

► Putting the Spotlight on Custodial and Maintenance Services

“My job is to make sure teachers concentrate on teaching, food service workers on feeding children, and office personnel on caring for children and parents.” That’s how Martin Meyers, head custodian in Idaho and an NEA ESP of the Year in 2003, sees his job.

In more ways than imaginable, custodial/maintenance employees make a profound impact on students and student achievement every day. To understand this impact, we need to know what custodial/maintenance employees do. The data and the information come from “2012 NEA K-12 ESP Membership Survey Report.”

- NEA considers the following classifications to fall under the custodial/maintenance category: building and grounds staff, housekeepers, mechanics and warehouse personnel.
- Custodial/maintenance employees make up 7 percent of NEA ESP members. That equates to 30,000 people.
- More than 95 percent of custodial/maintenance employees work full-time.
- Sixty-one percent of custodial/maintenance employees regularly attend professional development training each year.
- Wages for more than 67 percent of custodial/maintenance employees are paid on an hourly basis.
- Custodians sweep, mop and wax 31 billion square feet of floors in public schools per year.
- Building and grounds staff mow 7.1 million acres of public school grounds per year.
- These employees are the “guardians of the school environment” for students, staff and the community. With the constant wave of new equipment and regulations facing custodial/maintenance employees, they are looking for professional development in the following areas:

- Building security
- Asbestos training
- Blood-borne pathogens
- Hazardous equipment
- Hazardous chemicals
- Ergonomics
- Time management