

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT: Christina Brey, [BreyC@weac.org](mailto:BreyC@weac.org), 608.213.3497  
DATE: February 7, 2017

**WEAC Receives Grant from Great Public Schools Fund**

*Initiative builds respect, recognition of Education Support Professionals*

The Wisconsin Education Association Council has received a grant from the National Education Association's Great Public Schools (GPS) Fund to build respect and recognition of Education Support Professionals. GPS Fund grants, established by NEA members in 2013, are designed to help enhance the education profession and promote student success. The Wisconsin Education Association Council was one of 22 recipients.

"Nobody knows better than educators what their students need to succeed in the classroom," said NEA Vice President Becky Pringle. "Through these grants, we are providing the resources to put plans and programs in action that really will help ensure opportunity, equity, and success for every public school student in America."

Education Support Professionals are the wide range of school staff who team with teachers for student success, such as paraprofessionals, secretaries, custodians and bus drivers. Wisconsin's effort will connect support professionals across school districts to promote professionalism and offer opportunities for professional growth.

"Support professionals have a direct impact on student learning," said Arlene Braden, a high school secretary and secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin Education Association Council. "We're excited to lead efforts to recognize their important role and offer opportunities so they have even a more profound impact on students."

The GPS Fund Grants program was established because NEA members believed that the Association could do more to help ensure the success of all students, regardless of their ZIP code. Previous grants have been used to support bullying and suicide prevention programs, increase the number of nationally board certified teachers (NBCTs), and provide professional development opportunities for educators. The grants also support programs that focus on successful students, accomplished professionals, dynamic collaboration, and empowered leaders.

Grants from the GPS Fund are made directly to NEA state and local affiliates for promising projects and ideas that improve student success. The funds also help affiliates build partnerships with local organizations and work with key education stakeholders to develop and implement programs and policies that emphasize student success through union-led efforts.

"Educators around the country reach, teach, and inspire students every day to learn and achieve their dreams, and to support their work we need to continue to accelerate the transformation of public education—these grants help with this process," said Pringle.

[END]

[www.weac.org](http://www.weac.org) \* [www.facebook.com/MyWEAC](https://www.facebook.com/MyWEAC) \* [www.twitter.com/MyWEAC](https://www.twitter.com/MyWEAC)