

WORLD EDUCATION SUPPORT PERSONAL DAY

May 16 is World Education Support Personnel Day, a time to appreciate the invaluable contributions of school support staff. These dedicated individuals might not be teachers, but they work closely with educators and administrators, ensuring that schools run smoothly, and students are supported daily. Support staff roles encompass a wide range of duties, and they are essential to the overall success of the educational team.

School support staff are often the school's direct link to the local community. Many live in the neighborhoods where they work, creating strong connections between the school and its surrounding area. It's not uncommon for them to work in multiple schools, serving as bridges between the different sites and fostering relationships with local agencies and community organizations.

Unfortunately, despite their pivotal roles, support staff often go unrecognized and undervalued. They are the unsung heroes who work behind the scenes, supporting students, teachers, parents, and administrators alike. Schools and administrative centers would struggle to function without their tireless efforts. School support staff play a key role in fostering a positive school culture, being trusted and respected by students and parents. Their work ensures that students' academic, social, emotional, and practical needs are met, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

These dedicated professionals manage a wide variety of essential tasks, including bussing, student information and safety, technology support and administrative functions daily. They provide the backbone for much of the school system's smooth operation, yet their work often goes unnoticed. Moreover, many support staff members face job insecurity, particularly during summer breaks, when they might not know if they will have a job to return to in the fall.

To strengthen the educational community, it's crucial to not only attract and retain quality teachers but also quality education support personnel. Advocating for better working conditions for education support personnel helps ensure a stronger, more resilient school system. However, ongoing budget cuts and a lack of recognition by the Ontario Government and school boards have put these vital roles at risk, undermining the stability of our public education system.

On May 16, please join the OSSTF District 7 Office Professional and Technicians Bargaining Unit (OPT) Executive in acknowledging the extraordinary dedication of support staff in Bluewater. Let's take this day to recognize the critical role they play in supporting the success of every student and the entire educational system.

The OPT Bargaining Unit consists of School Office Managers, Office Professionals, Library Clerks, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Application Support, Software Application Trainer, Accounting, Purchasing, Transportation, Learning Services, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), Adult and Continuing Education/Blended Learning/Summer School, Business Services Development, Student Success/Program, Plant Services, Health and Safety, Student Success/Program, and Research Specialist.

We appreciate everything that all Education Support Personnel do and thank each of them for their dedication and hard work everyday.