

What I've Learned: A School Bus Can Be a Traveling Classroom

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Educators may spend their careers preparing lessons, but often the most memorable are those they learn themselves. With that in mind, NEA Today asked school staff – everyone from classroom teachers and bus drivers to guidance counselors and school nurses – to share the everyday lessons they've picked up along the way in a series called "What I've Learned."

Mickey Brady is a bus driver for the La Porte Community School Corporation in La Porte, Indiana, and a graduate of NEA's Leaders of Tomorrow program. These are the lessons she's learned after more than two decades behind the wheel.

What I've Learned: A School Bus Can Be a Traveling Classroom, By Mickey Brady

I have learned that school bus drivers are more than just drivers – they provide a lot more than transportation to school kids. I am privileged to drive a school bus, and early on in my career I realized what an important profession I had chosen. Bus drivers are the first and last school contact that students have each and every school day. We, as drivers, have the responsibility of ensuring that our students not only arrive safe and sound at their schools but also ready, willing and excited to learn the day's lessons. After school is dismissed, our students return to us, eager to share the events of the day. We celebrate their successes, downplay their failures and then send them off to their homes with, "Have a good night, I'll see you in the morning!"



I have learned that a school bus is a traveling classroom where a great deal of learning takes place. Drivers practice spelling words, give math quizzes, help with homework, answer all sorts of questions, encourage reading, and teach politeness and good manners.

I have learned to never underestimate the power a smile or a few words of praise can have in the lives of our students.

I have learned to treat each student as the unique individual that they truly are. If you recognize and acknowledge how special they are in their own way, they will thrive.

I have learned that Education Support Professionals are, in fact, educators. It takes every single one of us in the education profession, working together, to develop a well-rounded, well educated, successful student.