



Simplify procurement.
Maximize results.



CES Ancillary: Helping Schools Stay Compliant While Supporting the Students Who Need It Most

Schools today are responsible for far more than academics. They must create safe, supportive learning environments while meeting a growing number of educational, operational, and compliance requirements for Special Education Services. For many school districts, doing that effectively requires specialized expertise and reliable partners.

That is where **CES Ancillary** comes in.

CES Ancillary partners with schools and districts to provide specialized ancillary services and the professionals needed to support students, staff, and school communities. Our work is centered on one goal: helping schools access the right people and services while strengthening their ability to meet their responsibilities and remain focused on educating students.

Who We Hire

CES Ancillary works with qualified professionals who provide specialized services within the school environment. Our network includes professionals across a broad range of educational, therapeutic, behavioral, medical, and student-support disciplines.

CES MEMBER NEWSLETTER

October 2026

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- Educational Articles
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Depending on a school's needs, CES Ancillary can provide professionals such as:

- Adaptive Physical Educators
- Adaptive Physical Educators / RT
- Ancillary Teachers
- Audiologists
- Behavior Management Specialists / BCBA
- Certified Occupational Therapist Assistants
- Certified Orientation Mobility Specialists
- Certified Orientation Mobility Specialists / TVI
- Diagnosticians
- Bilingual Diagnosticians
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Physical Therapists with Doctorate
- Psychologists
- Recreational Therapists
- Registered Nurses
- Rehabilitation Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Social Workers

- Social Workers – Regular Education
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Speech-Language Pathologist Apprentices
- Teachers for the Visually Impaired

This range of professionals allows CES Ancillary to support schools with diverse staffing and student-service needs.

We understand that schools need more than a résumé. They need professionals who understand the unique environment of education and can work collaboratively with teachers, administrators, families, and other members of a student's support team.

Our hiring and placement process is designed vet the most qualified and licensed to help schools connect with qualified professionals who are prepared to work within school-based settings and understand the importance of documentation, communication, confidentiality, and professional standards.

Why Use CES

The advantages of using CES are:

- Part-time or Full-time CES Ancillary Staff available
- Over 190 NM-Certified and Licensed qualified professionals
- CES takes care of payroll responsibilities, taxes, benefits coverage, liability etc.

Who We Serve

Our primary partners are **schools, school districts, and educational organizations** that need additional capacity or specialized expertise.

Every school has unique needs. Some may need help filling an open position. Others

may experience a temporary shortage of qualified personnel, an increase in student needs, or difficulty recruiting specialized professionals in their local area.

CES Ancillary can serve as an extension of a school's team, helping administrators address staffing and service needs without losing sight of their core mission.

Most importantly, the work ultimately benefits students. When schools have access to the professionals they need, students are better positioned to receive the services and support identified by their educational teams.

How We Help Schools with Compliance

Compliance is an essential part of operating a school, particularly when services involve students receiving special education or related ancillary supports. Schools must be able to demonstrate that required services are being provided appropriately, by qualified personnel, and with the necessary documentation according to the IEP.

CES Ancillary helps schools strengthen that process by providing access to qualified ancillary professionals and supporting the operational side of delivering services.

Our approach can help schools:

- **Address staffing gaps** that could otherwise interfere with the delivery of required services.
- **Connect with qualified professionals** who understand school-based service delivery.
- **Support consistent service delivery** by helping schools maintain appropriate staffing resources.

- **Strengthen documentation and communication** between providers and school teams.
- **Support special education and related-service requirements** through appropriately qualified personnel.
- **Reduce administrative strain** by helping schools address ancillary staffing needs.
- **Adapt to changing student needs** as enrollment, programs, and service requirements change.

Compliance is not simply about checking a box. It is about having the people, processes, and documentation necessary to demonstrate that students are receiving the support identified by their IEP teams and applicable requirements.

A Partner, Not Just a Staffing Resource

At CES Ancillary, we believe our role goes beyond filling vacancies.

Schools are complex organizations, and ancillary services have to fit into the larger educational environment. Professionals must collaborate with educators and administrators, communicate effectively, follow school procedures, and understand the importance of student-centered service delivery.

That is why we approach every partnership with the school's individual needs in mind.

We work to understand what a school is trying to accomplish, where its challenges are, and what type of professional support will best fit its environment. Whether the need is ongoing or temporary, our goal is to make the process more manageable for school leadership.

Supporting Schools So They Can Focus on Students

When schools are understaffed, administrators often have to spend valuable time trying to solve staffing and service-delivery challenges. CES Ancillary helps take some of that burden off their shoulders.

By connecting schools with qualified ancillary professionals and supporting the delivery of specialized services, we help schools build the capacity they need to serve students effectively.

The result is a partnership focused on three things:

- **Qualified people.**
- **Reliable services.**
- **Student-centered support.**

For schools, compliance and quality service go hand in hand. Having the right professionals in place is an important part of both.

CES Ancillary is proud to work alongside schools and districts to help them meet their responsibilities, support their teams, and provide students with the services they need to succeed.

CES Ancillary: Helping schools find the people they need to support the students they serve.

*Submitted by Lianne Pierce
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10/1 TAP: Educating Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder The Basics and Beyond

10/2 National Custodial Workers' Day

10/5 World Teacher's Day

10/5 NMSBA Fall Region III Meeting – Las Vegas City

10/6 NMSBA Fall Region VII Meeting – Alamogordo

10/6 TAP: Useful Data Collection in the Special Education Classroom

10/7,14,21,&28 TAP: Mindfulness Based Practices Coaching Series

10/12 Columbus Day / Indigenous People's Day

10/12-14 CES Facility Managers Workshop

10/13 U.S. Navy Birthday

10/14 TAP: Developing successful FBA and BIP

10/15 TAP: Attention Deficit Disorders ADHD and Other Attention Issues

10/16 Boss's Day

10/16 TAP: The Space Between the Layers Where MLSS Actually Happens

10/20 TAP: Aligned for Success-Present Levels, Annual Goals & Progress Monitoring AM & PM

10/21 TAP: Early Childhood Language-Based Strategies Grounded in the Science of Reading

10/21-23 NMPPA Fall Conference

10/22 TAP: Get on THE MET train Altogether and on the Right track for students

10/27 TAP: Staying Clear of CAPs Getting Inclusion Services Right for Students with IEPs

10/27-30 NMASBO Boot Camp

10/28 TAP: Beyond the Boxes Building Better IEPs with New Mexico's New Template

10/29 TAP: Exploring Occupational Therapy and Classroom Interventions to Improve Occupational Performance

10/31 Halloween

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

PURCHASING NEWS

1) Name Changes/Change of Ownership:

- AAIS now National Career Academy Coalition, Inc dba American Alliance for Innovative Systems
- AC Disposal Services Inc, dba AC Fleet Solutions

2) New Contract Awards:

RFP	Awardee	Contract Number
RFP 2027-02 Professional Development and Specialized Training for Public Agencies	Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc. Capturing Kids' Hearts NuneX Enterprises LLC Pivotal Consulting ByYourSide Teaching Services, LLC VTac LLC. Plan Forward, LLC ASCEND ADVANCE INC WeConnect Bilingual Speech Therapy LLC ITSQuest, Inc. HB Construction School Specialty LLC Equity by Design Learning LLC Pacific OneSource Inc Globatech Solutions LLC lead4ward, LLC Staples Business Advantage Learners Edge LLC Kight & Associates, LLC Intentional Design Consulting Consortium On Reaching Excellence in Education, Inc. Good Measure Group LLC Lakeshore Learning Materials, LLC The Tides Center Creative Leadership Solutions	2027-02-C111-ALL 2027-02-C112-ALL 2027-02-C113-ALL 2027-02-C114-ALL 2027-02-C115-ALL 2027-02-C116-ALL 2027-02-C117-ALL 2027-02-C118-ALL 2027-02-C119-ALL 2027-02-C1110-ALL 2027-02-C1111-ALL 2027-02-C1112-ALL 2027-02-C1113-ALL 2027-02-C1114-ALL 2027-02-C1115-ALL 2027-02-C1116-ALL 2027-02-C1117-ALL 2027-02-C1118-ALL 2027-02-C1119-ALL 2027-02-C1120-ALL 2027-02-C1121-ALL 2027-02-C1122-ALL 2027-02-C1123-ALL 2027-02-C1124-ALL 2027-02-C1125-ALL
2027-03 Indoor-Outdoor Scoreboards-Marquees- Digital Signage and Related Services -Cat 1 Lot 1 Turnkey Solutions	Document Solutions E.P.N.M. Inc. Electrical Products of NM Norcon of New Mexico AK Sales & Consulting Inc.	2027-03-C111-ALL 2027-03-C112-ALL 2027-03-C113-ALL 2027-03-C114-ALL
2027-03 Scoreboards- Marquees-Digital Signage and Related Services -Cat 2 Lot 1 Product Only	Norcon of New Mexico Document Solutions AK Sales & Consulting Inc. E.P.N.M. Inc. Electrical Products of NM	2027-03-C211-ALL 2027-03-C212-ALL 2027-03-C213-ALL 2027-03-C214-ALL
2027-04 Solar Power Consulting, Design,	Border Energy Group Corporation Los Ebanistas, Inc. Positive Energy Solar	2027-04-C111-ALL 2027-04-C112-ALL 2027-04-C113-ALL

Engineering, Installation and Related	Everguard Roofing LLC Miller Engineers, Inc.	2027-04-C114-ALL 2027-04-C115-ALL
2026-02 Mechanical - Electrical - Plumbing	Lectra Tech Lectra Tech Metal-Tech Metal-Tech	2026-02-G2150-35 2026-02-R2255-35 2026-02-R1238-ALL 2026-02-R3237-ALL
2025-29 Career Technical Education (CTE)	C-Tech Associates Inc.	2025-29-C1112-ALL
2026-06 JOC Roofing	Coryell Roofing and Construction Inc	2026-05-R1233-ALL

3) Current & Upcoming Solicitations:

RFP #	RFP Description	Release	Due	Award
2027-15	<i>Integrated Payment, POS, and Management Systems and Related for Food, Special Events, Etc.</i>	9/18/26	10/16/26	11/3/26
2027i-03	<i>Comprehensive Financial, Planning, Economic Development Services and Related for Public Sector Agencies</i>	10/9/26	10/30/26	11/17/26

ORDER CORNER

Make Sure Your Quote Has the Details You Need

A complete, detailed quote helps make your CES purchase easier and keeps the compliance review moving smoothly.

When requesting a quote from a CES Procurement Partner, look for an itemized breakdown of all charges rather than a lump-sum price. Itemized pricing allows both you and CES to verify contract pricing and compliance— and as a CES member, you have the right to request this level of detail.

At a minimum, your quote should include quantity, part number, description, unit of measure or packaging, list price, CES price, and extended or final price. Also, make sure all applicable state and local

taxes are included so that you can accurately encumber the funds needed for your purchase.

One item you should not see as a separate charge is the CES Contract Administrative Fee (CAF). The vendor pays the CAF directly to CES; it is not a separate fee charged to the member.

Finally, when you receive your quote, it is helpful to ask the vendor whether its current pricing pages have been provided to CES for the Bluebook. Keeping this information current helps both CES and the member complete the compliance review efficiently.

A few quick checks when you receive your quote can help prevent questions, revisions, and delays later in the purchasing process.

Additional Business News

CES' Regional meetings will end on September 30th. Thank you to all who attended. We hope you found them informative. If you have any suggested topics for next year's meetings, please forward them to katie@ces.org.

Member credits, based upon FY2026 purchases, are being emailed over the next few days.

Remember that Gross Receipts taxes apply to the total cost of all services, and for construction, both goods and services are taxable.

CES' 41st annual Facilities Managers Workshop will be held October 12th-14th. The link to register is in the upper left-corner of our website (www.ces.org).

Important Reminder: Members should identify and select the appropriate CES contract to be leveraged. The selection should be based on the **members' choice**, not the vendors.

CONSTRUCTION CORNER

Know Your JOC Quote Formats

The right quote format helps keep your project moving!

When requesting a quote from a CES construction or trades vendor under a Job Order Contract (JOC), make sure the quote is provided in the format required by the applicable contract:

- **Gordian-based contracts** must use the approved Gordian quote format.
- **RS Means-based contracts** must use the approved RS Means quote format.

Catching this early can prevent unnecessary delays and help your procurement move smoothly through the review process.

Please note: Gordian is sometimes referred to as "EZIQ" and is a procurement method receiving strong project support from Gordian.

RS Means is sometimes referred to as "JOC Core" and receives no project support from Gordian. CES Construction Analysts will review the quote for contract compliance, but scope of work review relies upon the member.

A quick format check up front can save valuable time later!

The examples shown here illustrate what you should expect to receive from your CES vendor.

If a vendor provides a quote on company letterhead or in another format, simply ask the vendor to resubmit it using the appropriate contract-required format.

The image displays two sample quote forms side-by-side. The left form is titled 'SAMPLE GORDIAN QUOTE' and features the Gordian logo. It includes a 'Job Order Contract' section with fields for 'Price Proposal Summary', 'Date', 'Job Order Number', 'Job Order Title', 'Proposed Price', and 'Proposed Total'. Below this is a table with columns for 'Category', 'Description', 'Quantity', 'Unit', and 'Price'. The right form is titled 'SAMPLE JOC-CORE (RS MEANS) QUOTE' and features the RS Means logo. It includes a 'Job Order Contract' section with fields for 'Price Proposal Summary', 'Date', 'Job Order Number', 'Job Order Title', 'Proposed Price', and 'Proposed Total'. Below this is a table with columns for 'Category', 'Description', 'Quantity', 'Unit', and 'Price'.



Beyond the Label *Practical insights for understanding students, supporting families, and strengthening schools*

By Neily Snook, PhD, NBCT
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Families First: Building Trust Before the Meeting

*Simple communication practices that help
families feel valued, respected, and heard.*

In special education, some of the most important work happens before an IEP meeting ever begins.

As special educators, case managers, related service providers, and administrators, we spend a lot of time focused on timelines, paperwork, progress monitoring, and compliance requirements. Those responsibilities matter. But the relationships we build with families often determine how successful those systems and supports will be.

Families of students with disabilities are navigating a lot. They are balancing

school, home, appointments, services, and their hopes for their child's future. When communication from school is limited to concerns, evaluations, or required meetings, it can be difficult to build trust. When families hear from us consistently and positively, partnerships become much stronger.

One of the simplest things we can do is communicate before we need something. A quick phone call to share a success. A short email celebrating progress. A note letting a parent know their child helped a classmate or demonstrated persistence during a difficult task. These small moments send a powerful message: *We see your child, and we value them.*

Over time, those positive interactions build trust that can make future conversations easier, especially when challenges arise.

There are also a few simple practices that help families feel respected and included as members of the educational team:

- Start conversations with strengths before discussing concerns.
- Ask families what they would like the team to know about their child.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Use phrases such as "What I hear you saying is..." to ensure understanding.
- Follow up after meetings with a brief summary and an invitation for questions.
- Reach out occasionally when there is no problem to solve.

None of these strategies require extra programs, additional funding, or extensive training. They simply require intentionality.

One lesson I have learned throughout my career is that families want many of the same things educators want. They want their child to be safe, successful, understood, and supported. Even when disagreements occur, those shared goals often remain the same.

When concerns arise, it can also be helpful to remember that strong emotions are often rooted in deep care for a child. A parent who asks difficult questions or advocates passionately is usually communicating how important their child is to them. Taking time to listen, acknowledge concerns, and seek understanding can help keep conversations productive and focused on solutions.

Strong partnerships are not built during a single IEP meeting. They are built through consistent communication, mutual respect, and a willingness to listen long before challenges arise.

The strongest family-school relationships often begin with something simple: a conversation that lets families know they are valued, respected, and heard.



This month's question is one I hear in almost every building I visit, usually in the hallway after a staff meeting. Let's talk about it.

Reflection Question

What is one small step you could take to help a family feel more connected to your classroom, team, or school?

About the Author

Dr. Neily Snook is an Assistant Professor of Special and Gifted Education at New Mexico Highlands University and an Educational Consultant with Cooperative Educational Services. With more than 29 years of experience in education, she has served as a classroom teacher, gifted specialist, district coordinator, and university instructor. Her work focuses on family-school partnerships, social-emotional development, gifted and twice-exceptional learners, and creating educational environments where all students can thrive.

Dear Ms. M,

I teach seventh-grade language arts, and I have a student I'll call "Violet." Her test scores put her in the top two percent, and she's had a GIEP since third grade. She's funny, she reads constantly, and in class discussions she makes connections the rest of us miss. But she hardly turns anything in. When she does, it's rushed or half done. She's failing my class. Her

parents are frustrated, I'm frustrated, and when I ask her what's going on, she shrugs and says, "It's pointless." Everyone keeps telling her she's too smart for this. What am I missing?

— *Stumped in the Staff Lounge*

Dear Stumped,

I love that you asked what *you're* missing. A lot of teachers in your spot would have written to me asking what's wrong with the kid, so Violet is lucky to have you.

What you're seeing has a name: gifted underachievement. It's a lot more common than people think, and it's rarely about laziness. When a bright kid stops working, there's usually a reason underneath, and she may not be able to put it into words yet.

Listen to what she's telling you. Students that keep putting in the effort when they believe they can do the work, when they see a point to it, and when they feel the adults around them are on their side. Violet already told you which one is missing. She said it's pointless. I'd start there.

Take a look at the work itself. Many of our gifted kids spend a big part of the day on things they learned years ago. Some of them will do it anyway because they're compliant. Others quietly stop. Before your next unit, try giving a pre-assessment. If Violet shows she already knows the material, compact it and use that time for something with more depth, like an independent study, a debate, or a book she picks herself. I've watched this one change alone turn a kid around.

Rule out a learning need. Sometimes "too smart for this" is hiding a real struggle. Twice-exceptional (2e) students can reason at a very high level and still have a learning disability, ADHD, or trouble with executive functioning, and their ability can mask it for years. If Violet can talk about a novel beautifully but can't get two paragraphs on paper, she may be stuck rather than refusing. Watch how she gets started on assignments and how she organizes her writing. If something looks off, take it to your SAT/MLSS team and her GIEP team now. Don't wait until she's failed another class.

Consider perfectionism. For some kids, not turning something in feels safer than turning it in and having it be less than perfect. If being "the smart one" is a big part of who she is, then trying hard and struggling can feel like a threat to that. Praise the effort and the strategies she uses, not how smart she is. And give her work that's hard for everyone, so struggling feels normal instead of embarrassing.

Talk to her. Pull her aside when it's quiet and ask when school last felt worth it to her. Then just listen. You'll probably learn more from that conversation than from any behavior plan.

One more thing: pull out her GIEP and read it again. Were those goals written for the student sitting in your room now, or for the third grader who first qualified? If they don't fit anymore, ask for a meeting and bring her parents in as partners. Tell them what you're seeing and what you've tried, and ask what gets her excited at home. Parents often know something we don't.

This won't turn around in a week, Stumped. But you're already asking the right questions, and that's usually where it starts.

Warmly,
Ms. M

Have a question for Ms. M? Gifted policy puzzle, classroom dilemma, or parent-teacher friction you'd like an outside perspective on? Send it in — this column runs on your questions.

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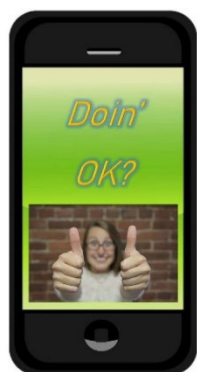
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Doin' OK? Mental Health Help

*By Gina Langley, PhD
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JOY Discipline



**Justice
Avoidance
Levit Y**

Welcome to the final quarter in The Year of 2026 (already)! I hope you're doing well with your first quarter in School Year 2026/27. But is the "honeymoon" of a new school year wearing away, such that you're facing frustrations with some of your students' behaviors?

Let's take a creative look at what may be going on, and what might help the situation.

*And, please, let this be a **collaborative** creative look – if you'd kindly share your thoughts and ideas to my e-mail address, above, I'll include them in next month's newsletter.*

So, what's at the root of today's misbehaviors? **What's feeding (reinforcing) it?**

Consider your young miscreant – recognizing the roots of “**miscreant**” as “**wrong belief**.”

Are their behaviors subconsciously rooted in hopes or efforts to **fix** their woes this way?

Are they seeking **Justice** for some perceived unfairness in their world?

Or trying to **avOid** some worse misery with this misguided behavioral dance?

Trying to break boredom/frustration with their errant attempts at **levitY**?

JUSTICE: What is their perceived injustice?

Quite likely, it may be something going on at home or in their personal lives, which is, of course, far more important to them, right now, than anything at school is. You know how that sense of injustice or worry can intrude on ability to stay focused on other things, right?

Is there a chance, maybe, of letting this person talk through their concerns – just enough to feel like someone hears them and understands their difficulty? Can we maybe **bargain**, to exchange undivided listening time later on, with a preferred

adult, for focused learning time right now? Can we promise to consider whatever they might write or draw for us, or to pass it on to someone who might be able to process their concerns more personally? OR, if the injustice is something going on at school, would it help to bring some of the parties together to discuss alternatives, in exchange for work effort when needed? Or maybe the child feels it's not right to be at school when their mind is silently screaming that they need to be elsewhere. Can a realistic, mindful discussion help them see that it's time for work now, and their other concern will be there in its due time, or perhaps **improve**, given time?

AVOIDANCE: What are they trying to avoid, and why?

Sure, we'd usually rather have fun (be joyous) than have to do work that's expected of us! We have to learn to get through the work expectations, so we can proceed to the fun parts. Does your miscreant just need some time, mindful **teaching**, and **practice**, to learn this?

We need to ensure that there *are* fun parts that *do* indeed reward their work efforts.

Or, maybe they are **unable**, or find discomfort, in working to the level of our expectations?

We may need to assess abilities or see if there is a foundational gap needing to be filled.

Could it be something in the **setting** that's aversive or difficult for them to “work” around?

Maybe **they** can suggest a change in the setting that might help them focus better.

It usually helps to get their input – at least, to let them know that their voice matters.

LEVITY: Why are *You* not amused?!?

Is the misbehavior in question raising laughter, smiles, or interest anywhere in the setting?

That may be all the reward your young miscreant seeks. It sure got your interest, right?

Maybe we need to focus hard on consistently rewarding (with smiles, notes, tokens, texts to mom, or other signs of our *own* interest) another behavior. Try letting the youngster know what you're looking for, so that they're aware and can give their own input, perhaps on what might be rewarding to them, or why the desired behavior is difficult at this time.

Maybe they'd do better if they had an allotted time or setting when they are allowed to be "onstage" or to blow off steam or to play or share a desired peer's time and presence. Maybe they just need some Unwind-Time to get recentered – two minutes of head-down, eyes-closed might be sufficient. Maybe build in some Story Time or an Exercise Break during times that are typically disruptive. Maybe a calm explanation of why a behavior feels disruptive is all that's needed. Don't forget: a smile goes miles in affecting change!

That's just a start at our creative look into some of the behaviors that may disrupt our mental health, or the peace within our settings, these days. We'll continue next month.

But I'm serious in wanting this to be a collaborative effort.

So, I'm asking each of you to please consider sharing some Trick or Treat time!

What tricks have you used to help improve the mental health of yourself or your students?

What tricks do your students – or coworkers (!) – use to disrupt your own mental health?

What tricks can you use to keep yourself in a place of relative joy and appreciation?

Have you discovered any tricks that can help alleviate some specific misbehaviors?

What treats do you offer, to help your students – or yourself – stay motivated or focused?

What treats might you consider, to help reward behaviors you'd like to see increased?

How do you determine what actions or things feel like a "treat" to difficult students?

What tricks do you need to "keep in your tool bag" that can be pulled out whenever needed?

What treats can you add to your own resource list that might provide needed motivation to yourself, your kids, your coworkers, your significant others?

Do you need to find time this month to prepare some tricks or treats to have at-the-ready?

What superpower would you like to be empowered with during this Trick-or-Treat time?

Any ideas on how to take a step toward that kind of empowerment?

I would be sincerely grateful for any input you share that may help in the development of next month's "Doin' OK?" newsletter. Whether you're new at this or have been doing it for decades, you do indeed have tricks or treats that others

have forgotten, have yet to consider, or that might spark some great brainstorming. Please share to: glangley@ces.org

Thank you.

Meanwhile, find some joy in this Trick-or-Treat month, count your blessings, and keep on Doin' OK!

Reflections:

What Leadership Asks Us To Carry

Leadership courses teach what fits neatly into a syllabus: budgets, strategy, data, rules of order, change, and the navigation of difficult conversations. All of it matters, though none enough on its very own.

Education has always known that understanding theory is not the same as living it in its implementation. Dewey, Marzano, Montessori, Hattie - they give practice a clear direction and language meant to illuminate the way. The harder part is carrying those ideas into the beautifully messy rambunctious reality of classrooms, teams, and within our schools.

Students, research, technology, and communities keep changing. People enter the profession with experiences and expectations unlike those from twenty years or even a short decade ago. While technology routinely outpaces our best prepped plans and processes, change seems to knock on the door *daily*. As such, preparation - whether leadership or teaching - must meet those demands and challenges head on.

New Mexico reported 737 teacher vacancies for the 2025-26 school year while deeply investing in new routes into the profession. Whether through mapped alternative licensure programs supporting vacancies and applied training, paid residencies, and paid student teaching, Educator Fellows, or learn and earn models, all pathways recognize a basic shared truth: there is no single best door into education.

There is no single way to become a leader, either. Some arrive through traditional preparation, some through the classroom, and others after years in another field joining as veteran experts with exponential field experience. Some step forward because they saw what was not working or how working was impacting children and could not bear to leave it alone any longer. Education needs that range of experience - and the humility of each one of us to learn from those spaces.

Strong practice develops through a continuous cycle of study, application, assessment, and refinement. Frameworks

should evolve with what we learn rather than simplify the people and situations they are meant to serve – simplicity is the rarest indulgence and most foreign ally to our systems. Teachers juggle this every day as their 28 seven-year-old students reshape even the best-laid plan in real time at their own cadence. Leadership requires the same ability to adjust without losing sight of the purpose, in the same stead, adjusting perpetually.

Expanding pathways into education raises the expectations for that preparation. New Mexico needs educators and leaders who can adapt, set clear standards, respond when performance falls short and act, and distinguish between support that builds capacity and support that delays accountability entrenching our systems.

That work is rarely tidy, often lonely. Expectations can strain relationships. Boundaries can be read as distance. A decision made for the health of a team may disappoint the person most affected by it.

None of that removes the responsibility to communicate, listen, repair harm, or make thoughtful decisions under pressure as leaders do daily. It does place a limit on what leadership can carry, however, and the emotional toll of that also strains our systems. Accountability is shared, and progress cannot be produced by one person on another's behalf. Discernment matters most when protecting the mission requires changing the systems it impacts and which are all around it.

As New Mexico expands routes into, through, and within education, the systems around those routes must help

people enter, grow, and remain in the profession. That requires sound preparation, useful support, clear accountability, and working conditions that do not treat exhaustion as proof of commitment. The work can matter deeply without becoming a person's entire identity. Educators and leaders still need ordinary days, relationships, laughter, and interests untouched by their strategic plans. Without that separation, every criticism feels personal and every organizational problem becomes difficult to set down.

Leadership is not mastery of a fixed set of methods. It is the discipline of continuing to learn, to question what we have inherited, and to recognize when an old answer no longer fits a new problem. It is also knowing what is ours to carry.

We carry the mission. We hold the identity. We borrow passion and strength when needed. We carry the responsibility to be clear, to listen, to act, to repair, and to make difficult decisions when they are ours to make, to give credit and take hold. We cannot carry another person's effort, every disappointment, or every problem in our shared systems - we cannot always improve the underperformer, especially if they won't help.

Perhaps that is the deeper work of leadership: knowing what to protect and what to change; when to hold a standard and when to reconsider the whole standard itself; when to stay, when to adapt, and when to let something go. Methods matter. Experience matters. Research matters. But leadership lives in the discernment among those.

About the Author

Alexis Esslinger, LEAP's Program Director, has lead Cohorts 5-8 and supports twelve instructional coaches. She holds degrees in Elementary Education, Special Education, and School Leadership. For details on LEAP at Cooperative Educational Services, visit www.cesleap.org or contact alexis@ces.org. Members at CES in

Albuquerque have access to LEAP's fast-track licensure program and are encouraged to participate, sending candidates from their communities. LEAP welcomes and supports participants from CES partners and affiliates far and wide, offering personalized coaching and dual-licensure options in general and special education in the 11-month cohort beginning each July.

“Teaching Tips ...for the Classroom”: Supporting Students with Section 504 Plans

by Barbara Piper, M.A.

The new school year has begun, or maybe it happens in the middle of the school year, and you find out you have a student in your classroom with a Section 504 plan. You've heard of Section 504 (hopefully!!) but have not dealt with any students who have Section 504 plans. Being a responsible educator, you know you need to be accountable. Yet, in reality, this is all new to you. So, the question is, “What DO I do ??” The answer to that question is the focus of this month's Teaching Tips article.

Here are some guidelines:

► **Know what Section 504 is.**

Generally, schools provide professional development to train staff on what Section 504 is. If you are not familiar with Section 504, here is a definition to get you

started: Section 504 is a federal civil rights, anti-discrimination law that prohibits any entity that receives federal financial assistance from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Students are considered eligible for Section 504 accommodations if they meet the Section 504 definition of an individual with a disability (i.e. an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; has a record of such impairment; and or is regarded as having such impairment.) It is important to understand that the definition of disability under Section 504 is not the same as the definition of disability under the other federal law specifically for Special Education (i.e., Individuals with Disability Education Act /

IDEA). The specifics of Section 504 legality would be provided in professional development, or you can attend my training through the free TAP / CES ZOOM trainings.

- ▶ **Know your school's process for identifying students who qualify for Section 504 plans.** Typically, the procedure for referring and qualifying students is part of the school's Section 504 professional development. Know who to contact at your school site when you have questions about anything to do with Section 504.
- ▶ **Read the student's Section 504 plan.** The plan includes the accommodations meant to support the student in receiving a comparable education to the non-disabled students. IF you do not understand something about the accommodations or other parts of the plan, ask!! The 504 Committee should be able to clarify for you. Section 504 plans provide accommodations to be made in the school setting / classroom, so the student can have equal access to everything non-disabled students experience. Section 504 does NOT mean you have to teach a totally separate curriculum to the student. Special Education services are what provide specially designed instruction which might include a different reading program for example than what is provided in your classroom.
- ▶ **Implement the accommodations provided in the Section 504 plan.** As I state in my training on accommodations, "*Implementation is what makes it or breaks it!*"

If you are not sure what is meant or how to implement a specific accommodation in the plan, ask for assistance or clarification on HOW the accommodation is meant to be implemented. Hopefully, the Section 504 Committee has written the accommodations in very specific language so there is no issue with interpretation of how to implement the accommodation.

- ▶ **Keep track of student's performance.** Is the student making progress, being able to experience what his/her non-disabled peers are, access the school environment, etc.?
- ▶ **Contact the 504 Committee if things change (for better or worse).** Section 504 plans should be reviewed periodically to determine if the student still qualifies under Section 504, if the accommodations are still effective or need to be changed, or if the student no longer needs a 504 plan.

REMEMBER...Section 504 is the law!! A section 504 plan must be followed and accommodations implemented. The plan can be revised as necessary, but not implementing the plan is against the law and could initiate a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Let Section 504 Plans be "your friend" in supporting your teaching and the education of all students to acquire a free and public education.

Resources:

LRP Publications: 2018 /2019/ 2021 including "*Quick Tips for Sound Section 504 Programs*"

Written by Barbara Piper, M.A.: Barbara Piper has an extensive career in education starting with a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the University of Maine, Master's Degree in Special Education from the University of New Mexico and then teaching both general education and special education in Maine, New York, and New Mexico. During her years as a teacher, she also taught as adjunct faculty for University of New Mexico, NM Highlands University, and most recently for the Santa Fe Community College Alternative Licensure Program.

Currently, Barbara is a consultant / trainer for TAP presenting both virtual and on-site professional development. With so MANY years in education and still a deep concern for what occurs for students and teachers in schools today, she hopes you will benefit from the information she will share about teaching and learning with a focus on instructional strategies in "Teaching Tips...for the Classroom" articles.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT CES

Current CES Ancillary Openings can be seen by accessing this QR code:



CES regularly employs both full-time and part-time for placement around New Mexico:

- Adaptive Physical Educators
- Ancillary Teachers
- Audiologists
- Behavior Management Specialists
- Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants
- Certified Orientation Mobility Specialists
- Diagnosticians
- Diagnosticians - Bilingual
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Recreational Therapists
- Registered Nurses
- Rehabilitation Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Speech/Language Pathologists
- Teachers for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Teachers for the Visually Impaired

Other CES Openings:

- Professional Services Staff

Also watch for CES job postings on www.indeed.com.

NEW CES STAFF



Victoria Watson recently joined CES as a Purchasing Specialist. She brings a background in financial services and customer service and is excited to bring her experience to the CES team. Victoria is currently pursuing her degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Entrepreneurship. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her son, traveling, staying active, and making memories with family and friends. She is excited about this new chapter and looks forward to growing professionally and contributing to CES.

BULLETIN BOARD



Simplify procurement.
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FACILITY MANAGERS WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 12-14, 2026

Albuquerque, New Mexico

REGISTER NOW!

Registration is open

2026 CES Facility Managers Workshop

Connect with facility professionals from across New Mexico.

WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

Register online:

ip.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/34asn2q/lp/a1015fdf-624d-4746-b75c-1c3d7fc7abbd

SPECIAL HOTEL RATE - EMBASSY SUITES

Call 1-800-EMBASSY and provide Group Code: 91E

HOTEL DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Book by midnight to receive the discounted group rate.



Fall 2026 Leadership Series

All sessions are virtual 3:30-5:30PM- All leaders, teachers, and ancillary staff are welcome.
Please note that topics and presenters may change.

August 27, 2026

Presenter: Scott Elder

Topic: Artificial Intelligence

[Register Here](#)

September 10, 2026

Presenter: Jed Duggan
Topic: Using MLSS to support Your District Education Plan

[Register Here](#)

September 24, 2026

Presenter: Superintendent Cindy Sims

Topic: HR Practices

[Register Here](#)

October 8, 2026

Presenter: Michele McWilliams

Topic: Coach Leadership Mindset

[Register Here](#)

October 22, 2026-

Presenter: Christine Prescott-Rio Rancho

Topic: From Vibe to Vision: Linking School Culture and PLCs

[Register Here](#)

November 5, 2026

Presenter: Lorie Gerkey, Attorney at Law

Topic: Principal's Role in Bridging General and Special Education

[Register Here](#)

November 19, 2026

Presenter: Tony Ortiz, Attorney at Law

Topic: Ethics

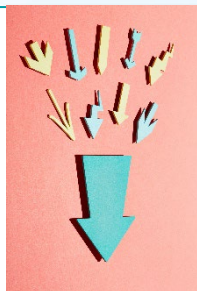
[Register Here](#)

December 3, 2026-

Presenter: Superintendent Elisa Begueria

Topic: Multilingual Learners

[Register Here](#)





LEDR Session 4

With Michele McWilliams

TOPIC:
Coach Leadership Mindset



October 8, 2026
3:30PM - 5:30PM

REGISTER NOW





LEDR SESSION 5

With Christine Prescott

TOPIC:
FROM VIBE TO VISION:
LINKING SCHOOL CULTURE
AND PLCS



October 22, 2026

3:30PM – 5:30PM

REGISTER HERE!

CES+
LEDR



Instructional Coaching Conference Level 2

Facilitator Coach:

Michele McWilliams, M.Ed., PCC, ACTC

OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- Build Trust and Safety with clients including difficult clients
- Analyze the International Coaching Federation coaching competencies
- Continue to enhance and practice powerful coaching skills
- Prepare for coaching sessions that result in teachers changing their practices for better student outcomes.
- Continue to move teachers to stronger practices for student outcomes

Nov. 5 & 6, 2026

To be held at CES





Special Education Essentials For Leaders

All sessions are virtual 3:30-5:30PM- All leaders, teachers and ancillary staff are welcome.
Please note that topics and presenters may change.

Join Cindy Soo Hoo for in-depth virtual collaborative sessions on Essential Special Education topics.
Register now for these comprehensive professional development opportunities designed specifically for education leaders.

January 12, 2027

- Eligibility Determination Team (EDT) requirements and process
- Definition of Special Education and Related Services
- Differences between Accommodations and Modifications

How to Effectively Conduct an EDT Meeting

[Register Here](#)



February 9, 2027

- 10-Day Rule
- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Change of Placement
- Pattern of Removals
- Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)
- Special Circumstances

How to Effectively Conduct an MDR Meeting

[Register Here](#)



March 9, 2027

- Parents' rights to an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)
- Obligations for addressing bullying
- Extended School Year (ESY) services
- Private School reimbursement requests
- Transition needs and goals
- Restraint and Seclusion guidelines
- Obligations for addressing chronic absenteeism

How to Effectively Conduct an IEE Meeting

[Register Here](#)

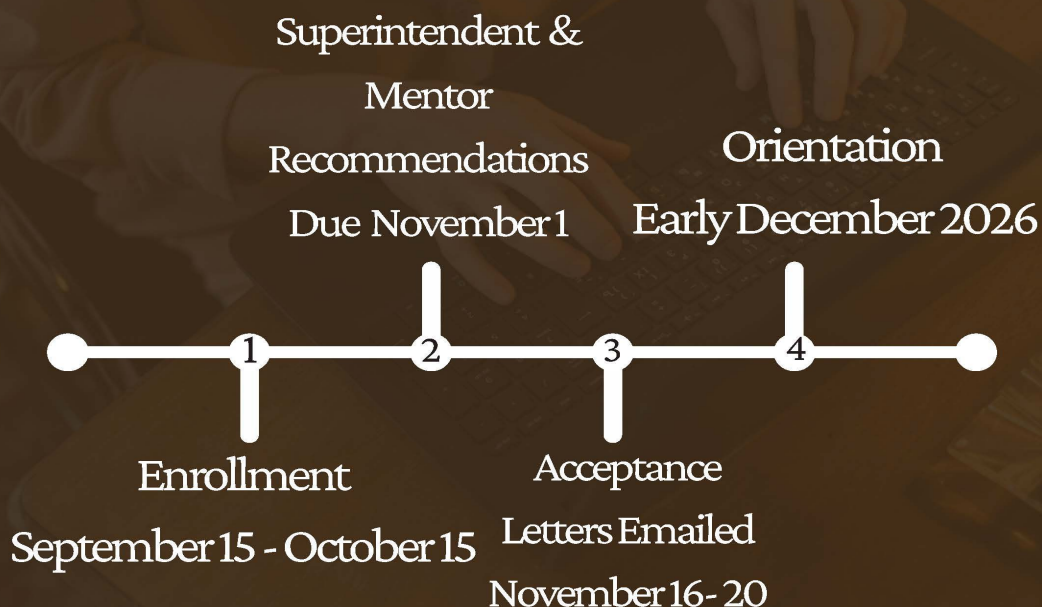


Questions? Reach out to
Leadershipdevelopment@ces.org



NEW Enrollment Timeline for **Spring 2027** - CES ALD Program

CES ALD (Administrative Leadership Development) Program has announced its enrollment timeline for **Spring 2027**:



Learn more by visiting our website at:
www.ces.org/leadership-development

2026 Annual Convention

December 3-5, 2026
Albuquerque, NM



The New Mexico School Boards Association will conduct its 2026 Annual Convention December 3-5, 2026. The Convention begins Thursday afternoon, December 3 with Newly Elected Training as well as Veteran Board Member Training and our Board of Directors Meeting. On Friday morning, December 4 attendees will listen to several informative keynote speakers; attend the Annual Recognition Awards Luncheon and participate in the Annual Delegate Assembly to adopt legislative priorities and elect state officers. The Convention will continue on Saturday, December 5 with several breakout sessions on important school governance and public education topics.

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