

STRONG ESP



STRONG SCHOOLS

Now Accepting Nominations!

Deadline: July 1, 2026

2026 ESP OF THE YEAR CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

Purpose

The MSEA Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year Award recognizes the contributions of ESPs to their schools, communities, and their profession. The award is presented to a member of MSEA who demonstrates outstanding accomplishments and reflects the contributions of ESPs to public education.

Eligibility

All current ESP members of an MSEA local affiliate who have been members for at least three years as of January 1 of the award year are eligible. Nominees must be an active member at the time of selection. Individuals can be nominated by other MSEA members or through their local association. Local association nominees must obtain the signature of the local president.

Please Note:

Nominations may be disqualified if: the nomination packet is not complete or the submission is outside the nomination guidelines; the nomination is received after the deadline; the local association nomination is not signed by the local president; or, the nomination includes handwritten documents, clippings, articles, or photos.

Selection

All nominations must comply with the procedures for nomination and submission guidelines. Applications will be evaluated by the MSEA ESP Organizing Committee, a committee of association members, and recommended to the MSEA Board of Directors for final approval.

Once the MSEA ESP of the Year is selected, the person or local affiliate who nominated the winner is responsible for ensuring all supporting materials and items needed for the award are sent to the MSEA ESP staff organizer.

If a local ESP of the Year is chosen, the local president is responsible for ensuring the winner's name and supporting materials are sent to the staff liaison of the ESP Organizing Committee for consideration for the statewide award.

Applications will be evaluated by the MSEA ESP Organizing Committee, which is comprised of MSEA members and approved by the MSEA Board of Directors.

CRITERIA: Nominations will be considered according to the following four criteria: **Impact on Students; Impact on Families and the Community; Union Engagement and Activism with a Focus on ESP Workforce Issues; and Impact on Colleagues.** The MSEA selection committee members will rate nominees on a scale of 1 to 5 for each criterion, where “1” represents minimal evidence of the criterion, and “5” represents very strong evidence of the criterion.

To help the nominee better tell their story and focus on their impact (instead of simply submitting a list of accomplishments), each criterion follows the same cadence: “What action was taken, and what impact did that action have?”

Nominees will be considered based on these four criterion:

- **Impact on Students** Describe specific actions you have taken and how those actions positively impacted student learning, social-emotional well-being, health and/or safety.
- **Impact on Families and the Community** Describe specific actions you have taken and how those actions have positively impacted families and/or the local community.
- **Union Engagement and Activism with a Focus on ESP Workforce Issues** Describe how your engagement and activism with the local or state union/association have positively impacted ESPs’ professional stature (e.g., importance and reputation), stability (e.g., wages, benefits, and job security), and/or effectiveness (e.g., professional practice).
- **Impact on Colleagues** Describe specific actions you have taken and how those actions have positively impacted colleagues at your school campus, school district, or worksite.

The following three questions will be applied to each of the criteria during scoring:

1. What is the degree of impact?

(Was the impact transactional or transformational? Were systems changed?
What was the breadth and/or depth of impact?)

2. How did the actions advance racial, social, and economic justice in education?

(Did the actions address issues of inequity? If yes, how? How were the actions inclusive and/or responsive to marginalized communities?)

3. To what degree did the nominee collaborate or partner with others?

(Individuals, organizations, etc.?)



PROCEDURES FOR NOMINATION

Nominations may be submitted by individual members or through their local association. The nominator must describe the nature of the achievement of the nominee citing the stated criteria. Local association nominees must obtain the signature of the local president.

Nomination Form The nominator must use the form provided.

Nomination Letter Nomination Letter (*Limit two pages, minimum 11-point font, double spaced, one-inch margins on all sides*) The nominator must provide a description of why the nominee is an outstanding support professional. Additional information may be included.

Resume Questionnaire Nominees must further demonstrate their accomplishments and impact related to the award criteria through the Resume Questionnaire. It should outline the work and professional experiences of the nominee through brief bullets or paragraphs. Nominees will outline past and present professional and Association positions, school or district roles, and positions with external organizations, community groups, or other stakeholders. Nominees will also list education, training, and/or certificates and licenses, and honors or awards received. Nominees may respond with up to 750 words per question.

Letters of Endorsement (*Two letters, limit one page maximum for each, double spaced, minimum 11-point font, one-inch margins on all sides, handwritten letters will not be accepted*) Nominees **must** include two letters of endorsement (no more, no less). Letters should be from those who know the nominee well, such as association leaders, colleagues, current or former students, parents of students, community members, etc. Letters must note how long the writer has known the nominee and in what capacity the writer is able to comment on the nominee's professional, association and/or community work.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- **Do not** staple or permanently bind the materials. Paperclips are acceptable.
- **Do not** include covers, decorative packaging, pictures, articles, clippings, etc.
- **Include only** the materials requested in these guidelines.
- **The complete nomination package must be received at MSEA no later than 5:00 PM EST on July 1, 2026. Submissions by email are strongly preferred, but hard copies by mail will be accepted. Faxed copies will not be accepted.**

Send nomination packages via email to: smckillop@mseanea.org or by U.S. mail to:

MSEA | Attn: MSEA ESP of the Year Application | 140 Main Street | Annapolis, MD 21401

Questions? Contact Sean McKillop smckillop@mseanea.org 240/405-9650

Deadline for MSEA ESP of the Year Submission: Wednesday, July 1, 2026

A winner will be chosen by September 30, 2026 and recognized at the MSEA Representative Assembly in Ocean City, October 16-17. *The MSEA ESP of the Year will be submitted as a nominee for the NEA ESP of the Year. Please note that additional requirements may need to be met in order to comply with the NEA's nomination guidelines.*



ESP OF THE YEAR NOMINEE:

Acknowledgement of Expectation

After reviewing the duties and responsibilities associated with being the Maryland State Education Association’s (MSEA) Educational Support Personnel (ESP) of the Year Nominee, I acknowledge that, as of the signing of this Nomination Packet, I am able to fulfill these responsibilities. I understand that I should do my best to be transparent should my circumstances change, and I acknowledge that a change in circumstances—other than those outlined as necessary to qualify as a Nominee—will not make me ineligible to continue as a Nominee.

I understand that my signature constitutes a commitment that if I am selected as the Maryland ESP of the Year, I will be present at the events listed below, except in the case of an emergency or an unforeseen conflict of a serious nature. If such a situation should occur, notification should be made to MSEA at the earliest possible time.

- MSEA Representative Assembly in Ocean City (October)
- MSEA ESP Conference (February)
- NEA ESP Conference (March – out of state)
- ESP Lobby Night (February)

SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE

DATE



NOMINATION FORM

Please complete the following:

The following individual has displayed excellence as a support staff employee in

_____ County Public Schools.

(NAME OF COUNTY)

Name _____ Local Association _____

School/Department _____ Position _____

The support staff employee has been nominated by:

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Position _____

Please check below your involvement with the nominee:

- Student
- Parent/Citizen
- Employee
- School Organization
- Other

Signature, Local Association President*

Date

*Required if a local association is the nominator.



2026 MSEA ESP of the YEAR

RESUME QUESTIONNAIRE

Complete this questionnaire online or include a paper version with your nomination packet.



FILL OUT THE
QUESTIONNAIRE HERE

Professional Positions

What professional positions (e.g., worksite position, job) do you currently hold? Up to 750 words

What professional positions (e.g., worksite position, job) have you held in the past? Up to 750 words

School/District Positions/Appointments

What additional school or district roles (e.g., committee or workgroup roles; student, athletic club or coaching positions; other engagements outside your job) do you currently have?
Up to 750 words

What additional school or district roles (e.g., committee or workgroup roles; student, athletic club or coaching positions; other engagements outside your job) have you had in the past?
Up to 750 words

Education/Training

Please list your education, training and/or certificates, licenses, etc. Up to 750 words

External Organizations/Stakeholder Positions

What positions with external organizations, community groups or other stakeholders do you currently hold? Up to 750 words

What positions with external organizations, community groups or other stakeholders have you held in the past? Up to 750 words

Honors/Awards

Please list any honors or awards you have received, including the name of the honor/award and the year received. Up to 750 words

Association Positions/Appointments

What Association positions or committee appointments do you currently hold? Up to 750 words

What Association positions or committee appointments have you held in the past?

Up to 750 words

2026 MSEA ESP OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINATION CHECKLIST



Nominee

- Nominee is an active ESP member of an MSEA local affiliate or bargaining unit and has been an MSEA member for at least three years.

Nomination Form

- Nomination form is complete and includes the signature of the local president.

Nomination Letter

- Nomination letter provides a description of why the nominee is an outstanding support professional.
- The letter is typed, two-page maximum, with one-inch margins and minimum 11-point font.

Resume Questionnaire

Questionnaire demonstrates the nominee's achievements and impact in each of the following award criteria:

- Impact on students
- Impact on families and the community
- Union engagement and activism, with a focus on ESP workforce issues
- Impact on colleagues

Letters of Recommendation

- Two letters of recommendation (no more, no less) have been included.
- Each letter is typed, one-page maximum, with one-inch margins and minimum 11-point font.
- Each letter notes how long the letter writer has known the nominee and describes the capacity (e.g., school/worksite, local/state union, community) through which the writer is commenting on the nominee's accomplishments and impact.

Responses

- Responses took into consideration the following questions. These questions will be applied to each of the criteria during scoring.
 1. What is the degree of impact? (Was the impact transactional or transformational? Were systems changed? What was the breadth and/or depth of impact?)
 2. How did the actions advance racial and social justice in education? (Did the actions address issues of inequity? If yes, how? How were the actions inclusive and/or responsive to marginalized communities?)
 3. To what degree did the nominee collaborate or partner with others? (e.g., individuals, organizations, etc.?)

Deadline for Nominations

- Nomination has been or will be submitted by 5:00 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, July 1, 2026.