1930 American Federation of Teachers begins to organize support staff; first are secretaries of Chicago.

1946 Federal school lunch program starts.

1966 Chapter 1 legislation supports paraprofessionals in classrooms.

1970 AFT wins elections to represent paraprofessionals in New York City.

1971 AFT Convention resolution recommends organizing school personnel.

1972 New York State United Teachers is created by merging United Federation of Teachers and UFTNY (United Teachers of New York).

1973 Velma Hill, UFT para, joins AFT Executive Council, chairs new Committee on Paraprofessionals.

1975 AFT Convention has resolutions on organizing paraprofessionals, secretaries. IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) gives all students, regardless of disabilities, rights to a free, appropriate public education, spurring continued growth of School-Related Personnel in public schools.

1978 Recognizing need for union development training, NYUT holds its first SRP Leadership Conference in Syracuse. Baltimore para Lorretta Johnson is elected to the AFT Executive Council, named chair of the paraprofessional committee.

1979 NYUT forms the SRP Advisory Committee; Joan Weisbrod of NYSUT becomes AFT President.

1980 NYUT’s Maria Portolosin, United Federation of Teachers para, is elected to AFT Executive Council.

1981 Federal Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers License applies to school bus drivers.

1982 Organizing school support staff takes off in New York state as NYUT recognizes all school employees need the benefits and protections the union provides to teachers and paras.

1983 NYUT’s Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel (PSRP) Committee.

1984 AFT encourages state federations to appoint state-level PSRP committees and to offer conferences for support staff. Only 15 states have statewide committees.

1985 NYUT has had an SRP committee since 1979; conferences since 1987.

1987 AFT convention has resolutions on school bus safety and school bus seat belts.

1988 AFT convention has resolution on health care responsibilities in special education.

1989 Retirement legislation: 12-for-10 bill passes — a huge legislative victory for NYUT.

1990 NYUT creates a team of four consultants to help SRP members with retirement questions.

1991 NYUT publishes first issue of AFT Reporter, a publication for paras. It will grow to cover all support staff.

1992 The PSRP Committee becomes the PSRP Program and Policy Council (PPC) and adds six new members; its chair, AFT Vice President Lorretta Johnson, joins AFT Executive Committee.

1994 NYUT’s inaugural SRP of the Year award goes to Clara Quirk, a secretary from Massapequa, Long Island.

1995 AFT-PSRP Task Force is appointed, conducting nationwide poll of PSRP members for the AFT.

1996 NYUT President Tom Quirk appoints SRPs to standing committees.

1997 NYUT President Tom Quirk launches SRP Task Force to shape service to SRPs.

1998 NYUT creates new position of SRP coordinator, naming Margaret MacKerboy to work with task force.

1999 NYUT appoints SRPs to standing committees.

2000 NYUT President John Johnson appoints a teaching assistant from Hempstead, as first SRP member of NYUT Executive Committee.

2004 NYUT wins elections to represent the teaching staff.

2005 NYUT wins elections to represent the teaching staff.

2006 NYUT’s SRP Professional Development Program receives the national Union Builder award from the AFT.

AFT/PSRP department launches a professional development initiative to help affiliates advocate for SRP training in districts.

Permanent pension COLA is enacted after huge NYUT/NEA rally; NYUT wins elimination of 5 percent contribution after 10 years of service.

2001 Federal government amends drug and alcohol regs for school transportation workers.

2002 NYUT publishes first issue of SRP NewsLink for leaders.

2003 At RA, NYUT elevates status of SRPs by changing their title from School-Related Personnel to School-Related Professionals.

2004 NYUT’s SRP Professional Development Program receives the national Union Builders award from the AFT.

2005 NYUT wins elections to represent the teaching staff.

2006 NYUT’s SRP Professional Development Program receives the national Union Builder award from the AFT.

AFT/PSRP department launches a professional development initiative to help affiliates advocate for SRP training in districts.
KEY to the photos on the front:

Top row, left to right: SRP leaders Minnie Wheeler, Florence Fidell and Glenn Lucas at a 1993 NYSUT SRP conference.

In the wake of merger in 2006, ESP (Education Support Professionals) leaders from former NEA/NY locals meet NYSUT President Richard Iannuzzi, Secretary-Treasurer Ivan Tiger and Vice President Kathleen Donahue.

SRP members and then-NYSUT President Tom Hobart sing “Solidarity Forever” at NYSUT’s 2001 SRP Leadership conference in Buffalo.

Middle row, left to right:

Members of NYSUT’s SRP Advisory Committee with a Membership Growth award from the AFT at a national conference in 1996.

Members of the School Secretaries Union of Chicago, the AFT’s first support staff local, with school board members in a 1965 photo.

UFT President Al Shanker and legendary activist Bayard Rustin at an October 1970 rally to save paraprofessional jobs in New York City.

Secretaries and paraprofessionals from the United Federation of Teachers receive a 1999 NYSUT award for VOTE-COPE efforts in political action: From left, Shelvy Young Abrams, Maria Portalatin, Jackie Ervolina and Doreen Raftery.

Bottom row, left to right:

A button from a 1980s national AFT/PSRP conference.

SRPs forge bonds in 2005: From left, Jo Ann Sweat; Lynn Romanick; Sandra Carner-Shafran; and Debbie Minnick.

SRP leaders present a donation of $10,000 for hurricane relief to Vice President Kathleen Donahue. From left, Pat Weinwurm, Deb Paulin, Donahue, Laura Harper of the Jefferson Parish (La.) FT and Margie Brumfield.

Bert Boehm and Arlene Hanley discuss priorities for one of the first NYSUT SRP Advisory Committee meetings.

Velma Hill meets with New York City paraprofessionals in 1971.