



appreciating classified employees

Program Toolkit



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Appreciating Classified Employees (ACE)

More than a quarter million classified employees across the state of California perform a wide range of essential work that is the heartbeat of our schools, and contributes to the academic and personal success of all students. They are dedicated to their profession. However, working behind the scenes, they often go unnoticed.

The Appreciating Classified Employees (ACE) program began more than a decade ago to bring the work of classified employees out of the shadows. Held in districts statewide, ACE demonstrates the importance of classified employees' daily responsibilities by shining a light on their jobs.

Ten chapters are selected each year from each area to participate in the ACE program through a nomination process. Those who are interested should reach out to their Field Office or Labor Relations Representative in early Fall to be nominated for the following May event.

All nominations are sent to the Association President, who selects a participating chapter from each area in December. However, chapters who are not chosen can still host their own job shadow day as part of Classified School Employee Week events.

During the program, administrators (including superintendents, district-level administrators and



principals), Board Members, Parent Teacher Association members, City Council members and more are invited to sign up to “job shadow” classified school employees during Classified School Employee Week, held the third full week of May.

This toolkit should be used to inspire and guide your members and staff to participate in this important event by providing you with informational resources and documents. However, it is entirely up to your chapter on how you would like to get involved and oversee ACE (including: which administrators will participate, what classified employee

each administrator will shadow and what day it will occur).

Creating captivating photos (see p.9) and social media posts (see p. 11) are all key mediums to make sure your event is recognized by the school district and community at large. Additionally, CSEA publishes an article with testimonials and pictures about participating chapters in its publications, including Focus magazine.

Help this year’s ACE program be a success by contacting your district administration today!





ACE program events

The ACE program is designed to build understanding within the district and recognize the hard work that classified employees do every day. As such, the job shadow portion is the main focus of the program. Because each school district varies in size and demographics, there is no cookie cutter way to build the program. Chapter leaders and district staff should work together to ensure a successful event.





Celebrate safely

The pandemic was particularly challenging for our members who had to find new ways to meet the needs of their school districts and the 6.2 million students and families they serve across the state of California. However, they continue to be resilient, rising to the challenge of these unprecedented times. That is why it is important to spotlight this dedication during ACE program events and to do it safely.

Because the response to COVID-19 is a constantly evolving process that differs based on location, please refer to your school and county safety guidelines for planning your ACE program events.





Below is a list of possible ways a school district can participate.

This list is not intended to restrict the manner in which districts will conduct the job shadow program, but to serve as a catalyst for new ideas as well.

- Select a principal at every school site to shadow one classified employee for an hour during the specified ACE day.
- Ask School Board Members or the district's executive staff to shadow a classified employee at sites throughout the district.
- Request the superintendent, executive staff or a school principal ride on a school bus while meals are being distributed.
- Ask a district administrator to assist nutrition service classified employees in serving food to students during breakfast or lunch.
- Designate a member of the district's executive staff or invite an elected official to sit with a school front office secretary in the frantic hour leading up to the beginning of school.
- Request a PTA member shadow a maintenance worker as they perform safety checks, routine inspections and make repairs.
- Ask executive staff to sit with a para-educator as they work with special education students.
- Assign a district administrator to sit in on an English language learning class with a bilingual aide.
- Ask executive staff to rake leaves and help clean the grounds of a school site.
- Adopt a resolution to recognize Classified School Employee Week and celebrate the work of classified employees. [Use our fillable form to create a sample resolution for your district.](#)

Post-event celebrations

An integral part of the ACE program is the post-event reception, during which ACE participants share their experiences.

It is recommended that the chapters host a potluck or sponsor food and refreshments to be served at the reception to celebrate the program. During the reception, district administrators, classified staff and trustees are encouraged to talk about what they observed and learned during their job shadows. Contact Senior Communications Specialist Matt Murphy at mmurphy@csea.com with questions about an ACE reception.

We would love to hear how you conducted the job shadow program! Email photos and stories of how your program went to us at ACEphotos@csea.com.



Creating your ACE team

In order to ensure the success of your ACE program events, you will want to have a designated team set in place to help coordinate the efforts. We recommend putting a team in place at least six weeks before the event and suggest the following roles for chapter leaders in order to distribute the workload and be prepared:

- Job shadow coordinator
- Photo coordinator
- Event coordinator
- Social media coordinator

Descriptions are on the following pages.



Job shadow coordinator

- This person will identify the classified employees who want to participate six weeks before the event.
- Once this list is generated, they will create and email a save the date (see p. 14) on which administrators, elected officials, dignitaries, PTA members and more can sign up to participate, with cutoff a week before the event.
- Once both lists have been created, they will pair up the employee and participant and share out their worksite and contact information so they can make plans for ACE day two weeks before the event.
- This person will distribute the participation pairings list to the photo coordinator, social media coordinator and post-event reception coordinator two weeks before the event.
- This person will coordinate the CSEA themed T-shirts that are needed for the year's participants.



Photo coordinator

- This person will review the participation pairings list from the job shadow coordinator and identify a handful of participants across varying job classifications to be photographed on ACE day.
- Once the sources are identified, this person will go out to the sites they chose on ACE day to take pictures. Be sure to write down people's names, titles and what is happening in the photo. For tips on taking photos, see page 16.
- The week following, the photo coordinator will go through the photos and choose the top 10 and go through the top 10 photos from the social media coordinator.
- Email your top 10 photos to ACEphotos@csea.com with the names and titles of people in the pictures along with what they are doing.





Event coordinator

- Four weeks before the event, this person will ask for the RSVP list from the job shadow coordinator to determine how many individuals will participate and their email addresses.
- At least three weeks before the event, this person will send a meeting invitation and flyer.
- This person will talk with other chapter leaders about the type of materials they want to provide to participants for the celebration (ie, CSEW Tshirts and/or Zoom backgrounds, available at <https://www.csea.com/csew>).
- This person will help facilitate the mailing and distribution of those materials.
- During the reception, this person will facilitate the discussion of the job shadow program.



Social media coordinator

- This person will review the participation pairings list from the job shadow coordinator with the photo coordinator and identify a handful of participants across varying job classifications to be photographed on ACE day that the photo coordinator isn't planning on covering.
- Once the sources are identified, this person will go out to the sites they chose on ACE day to take and post pictures for social media using the mention @CSEA and hashtags #CSEW, #ClassifiedSchoolEmployeeWeek, and #CSEA. People photographed need to be ID'd before being posted.
- The week following, this person will go through their photos, choose and email 10 to the photo coordinator with the names and titles of people in the photos along with what they are doing.



Publicizing the ACE program

Creating the ACE program takes a lot of time, communication and dedication, and you want to make sure it doesn't go unnoticed. The materials highlighted on the following pages are meant to energize potential participants to get started and later share out the success of your event.



Internal Communications:

Talking points

The Appreciating Classified Employee (ACE) program has helped build a bridge between many district administrators and support staff. The outcomes are beneficial for chapters, school districts and classified staff alike, it energizes participants in a way that is invaluable to those that they serve.

Chapters who have participated once tend to do so again and again, knowing the impact it leaves for classified employees and job shadow participants alike who take part in the annual celebration.

New to the program and want to get started? Below are some talking points that you can share with district administrators as a chapter leader in order to lay the groundwork for a program where you are. Additionally, see page 20 for Frequently Asked Questions.

The ACE program:

- ...is a good way for the school district and classified staff to share experiences and build relationships.
- ...can generate positive media coverage of the school district and the local CSEA chapter.
- ...allows district administrators, elected officials and the community-at-large to observe the daily dedication and hard work of some of CSEA's more than a quarter million classified employees.
- ...is the ideal way to celebrate Classified School Employee Week to show the extraordinary work and tremendous strengths that CSEA members bring to the district every day.
- ...shows how appreciated classified school employees are in the district.
- ...reinforces that a school district requires the efforts of a number of groups, including teachers, classified staff and administrators. A healthy school district is built on teamwork, and the ACE program reinforces that.



Internal Communications:

Save the date

Intended for the purpose of inviting school district employees and administrators, elected officials, PTA members and others to participate in the ACE program.



Save the date email template:

SUBJECT: Your participation essential to the success of this year's ACE program!

BODY: Dear *(district)* employee,

California's Legislature recognizes the important contributions of classified school employees and named the third full week of May "Classified School Employee Week" to honor these contributions.

(District) is celebrating this honor by participating in the California School Employee Association's Appreciating Classified Employees (ACE) program. We are looking for people to participate in the job shadow portion of the program which allows school district administrators and elected officials a chance to "walk a mile" in classified employees' shoes. It will take place *(time)* on *(date)* at various sites throughout the district.

In the program, superintendents and other administrators will shadow food service workers, groundskeepers, bus drivers, paraeducators, mechanics, secretaries and other classified employees.

Respond if you are interested, and you will be contacted by *(date)* with your employee match and reporting time and location that day.

Thank you so much for your consideration in highlighting the hard work and dedication of support staff every day.

Sincerely,

(Chapter President name), (Chapter name and number) Chapter President

(Superintendent name), (District) Superintendent





Frequently Asked Questions

What is the ACE program?

The ACE program is a “job shadowing” program. It gives administrators a first-hand view of what various classified employees do. It also provides an opportunity for classified employees and administrators to interact on a one-on-one basis and promotes understanding between classified and administrative staff.

When does the ACE program take place?

The ACE program takes place during the third full week of May, which is designated as Classified School Employee Week by the State of California.

What is Classified School Employee Week?

Thanks to a resolution passed by members at CSEA’s 1984 annual conference, legislation was introduced in the State Senate to permanently solidify CSEW as an annual week of statewide recognition.

What’s the purpose of the ACE program?



The purpose of the ACE program is to give stakeholders in education the chance to see the positive interaction between classified staff and administrators. It shows the integral role classified employees play in building a strong support system at their sites.

What does the ACE program entail?

The ACE program entails administrators and classified employees spending time together on the job. The ACE program will be designed and implemented by participants. Although school administrators are keenly aware of the tasks and responsibilities of classified employees, this program gives administrators and others the chance for a behind-the-scenes look at how classified employees contribute to the success of schools and students.

What are the benefits of participating in the ACE program?

The ACE program will provide plenty of opportunities for the participants and their school districts to receive positive publicity. It will raise the awareness of parents and other stakeholders about the amount of work that goes into educating California's students.

Who participates in the ACE program?

Chapters participating in the ACE program are selected through a nomination process. Those who are interested should reach out to their Field Office or Labor Relations Representative to be nominated. All nominations are sent to the Association President, who selects a participating chapter from each area.

What if I'm not selected as an ACE chapter?

Any chapter can host a job shadow day

While only a select amount of chapters are chosen for the ACE program, any chapter can host a job shadow day or Classified School Employee Week events. These events will require cooperation and planning by both chapter leadership and district administration, both of which will be involved during every step of the program.



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appreciating classified employees



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