ESP GREATNESS!

Building Moral Values During COVID-19!

April 17, 2021  Virtual Event
Dear #TeamTSTA,

Welcome to our first ever Texas State Teachers Association Education Support Professionals (ESP) Virtual Statewide Conference!

This year’s conference theme, *ESP Greatness- Building Moral Values During COVID-19*, celebrates our accomplishments and calls us to action as we continue the fight for safe schools for our students and employees. This conference is an important opportunity for you to prepare yourself to provide leadership in your districts, local unions, and TSTA/NEA. ESP Greatness is found at every campus and worksite in our public schools and in every local affiliate of our union. The ongoing pandemic has created unbearable suffering for students and colleagues and this situation has been made even more challenging because of many of the policies enacted by the state and local districts. Those polices have put the safety of our students, colleagues, and communities at risk. Our mission to “provide a quality public school for every child” has never been more challenging or more critical.

Our mission rests on our moral values as a union. We value the humanity of our students and colleagues; that is why we organize campaigns for racial and social justice, equity, due process, living wages, affordable health care, and rESPct. We also value the power of the collective to make things better for all. Together, we’ve accomplished vital things to keep our students, colleagues, and communities safe throughout the past year. We did this by tirelessly caring for our students, organizing around safety issues, and getting involved in elections. TSTA members voted in record numbers for pro-public education candidates. We elected a new administration in Washington including a new President, and we have a new Secretary of Education! We are educators, and we serve as activists and advocates in order to create a better learning environment for our students and a better working environment for our colleagues. This is our greatness. This is our union.

Thank you for being here for this conference. We are physically distanced but we are staying connected - building moral values during COVID-19. We are honored to stand with you and thank you for your active participation in our union. Take care and stay safe.

In solidarity,

Ovidia Molina, TSTA/NEA President
TSTA ESP Conference

APR 17

9:00 - 9:30am: Welcome/Ice Breaker

9:30 - 10:00am: TSTA Officer Greetings

10:00 - 10:15am: Break

10:15 - Noon: Employment 101: Know Your Rights!

Noon - 1 pm: Lunch on your own

1:00 - 2:00 pm: Winning Local School Board Elections

2:00 - 2:15pm: Break

2:15 - 3:15pm: Self-Care During COVID-19

3:15 - 3:30pm: Closing/Evaluation
AMANDA MOORE
Amanda Moore is the General Counsel and Director of the Organizing Center for Legal Services and Member Advocacy at TSTA. She has represented TSTA members since 2008. Ms. Moore has represented public school employees at school district board hearings, in nonrenewal and termination hearings, and in appeals before the Texas Commissioner of Education. For over fourteen years, Ms. Moore has advised public school employees on issues involving grievances, workplace concerns, and adverse employment actions. In January 2020, Ms. Moore argued before the Texas Supreme Court in a case involving the interpretation of a statute that governs the termination of the continuing contracts of teachers in Texas. Amanda received her law degree from the University of Texas School of Law where she was a member of the Thurgood Marshall Legal Society. Amanda graduated summa cum laude from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Spanish.

PORTIA BOSSE
Portia Bosse is the Director of Public Affairs for TSTA since April of 2018, and before that was a TSTA Governmental Relations Specialist since 2006. Ms. Bosse has worked on behalf of TSTA and its members in public education policy at the Texas Legislature, and before the State Board of Education, the State Board for Educator Certification, and the Teacher Retirement System. Prior to working for TSTA, Ms. Bosse practiced law for 12 years in private practice representing county governments across Texas and as an Assistant Attorney General. Ms. Bosse received her JD at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University and received her BA at Texas A&M University-College Station. She went to public schools in Houston, Texas.

PATY MÁRQUEZ
Patty Márquez is the interim OCALD Director for TSTA. For the last decade, she passionately served in multiple capacities including Organizational Specialist, ESP Statewide Coordinator & Help Center Advocate. From an early age, Mrs. Márquez believed in advocating for equality and empowering members to take control of their association by challenging status quo & changing policies/procedures. She also served as a Union President for the NEA-TorC in New Mexico by working directly with the districts to make a difference in public education. As a grass-root organizer Patty understands the importance of organizing campaigns around issues that impact teachers and ESPs.
Workshops

Employment 101: Know Your Rights!
Presenter: Amanda Moore

In this session, we will discuss the employment laws and school board policies that directly relate to public school employment. We will examine employment issues related to leave, certification, grievances, job duties, recent COVID-19 developments and overall working conditions.

Winning Local School Board Elections
Presenter: Portia Bosse

All politics are local. This session will guide your local’s work on how to become active in your local school board elections from recruiting community leaders to run, endorsement process, and organizing a local campaign. Having friendly members on a school board can lead to increased compensation and better benefits, better working conditions, and prioritize safety in a pandemic.

Self-Care During COVID 19
Presenter: Paty Márquez

Since the pandemic we have all been impacted by the sudden and drastic change as we continue to work to adapt in our personal and professional lives. The endless challenges we face each day while multitasking has left many of us very little time for self-care. It is important to find balance between work and personal time and personally committing to set time aside during your day to help you find balance between self-care and everyday tasks. This interactive session will provide you with easy-to-use stress management techniques that will help you relax.
Maria grew up in Ysleta, the daughter of amazing parents who raised their children on a motto of always having respect, being honest, keeping the faith, and love. Her family wasn't rich, but Maria learned early in life that riches don't make a person happy. After high school, she worked and married and was blessed with three beautiful children. When the marriage ended, Maria became father, mother, and more for her children, and her community service began with them.

She coached a T-Ball team, volunteered at Ysleta elementary, and started fundraising for the children. Maria then begins to fundraise for other worthy causes. As a volunteer for their local church, Maria went to local stores to request donations and made gorditas and churros for sale to raise funds. At one point, she raised up to $6,000 in donations.

In 1985, Maria became a substitute for Ysleta ISD and substituted for 13 years before becoming a teacher assistant in 1998. She was hired into the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) Unit in the Special Education Department, and since then has continued to be a Special Education aide. Currently, she works in the Specialized Support Behavior (SSB) Unit where she assists students in learning social skills with a goal toward strengthening life skills. Her approach is to take things day by day, with patience and empathy. Maria loves her job, "because it is gratifying when all your hard work becomes a successful story."

Maria has applied everything she has learned on the job to her work with the Ysleta Teachers Association. She has been involved in school board elections and works hard to recruit more members to YTA. Maria has been an Association Representative, a Coordinator, and has won several awards for being the Best Recruiter for YTA. She sits on the YTA Board, and says "there is nothing I would not do for YTA. I believe in this organization." Her work with Ysleta Teachers Association has given her skills she needs in order to help her colleagues.

Maria has an Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education, and a Bachelor's degree in multi-disciplinary studies with a minor in Chicano studies. She believes her strength and passion for helping others comes from her parents. Her dad, especially, believed in her and there was nothing she could do wrong in his eyes. "For him, I could accomplish whatever my heart desired. I believe that with all my heart."
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ESP Committee Members

Committee Chair
Joyce Johnson, Chair, Beaumont Teachers Association

Committee Members
Maritza Barrera, San Antonio Alliance
Sherri Harper-Walker, Cy-Fair TSTA/NEA
Maria G. Hernandez, Ysleta Teachers Association
Tracy Knotts, Alief-TSTA/NEA
Norman Quigley, Fort Worth Education Association
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