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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Education Support Professionals (ESPs) are the backbone of Pre-K through 12 public education and also work in higher education institutions; more than half a million Education Support Professional members across the country take care of our children every day; they ensure all students have the tools they need to succeed in our schools, classrooms, and higher education institutions; ESPs are comprised of nine career families working in clerical services, custodial and maintenance services, food services, health and student services, security services, skilled trades, technical services, and transportation services and as paraeducators; ESPs are not treated, respected, nor valued the same as teachers; and

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WHEREAS, ESPs interact daily with students, parents, and staff; responsibilities include, but are not limited to, processing and maintaining vital, confidential data and student records; and

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WHEREAS, ESPs keep schools open, operational, safe, accessible, and clean for students, staff, and the community at all times; they are responsible for ensuring proper indoor air quality and for complying with ROE state regulations and federal OSHA standards for safety operations in the school

23

1 buildings; and

2 WHEREAS, ESPs ensure that students have access to safe and
3 nutritious meals and ensure that school districts are
4 complying with the federal free and reduced meal guidelines;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, ESPs perform a wide variety of health assistance
7 that improves and protects student health and welfare; their
8 responsibilities include, but are not limited to, traditional
9 tasks of providing first aid, monitoring immunizations,
10 conducting health screenings, and assisting sick and injured
11 children; ESPs also provide education that encourages students
12 to maintain good health independently; and

13 WHEREAS, ESPs perform professional responsibilities that
14 contribute directly to student achievement by providing direct
15 services to students and their families, including academic,
16 social emotional, behavioral, English as a second language,
17 special education, and medical and life skills support for
18 general education to ensure all students receive fair and
19 equitable educational opportunities; and

20 WHEREAS, ESPs have a clear understanding of not only
21 security techniques but also the unique nature of the school
22 population with whom they work; on a broader level, they are

1 active in designing and implementing security policies and
2 crisis response plans; and

3 WHEREAS, ESPs maintain and improve the physical quality of
4 school buildings, offices, and facilities; they work behind
5 the scenes to repair, maintain, and operate machinery that is
6 essential to the smooth functioning of the school; and

7 WHEREAS, ESPs lead the effort to maintain high standards
8 of technology and communication in our schools; they install,
9 repair, and upgrade computers and networks that enable the
10 timely communication of essential information between parents,
11 school district employees, and students; and

12 WHEREAS, ESPs transport students to and from school
13 safely, and an ESP is the first people to greet each student in
14 the morning and last to say goodbye as they return home; ESPs
15 operate and maintain all of a school system's vehicles; in
16 addition to driving, often in bad weather or heavy traffic,
17 they are responsible for first aid and emergency evacuation
18 procedures, student conduct and discipline, and the safe
19 transportation of students with special needs; all employees
20 in a district's transportation department stay up-to-date on
21 new safety requirements, regulations, and policies; and

22 WHEREAS, The starting salaries of ESPs begin at \$10.00 per

1 hour for the 2020-2021 school year in the state of Illinois
2 according to the ISBE Non-certified Salary Study; ESPs also
3 often do not qualify for health benefits or use most or all of
4 their wages to pay for health benefits; some ESPs earn at or
5 near poverty level and qualify for government assistance; many
6 ESPs must work more than one job to provide for their families;
7 therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF
10 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that Education Support
11 Professionals in public schools should be treated with the
12 same respect, recognition, value, and standards as teachers
13 and should no longer be second class citizens within the ranks
14 of public education; these professionals provide invaluable
15 services to school communities; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That we urge the General Assembly to seek
17 solutions via study and legislation that include, but are not
18 limited to, legislated salary parity, quality professional
19 development and training, and mandated access to health
20 benefits for all education support professionals.