. We know the core services we provide are essential to the success of our public schools. We know we make schools work. We have daily contact with students on the bus and the playground, in the cafeteria and the classroom, in the hallway and the front office. We work behind the scenes to ensure clean and secure buildings, smooth administrative functioning, quality nutrition, safe buses, and needed support for all who deliver services to students.

Our Issues

The issues that concern us are as varied as our job titles, but there are some key areas that affect almost all of us.

Professional Development: We love our work and we want to do the best job possible. To that end, we desire professional development that enhances our skills and helps us shine as we serve our students. The union has developed partnerships in several districts across the state to help provide the quality training we want. We believe all school districts should offer meaningful professional development for every category of employee.

Privatization: When school districts feel a financial crunch—all too common in Texas with our history of devastating cuts to public education—there is a temptation to contract out core services in an attempt to save money. Extensive research shows how these misguided attempts to save money typically cost the district in different ways. There is a loss of direct accountability to the public and the parents as the contracted employees report to a private company instead of the school district, while the privatized support personnel are either out of a job or must work for less pay and fewer benefits. Texas AFT believes contracting out is wrong: harmful to our students and harmful to those who have worked diligently in our schools.

Overtime Abuse: Another result of the immense pressure on schools to perform at ever-higher levels with reduced staff (and limited funds) is the practice of encouraging employees to work overtime without compensation. The Fair Labor



Standards Act provides clear guidance on overtime, and Texas AFT has worked hard to create manuals, pamphlets, and training materials to inform workers and their bosses of the federal law.

Respect: Respect is the most intangible of our issues, but one that shows up regularly in conversations with our co-workers. Perhaps bus routes are distributed to “favorites” instead of through a clear system that all agree is fair. Maybe cafeteria workers are left out of school lockdown drills or holiday parties. Lower pay, unpaid vacation and skimpy benefits do not show respect. Or support personnel are not given a voice in decision-making within our own profession, looked over instead of looked to for their expertise. The union is committed to empowering support personnel to stand up and demand the same respect we show parents, students, co-workers and our employers.

Our Union

As school support personnel, we understand the value of standing together as a union, working to create a voice that can be heard in our schools, in our districts, and at the Capitol.

We join Texas AFT for many reasons: we want someone watching our backs, a structure to help us make needed changes, member benefits that help our families save money, job security, and professional development. We are proud to be part of a union that celebrates all its members: paraprofessionals and school related personnel, teachers and counselors and librarians, nursing professionals, community college faculty and staff, and more. We are encouraged to attend workshops to improve our skills in union leadership and effectively advocate our own unique issues. We choose to participate—to actively embrace our role in the union.

Texas AFT is the way to make our voices heard!