

Building Authentic Relationships as ESP Leaders



Pamella Johnson

Academic and Behavioral Interventionist

2023 NEA ESP of the Year



#WeLoveOurESPs

HAPPY EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS DAY!







ESP Power to Affect Change

- **More than 2.2 million** K-12 ESPs work in public schools across the country; **more than 760,000** Higher Ed ESPs work in colleges across the country.
- **76% of PreK-12 ESPs** report that promoting school safety is a part of their job responsibilities.
- **62% of PreK-12 ESPs** work with special education students.
- **The majority (67%)** of us live in the school district where we work, and many volunteer in those communities.



Why Relationships?

- It's in our nature as humans to connect and build relationships.
- Social connectedness - the degree to which people have and perceive a desired number, quality, and diversity of relationships that create a sense of belonging, and being cared for, valued, and supported. (CDC)





- What is authentic, intentional relationship building?
- Please post in the chat.





- Think about an authentic relationship you have.
- What characteristics make that relationship authentic?
- Please post in the chat.



Characteristics of Authentic Relationships

- Truth
- Respect
- Mutual trust
- Open communication
- Intention and practice
- Treat others as you wish to be treated!





- Who do you think are our most valuable partners in this work and why?
- Please post in the chat.



Our Partners In This Work

- Teachers
- Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISPs)
- Other ESPs
- Students
- Administrators
- School boards
- Elected officials
- Parents/Families
- PTA/PTOs
- Other unions
- Social activist groups
- Faith-based organizations
- Ourselves



Building Relationships with Other Educators (other ESPs, teachers, SISPs)

- Engage in meaningful, authentic conversations.
- Always start with your WHY.
- Encourage them to share their why and story too!
- Use active listening skills.
- Identify the things you have in common.
- Offer support, create community, and ask for what you need.
- Treat everyone with respect, greet everyone, recognize and thank others for all things including the small things!



Building Relationships with Students

- Get to know your students and let them know you care about them and appreciate who they are.
- Understand your students' backgrounds, cultures, identities, and what they bring into the learning space.
- Treat students with respect.
- Be there for them without judgment and offer whatever support they need.
- Hold students accountable.





I take great pride in my work. I created a report with every single student on my bus. I learn their favorite sport, music they like or hobby. In the afternoon we play music on the way home from a playlist that they choose. I communicated with their parents about their days and to teachers about behavior and needs. Most of the time I can recognize when Johnny is upset or had a bad day the night before. My job is not only to transport the students safely from home to school and from school to home, but also care for their needs.

Ivis Castillo – School Bus Driver (VA)



I love what I do and love that I get to interact with so many different personalities daily. My favorite part of my day is right after school starts. We have a SPED class and one of the student's request is to have me walk with him to class from the cafeteria after he eats his breakfast, if I am able to.

Andy Markus – Assistant Facility Manager (UT)

Building Relationships with Families/Community

- Get to know families and community partners.
- Share your voice, what you do, and the important role you play in student success.
- Identify common goals.
- Offer support, create community, and ask for what you need.





Empowerment

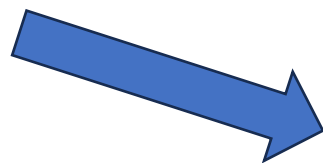
Engagement

Relationships



Parting words from my youngest granddaughter Carly...

Carly



“Be engaged, stay engaged, be about it.”



“Believe that you can
and you’re halfway there.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

Pamella Johnson

253-318-8982

pamella.johnson@washingtonea.org

