Simplify procurement.
Maximize results.

CES MEMBER NEWSLETTER

November 2026



- Feature Article
- Calendar of Events
- Purchasing News
- Order Corner
- Educational Articles
- CES Job Opportunities
- Bulletin Board
- CES Contacts

CES Procurement: Making Purchasing Easier, Smarter, and More Efficient

Helping Our Members Save Time, Reduce Costs, and Purchase with Confidence

Since 1979, Cooperative Educational Services (CES) has helped public agencies throughout New Mexico and beyond simplify purchasing while maintaining compliance with applicable procurement requirements. Through cooperative purchasing, CES provides members with access to competitively solicited contracts for a broad range of products, equipment, construction, and professional services — saving members the time, expense, and administrative burden of conducting their own solicitations.

Today, CES offers access to approximately **2,200 contracts with 760 contracted vendors**, serving more than **650 member organizations nationwide**. From everyday office supplies and technology to vehicles, facility improvements, and major construction projects, CES helps members find purchasing solutions that meet their needs.

But CES offers much more than contracts. Our Procurement Department works closely with members and vendors to help ensure purchases are properly documented, contract pricing and requirements are followed, and procurement processes run smoothly. Whether assisting with a purchasing question, reviewing a quote, or helping navigate the CES Bluebook, our team is committed to providing responsive, knowledgeable, and personalized service.

And remember: CES membership is free! Our goal is to make cooperative purchasing a convenient, reliable, and cost-effective resource for every member.

Meet Your CES Procurement Team

One of CES's greatest strengths is the experience and dedication of the people working behind the scenes to support our members. Our Procurement Department brings together professionals with extensive backgrounds in public purchasing, finance, contract management, construction, and educational administration. Their

combined knowledge helps members navigate purchasing requirements, identify appropriate contract solutions, and complete purchases with confidence.

We'd like to introduce the professionals who make that possible.

Gustavo Rossell – Director of Procurement

Gustavo leads the CES Procurement Department, bringing a wealth of experience in both public- and private-sector purchasing. During his eight years with CES, he has helped guide the department's commitment to providing effective, compliant procurement services. His professional background includes 15 years in private-sector procurement involving telecommunications, exports, and domestic purchasing, along with 18 years in public-sector procurement with organizations including Albuquerque Public Schools, the University of New Mexico, and CES. A Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) since 2012, Gustavo holds certification through the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) and the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC). His broad experience provides valuable leadership in supporting CES members and maintaining the integrity of cooperative purchasing.

Angela Valadez – Administrative Assistant

Angela plays an important role in keeping the Procurement Department's daily operations running smoothly. She joined CES two years ago, bringing five years of experience with the City of Rio Communities, where she served as a Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) and Accounting Specialist. Her responsibilities included processing purchase orders and grant reimbursements, providing her with practical insight into the purchasing and financial procedures that public agencies manage every day. Her administrative and procurement background makes her a valuable resource in supporting both the department's staff and the members they serve.

Joe Valencia – Procurement Specialist

Joe brings an extraordinary depth of experience to CES, with 41 years in public-sector finance and procurement. His career includes 26 years in finance and 15 years in procurement, all 15 of those procurement years having been spent with CES. This combination of financial expertise, purchasing knowledge, and familiarity with CES operations makes Joe an especially valuable member of the team. His extensive experience helps him understand the challenges faced by public agencies and the importance of careful, compliant purchasing practices. Members benefit from the perspective and practical knowledge he has developed throughout his distinguished career.

Lisa Romo – Procurement Specialist

With nine years of service at CES, Lisa brings a strong understanding of cooperative purchasing processes and the importance of accurate contract administration. Her professional background includes three years as a Contract Specialist, and she holds two professional certifications: Procurement Operations Specialist and Procurement Operations Professional. These credentials reflect her specialized knowledge of procurement procedures and operations. Lisa's experience and attention to purchasing requirements

contribute to the department's ability to provide members with dependable assistance in navigating contracts and procurement documentation.

Mohamed Al-Hussaini – Procurement Specialist

Mohamed brings more than 20 years of combined public- and private-sector experience to his position at CES. His professional background includes key roles with Amazon, Chevron, and Santa Fe County, where he developed expertise in procurement, contract administration, vendor management, and leadership. Since joining CES two years ago, Mohamed has applied that diverse experience to managing competitive solicitations and supporting cooperative purchasing activities. His understanding of both the vendor and public-agency perspectives helps him contribute to purchasing solutions that emphasize value, efficiency, and compliance.

John King – Construction Analyst

John brings a particularly valuable perspective to the CES Construction team through his extensive experience as a licensed general contractor and educational facilities administrator. His professional background includes 17 years as a licensed general contractor, seven years as a Regional Manager with the New Mexico Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA), and ten years as Director of Operations for Clovis Municipal Schools. He also spent a year as an Account Manager with Gordian, gaining additional experience with construction procurement and project management systems. During his three years with CES, John has drawn upon this diverse background to support the department's construction-related purchasing activities. His understanding of construction from the contractor, school district, and facilities oversight perspectives is a significant asset to members planning facility improvements and construction projects.

Thad Phipps – Construction Analyst

Thad joined CES two years ago following a successful career in public education administration, including eight years as Assistant Superintendent of Operations for Artesia Public Schools. In that position, his responsibilities included construction procurement, facility design, district project management, and coordination with maintenance and technology departments. His work required close collaboration with architects, engineers, contractors, and district personnel to deliver projects that served the needs of students and the community. This firsthand experience gives Thad a strong understanding of the challenges school districts and other public agencies face when planning and implementing construction projects. At CES, he brings that practical, member-side perspective to helping agencies navigate construction procurement processes.

We're Here to Help!

The CES Procurement Department represents far more than a collection of purchasing specialists and construction professionals. It is a team of experienced individuals who understand the responsibilities, challenges, and expectations facing public agencies. Their collective experience spans everything from routine purchasing and contract administration to complex construction projects and major public-sector procurement initiatives.

Whether you're purchasing everyday supplies, evaluating equipment options, planning a construction project, or simply seeking guidance about the appropriate purchasing process, CES is here to help.

We encourage you to get acquainted with our Procurement Department, take advantage of its considerable expertise, and reach out whenever you have questions. Our goal is to make every CES purchasing experience as straightforward, efficient, and successful as possible.

At CES, cooperative purchasing isn't just about contracts—it's about knowledgeable people working together to help our members get the job done right.

Procurement Department Contact:
Angela Valadez
avaladez@ces.org
505-344-5470 x116

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

11/1 Daylight Savings Time ends
11/3 Election Day
11/3-6 NMML: NM Law Enforcement Conference
11/4 TAP: Supporting Students Mental Health Students with an Emotional Disturbance
11/5 TAP: Early Childhood Unpacking Challenging Behavior Series 1
11/5 LEDR: It Starts In General Education: The Principal's Role in Bridging General and Special Education
11/5-6 LEDR: Instructional Coaching Conference Level 1
11/10 US Marine Corps birthday
11/10 TAP: Leading the Way Successful IEP Facilitation from Start to Finish
11/11 Veterans' Day
11/11 TAP: One Time Different Needs Differentiation Gifted Services
11/12 TAP: Autism Toolbox Series Visual Supports Across ALL Setings for Students with ASD and Other Needs
11/16-20 NMDFA: NM Infrastructure Conference
11/17 TAP: Inclusion Series Part 1 Inclusive Practices for Students with Special Needs
11/18 TAP: Your Guide to Dyslexia Everything You Need to Know Part 2
11/19 LEDR: Ethics
11/26 Thanksgiving Day {CES Closed Thursday and Friday}
11/27 President's Day observed in NM

November						
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					

PURCHASING NEWS

1) Current & Upcoming Solicitations:

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

ORDER CORNER

Important Reminder
Protect Your Organization:
Be Alert to "Bait and Switch" Vendor Practices

CES is committed to helping our members obtain quality products and services through competitively solicited contracts while maintaining compliance with applicable procurement requirements. An important part of that commitment is ensuring that purchases made through CES contracts follow the proper procedures.

We want to alert our members to a practice commonly known as **"Bait and Switch."** This occurs when a vendor initially promotes its products or services under the benefits and authority of a CES contract, but subsequently encourages the member to bypass CES and issue a Purchase Order directly to the vendor without submitting the required purchasing documentation through CES.

Please be aware that this practice is unacceptable and can place your organization at risk. Bypassing established CES purchasing procedures may circumvent important contract compliance and pricing reviews, potentially exposing your organization to procurement violations, unfavorable pricing, audit findings, and other unnecessary liabilities. Vendors engaging in such practices may also face serious consequences, including suspension or termination of their CES contracts.

To protect your organization and preserve the benefits of cooperative purchasing, please remember:

- **"Traditional Purchase" contracts:** Purchase Orders must be issued to CES and submitted through the CES Bluebook, along with the vendor's quote.
- **"Direct Purchase" contracts:** Purchase Orders are issued to the vendor but must still be submitted through the CES Bluebook, along with the vendor's quote.
- **"Shop Vendor Portal" and "Contact the Vendor" contracts:** These contract types are exempt from the requirement to submit Purchase Orders to CES.

If a vendor encourages you to bypass CES purchasing procedures while representing the transaction as a CES contract purchase, please contact your CES Regional Manager before proceeding. We will gladly assist you in

verifying the appropriate process and ensuring your purchase is handled correctly.

CES values the trust you place in us and remains committed to protecting your organization's purchasing integrity while making procurement as simple, efficient, and beneficial as possible.

Thank you for your continued partnership with CES. Together, we can ensure that every CES purchase delivers the value, accountability, and compliance your organization deserves.

EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES



Beyond the Label

Practical insights for understanding students supporting families and strengthening schools

By Neily Snook, PhD, NBCT
nsnook@ces.org

Rowing in the Same Direction

Helping school teams stay connected, coordinated, and focused on students when the year gets busy.

By November, the school year feels different.

The routines that seemed new in August are now familiar. The excitement of a fresh school year has settled into the daily work of teaching. Educators have made it through parent conferences, interim assessments, report cards, progress reports, **IEP** meetings, staff meetings, and countless other demands competing for their time and attention.

And now the holidays are approaching.

Students may be more distracted or excited. Schedules begin to shift. Special events appear on

calendars. Staff members are tired. Somewhere along the way, even the most positive team can begin to feel the strain.

This is also a good time to ask an important question: **Are we still rowing in the same direction?**

Just as a boat moves forward when everyone rows together, students are best supported when teachers, case managers, related service providers, and administrators work together toward the same goals.

For students receiving special education services, that shared direction matters.

An IEP Is a Team Commitment

A student's IEP may involve a special education teacher, general education teachers, educational assistants, speech-language pathologists, occupational or physical therapists, counselors, social workers, administrators, and other service providers. Each person may see the student at a different time, in a different setting, and for a different purpose.

Yet to the student, it is all one school day.

IDEA requires that the IEP be accessible to the teachers and providers responsible for implementing it and that each person understand their specific responsibilities for the student's services and supports. Related services identified by the IEP team are part of the educational program designed to help the student benefit from special education.

That means implementation cannot belong only to the case manager, special education teacher, therapist, or administrator. It takes a team.

The challenge is keeping that team connected when everyone is busy.

When the Schedule Starts Driving the Services

By this point in the year, schedules can become surprisingly powerful.

Speech is at 10:00. Intervention is at 10:30. Math starts at 10:15. The occupational therapist is only on campus on Tuesdays. There is an assembly Friday. Testing changed Wednesday's schedule. Someone is absent. Someone else is covering a class.

Before long, we can find ourselves asking, "How *do* we *fit the student's services into the schedule?*"

A better question is: **How do we make the schedule work for what this student needs?**

An **IEP** specifies the special education and related services a student is to receive, including their anticipated frequency, location, and duration. Those decisions are individualized to the student. Scheduling and

staffing realities are genuine challenges, but they should prompt teams to solve problems together rather than quietly allow services to drift.

A November Team Check

This can be an excellent time for case managers, administrators, teachers, and related service providers to have a simple check-in. It does not necessarily require another formal meeting or a new initiative. Sometimes a few intentional conversations are enough.

Consider asking:

- ***Are services happening as*** **written? Look** beyond the schedule on paper. Is the student receiving the frequency and duration of services identified in the **IEP?**
- ***Does everyone know their*** *role? General* educators, special educators, related service providers, and support staff should understand what they are responsible for providing.
- ***Where are the scheduling pressure points?*** Identify conflicts before missed services become a pattern.
- ***Are*** **we** ***communicating across settings?*** A strategy that works beautifully in speech, counseling, or the resource room becomes even more powerful when other educators know how to reinforce it.
- ***What is the student telling us?*** Progress data matter, but so do changes in engagement, independence, behavior, confidence, and classroom participation.
- ***Who needs*** **support? Sometimes** a service delivery problem is really a communication, scheduling, staffing, or resource problem that the team can solve together.

Case Managers Cannot Row Alone

Case managers play an important role in monitoring **IEP** implementation, coordinating services, and helping team members stay connected. But coordination should not become isolation.

A case manager should not have to spend November chasing everyone down to determine whether services are occurring.

Administrators can help by protecting collaboration time and addressing scheduling barriers. General education teachers can communicate when accommodations or services are difficult to implement. Related service providers can share strategies that extend beyond therapy sessions. Special educators can help connect goals, services, accommodations, and classroom performance.

And everyone can speak up early when something is not working.

That is what teamwork looks like.

The Student Is the Reason We Keep Rowing

November fatigue is real. Schools are busy places filled with people doing demanding work. It is understandable that patience gets shorter, calendars become crowded, and a little irritability sneaks in.
But the student sitting in the middle of all those schedules does not experience an IEP as separate boxes on a service page.

They experience the adults around them.

They notice when expectations are consistent. They benefit when strategies carry from one setting to another. They make stronger connections when the adults supporting them communicate with one another. And they are more likely to receive the program their team carefully designed when everyone understands that implementation is a shared responsibility.

We do not have to row perfectly every day.

But every once in a while, especially during the busy middle of the school year, it is worth looking around the boat, checking our direction, and making sure we are still pulling together.

Because behind every schedule, service, goal, accommodation, and progress report is a child.

And every child is more than a label.

Reflection Question

What is one small step your team could take this month to make services more coordinated, communication more consistent, and support feel more connected for students?

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 30+ 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.



Gifted Kids, Mental Health, and Neurodiversity

November is a hard month in a lot of classrooms. The newness of fall has worn off first-quarter grades are in, and some of the kids who were holding it together in September just can't anymore. This month's letter is about one of those kids.

Dear Ms. M,
I teach fourth grade, and one of my gifted students, "Eli," has me worried. He's reading at a high school level and can talk about black holes for *twenty minutes. But lately he cries over small mistakes, has stomachaches most mornings, and can't get started on anything with more than two steps. He loses his work constantly. When I mentioned ADHD to a colleague, she said, "He can't have ADHD, he's too smart." His mom says he's fine at home, just "intense." I don't want to overreact, but I don't want to miss something either. Where do I even start?*
-Second-Guessing Myself

Dear Second-Guessing,

Let's start with your colleague's comment, because I hear some version of it in almost every building I walk into. Being gifted doesn't protect a child from ADHD, autism, anxiety, depression, or a learning disability. A student can be both gifted and struggling, and when that happens, we call them "twice-exceptional," or "2e." These are some of the easiest kids to miss because their strengths cover for their needs. We see the reading level and the black hole lecture and assume everything else must be fine too.

That matters here in New Mexico in a practical way: gifted is already under the special education umbrella, so Eli already has a GIEP team. That team can (and should) look at the whole child, not just the gifted part. You don't have to start from scratch to get him help. You just have to bring what you're seeing to the people who are already supposed to be looking.

Start by writing it down. You've already noticed a lot: tears over small mistakes, morning stomachaches, stalling on multi-step work, lost papers. Keep simple notes with dates and times. Is it worse before writing? On Mondays? After recess? You aren't trying to diagnose him (that's not your job, and it's not mine either), but good notes give your counselor, school psychologist, and SAT/MLSS team something real to work with. They also make the conversation with his mom go a lot more smoothly.

About "fine at home": take that seriously, but don't let it end the conversation. Some kids hold it together all day at school and fall apart in the car, and some do the opposite. Ask his mom specific questions

about mornings, sleep, and homework time. "How are mornings going?" usually gets you further than "Is everything okay?"

In the classroom, lower the stakes. For a kid who's used to being the smart one, a mistake can feel enormous. Talk out loud about your own mistakes. Grade some practice work for effort only. Give the whole class checklists for multi-step tasks and a set spot for finished work. Eli gets the structure he needs without being singled out, and I promise he won't be the only one who benefits.

Here's where I send teachers for more: SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted) has articles and webinars written for exactly this situation, and a lot of their material is free. Hoagies' Gifted Education Page has a twice-exceptional section that's worth bookmarking. NAGC has 2e resources for both teachers and families, which is handy when you need something to send home to his mom. And don't forget the people down the hall: your school counselor and school psychologist often know more about anxiety and executive functioning than they get asked about.

One more thing: if Eli ever says anything about hurting himself or not wanting to be here, don't wait and don't handle it alone. Follow your school's protocol and get your counselor involved that same day. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) is there for families and staff too. I hope you never need it, but every teacher should know it's there.

You're not second-guessing yourself, you're paying attention, and in a building where everyone else sees a kid who's doing great, that might be the most important thing Eli has going for him right now.

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.*

CES+TAP

D o i n ' O K ?
Mental Health Help

By Gina Langley, PhD School Psychologist *glangley@ces.org*



JOY Discipline

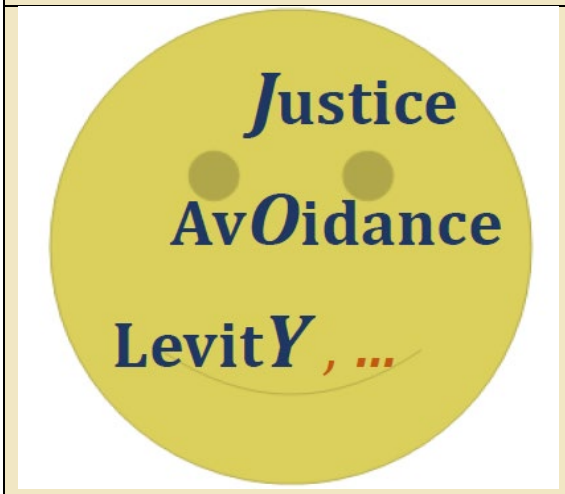
Welcome to the final quarter in The Year of 2026 (already)! I hope you're doing well with your first quarter in School Year 2026/27. But is the "honeymoon" of a new school year wearing away, such that you're facing frustrations with some of your students' behaviors?

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, to work 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 toolbag" 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!

Teaching in the Trenches

By Alexis Esslinger
Director CES + LEAP
Leading Educators Through Alternative Pathways

In the Trenches:

The Ghosts We Carry and the People We Are Becoming

A note of gratitude for *all readers and supporters of CES - a reflection on memory, influence, and the long arc of our work.*

Every October, the ghosts arrive. Some appear with Halloween decorations and familiar things that go bump in the night. Others come quietly- through a photograph, a memory, a former student's voice, or through the reminder of someone we used to be.

As Halloween passes and ofrendas appear in homes and communities across New Mexico, the season invites reflection on memory, loss, and the people who shaped us. Dfa de los Muertos is rooted in Indigenous traditions of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica dating back nearly 3,000 years! It teaches us that remembering those who have died is about so much more than grief. Through photographs, marigolds, food, treasured objects, and the stories attached to them, families honor their ancestors and the enduring bond between those who came before and those who carry their influence forward. The tradition feels familiar to our work in education: we, too, are shaped by those who pass through our lives, by the stories they leave with us, and by those who quietly make the work possible before moving on. We often aim for the completion, the next step, the passing through, yet

influence has a way of remaining-like a familiar presence at the edge of the room.

My mother was an educator for 30 years in Farmington Municipal Schools. A teacher, mom to the four of us, and a leader whose legacy continues to shape who I am - she was the first and best teacher of this precocious heart. When my six-year-old daughter asks where she is, sometimes, I answer gently and tell her that we can still remember her, talk about her anytime, and celebrate her and the beautiful family she left behind. My daughter nods, her big, soulful brown eyes full, and says, "That's the circle of life, right, but is she a ghost?" Just like that, she reminds me of something I am still learning to understand-a truth foretold in *The* Lion King and *The* Land Before Time, but one my adult heart still works to figure out.

Our circle of life is most about influence as educators and leaders-how we continue through the people we love, the lessons we teach, and the values we model, share and pass on. The ghosts remain, too, not as something to fear, but as traces of the people whose voices, habits, and convictions are still with us. My mother lives on in the educator I am, the leader I strive to be, and the lessons I hope to share with my own little girl. My mom was fierce, an advocate for students with exceptionalities and teachers of those students, her legacy extends beyond one classroom through a tricennium-three decades of students, parents, colleagues, friends, administrators, and members of her Farmington community whose lives she touched. Like the objects placed on an ofrenda, those lives hold pieces of her influence and carry them into places she could never have fully seen or known and now into the mind and life of my daughter who will only know her through story, picture and the foods I'll make and tell her all about.

I'm often reminded none of it stays in one place - the good work that we do. What we give moves through classrooms, careers, families, and communities far beyond what we can trace. We rarely see the full reach of our influence, and its arc almost never announces itself. Still, it returns in small ways: in another educator's words, in a decision made differently, or in the care someone offers because it was once offered to them, in little and big shows of trust.

Across New Mexico, I see classrooms asking much of students and teachers: patience, creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to look beyond actions to what might be being communicated, instead. Progress does not always follow a curriculum guide or theory. Sometimes it is a new connection, a short, easily-missed small signal of trust, or a small step toward independence-something worth celebrating and examining with a teacher as the pieces come together. Students teach us to reconsider what success looks like. Growth is rarely linear, and some of our most meaningful work cannot be measured. Thankfully, I am not the educator I was when I began, the teachers I support are not the same educators who fi.rst entered their classrooms. Our students change us, often for the better. We all remember the child who challenged a very closely held

assumption, asked for more patience than we ever knew we had, reshaped our sense of responsibility, or named the judgment we had not yet recognized in ourselves. We may forget individual lessons or difficult days, but we remember children-what they asked of us and who we had to become to serve them well. They join the unseen company we carry: not ghosts to fear, but enduring influences that still enter the room with us.

We talk continuously about growth in education: goals, data. Beneath those measures is a deeper story fixed on people. Educators keep *becoming-the* teacher learning how complex the work is; the leader discovering that having the answer matters less than asking the right question; the coach realizing that meaningful coaching often requires listening more deeply than speaking ever will.

I keep returning to the image of an ofrenda-especially here in New Mexico, where memory is often held close through family, place, story, food, and objects worn smooth by use. The past is not erased there or forgotten; it is cherished, welcomed, honored, and celebrated. What mattered is remembered, what was given is cherished, and what endures is carried forward. It is a fitting image for our work in schools and communities. The time, belief, resources, and care we invest in one another do not simply meet an immediate need or remain transactional. They become part of someone else's story, continuing in classrooms, coaching conversations, decisions made years later, and the ways people show up for others because someone once showed up for them. In that sense, influence is its own kind of offering: something placed with care, received by another, and carried onward.

Our growth is never ours alone.

As we move from October into November, I am especially grateful for those alongside us in our work at CES-our executive board members, partners, colleagues, coaches, consultants, districts, teachers, Principals, and the long arc of friends who make this work possible across New Mexico. Their support creates room for students to grow, educators to learn and evolve, and leaders to keep becoming. Much of this influence may never be fully visible, but its reach extends beyond any single moment or measure. We do not have to remain who we were to honor who we have been.

In the trenches of education, we are always learning, adjusting, and becoming together, carrying forward the people, lessons, and legacies that shaped us. Perhaps these are the ghosts we carry best: not shadows that hold us back, but presences that remind us how we came to stand where we are.

If this finds you remembering an educator who shaped your path, consider sharing that story with them. Naming those who made a difference is one way we keep their influence alive-an everyday ofrenda made not of objects, but of gratitude and witness. These returns may never appear in a formal record, yet they may be among the most meaningful measures of our very best work.

Here's a place for story shared: Home I Teachers of New Mexico

About the Author

Alexis Esslinger, LEAP Program Director, has led Cohorts 5-8 and supports 12 instructional coaches. She holds degrees in elementary education, special education, and school leadership. To learn more about LEAP at Cooperative Educational Services, visit www.cesleap.org or contact alexis@ces.org. CES members in Albuquerque can access LEAP's licensure program and refer candidates from their communities. LEAP also welcomes participants from CES partners and affiliates statewide, offering personalized coaching and dual-licensure options in general and special education. The 11-month cohort begins every July.

Teaching Tips ...for the Classroom

Understanding Attention
by Barbara Piper. M.A.

A teacher stands in front of his/her students and says, "Please give me your **attention."** What is being asked of students to successfully do that?? Possibly more than you ever realized.

Here is what is being asked of the student when you say "pay attention."

1. For the student to be alert and disengage from any competing stimuli.
2. For the student to orient YOUR (teacher's) priority to the TOP of student's brain's priority list.
3. For the student to sustain that attention over time with focus and suppression of competing stimuli.

THAT can be quite a challenge, especially for students who exhibit/ experience attention difficulties.

Furthermore, have you ever thought of attention as a **system of controls?** Interesting analysis of attention. The 3 controls are mental energy, processing, and production. Students with attention difficulties may be experiencing challenges in any one of those 3 controls or more than one simultaneously. A summary of the 3 controls:

- Mental Energy which regulates and distributes the energy needed to take in and interpret information and regulate behavior. Includes alertness, mental effort, sleep and awake balance, consistency of performance.
- Processing, which is being able to select, prepare, and begin to interpret incoming information. Includes saliency determination (i.e., identifying what is most important), depth and detail of information to be processed, ability to make new

cerebral connections, and ability to focus on important information for appropriate period.

- Production, which manages output including what the student generates academically, behaviorally, and socially. Includes thinking about outcomes before actions, pacing (not too slow or not too fast), self-monitoring, and using previous experience to guide current behaviors.

In disability language, significant attention issues are now identified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) as ADHD under 3 classifications: predominantly inattentive ADHD (previously ADD), predominantly hyperactive type ADHD, and combined type ADHD (hyperactivity and impulsivity). The classifications generate eligibility under special education law (IDEA), thus having significant importance. As teachers though, we need to be astute at identifying the learning behavior exhibited by the student with attention difficulties. In other words, to determine effective instructional and behavioral strategies, we need to know "What does the behavior look like?" For example, the teacher remarks, "Marie is very distractible." What does "distractible" look like? What is Marie doing? Is she staring out the window for periods of time? Is she getting up and walking around the room? Is she looking at something other than what the teacher wants her to focus on? Does she start the task but get involved with other things that are not task related? Observing the patterns of behavior of distractibility and relating them to the three systems of controls can lead to effective strategies for dealing with the attention difficulties.

AND . . . here are two more thoughts that might enrich your understanding of attention. The first being, some people say ADHD stems from a nervous system that works perfectly well, just by its own set of rules. The second being, "If attention is about the mind homing in on what's relevant in each moment, engagement is about keeping the spotlight pointed at the same target over time. Doing so may be less a matter of filtering out distractions and more a matter of whether the task registers in the brain as worth doing in the first place." (NY Times: Awais Aftab).

I hope this "Teaching Tips" article has furthered your understanding of attention, attention difficulties, and ways to support students with attention difficulties. Remember . . . "Knowledge is of no value unless put into practice." (Anton Chekhov)

Resources:

Developing Minds / https://allkindsofminds.org/
Ran Prieur, https://www.ranprieur.com/.
(Awais Aftab, psychiatrist; quoted in the NY Times)
Marilee Sprenger, *How to Teach So Students Remember, 2nd Edition.* ASCD 2018
Sandra Reif, *How to Reach and Teach Children with ADHD*. Jossey Boss Pub., 2005

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 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 onsite 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.

BULLETIN BOARD

CES+ LEDR

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

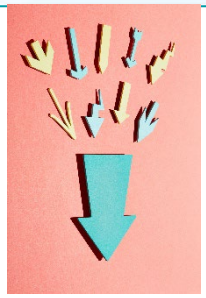
Register Here

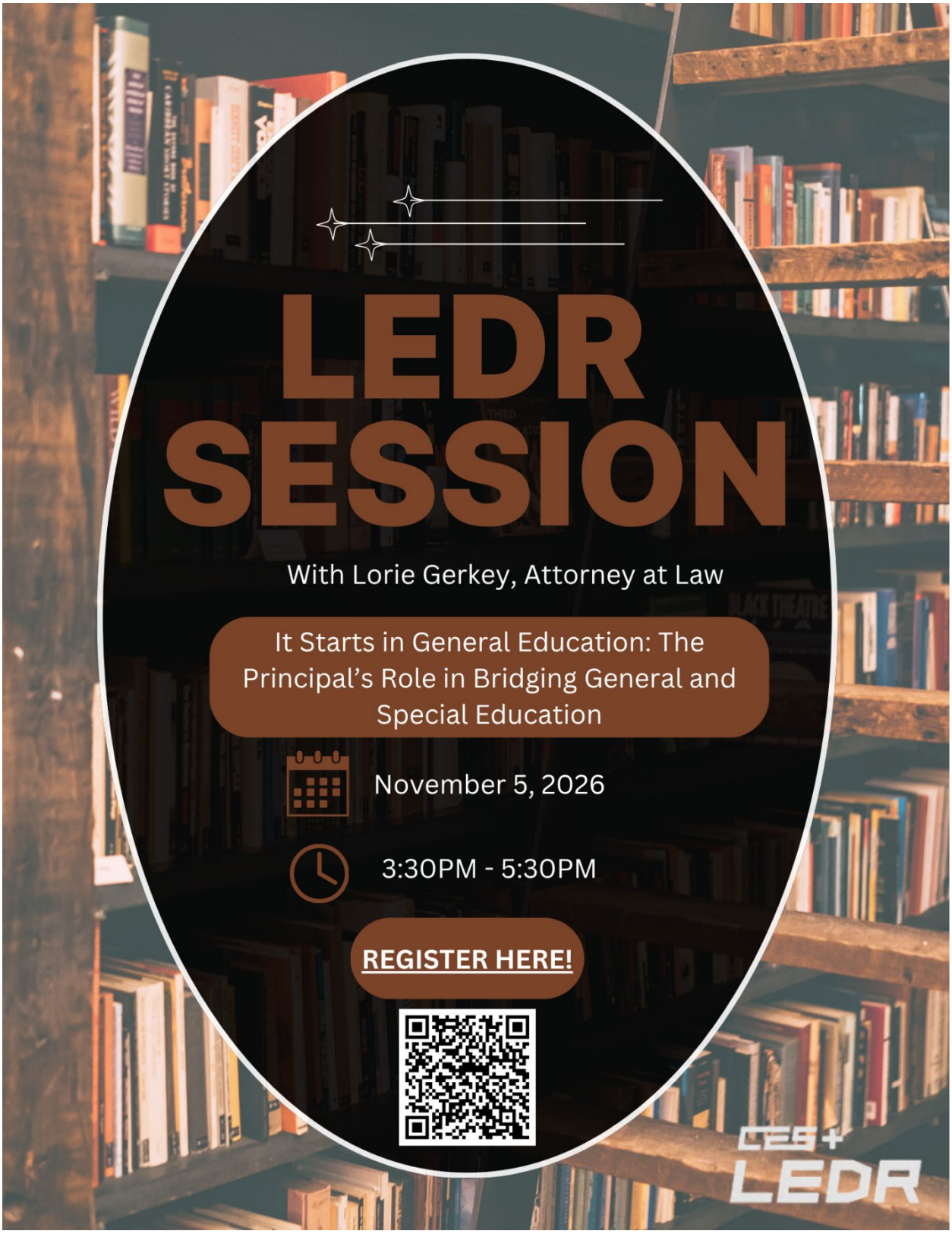
December 3,2026–

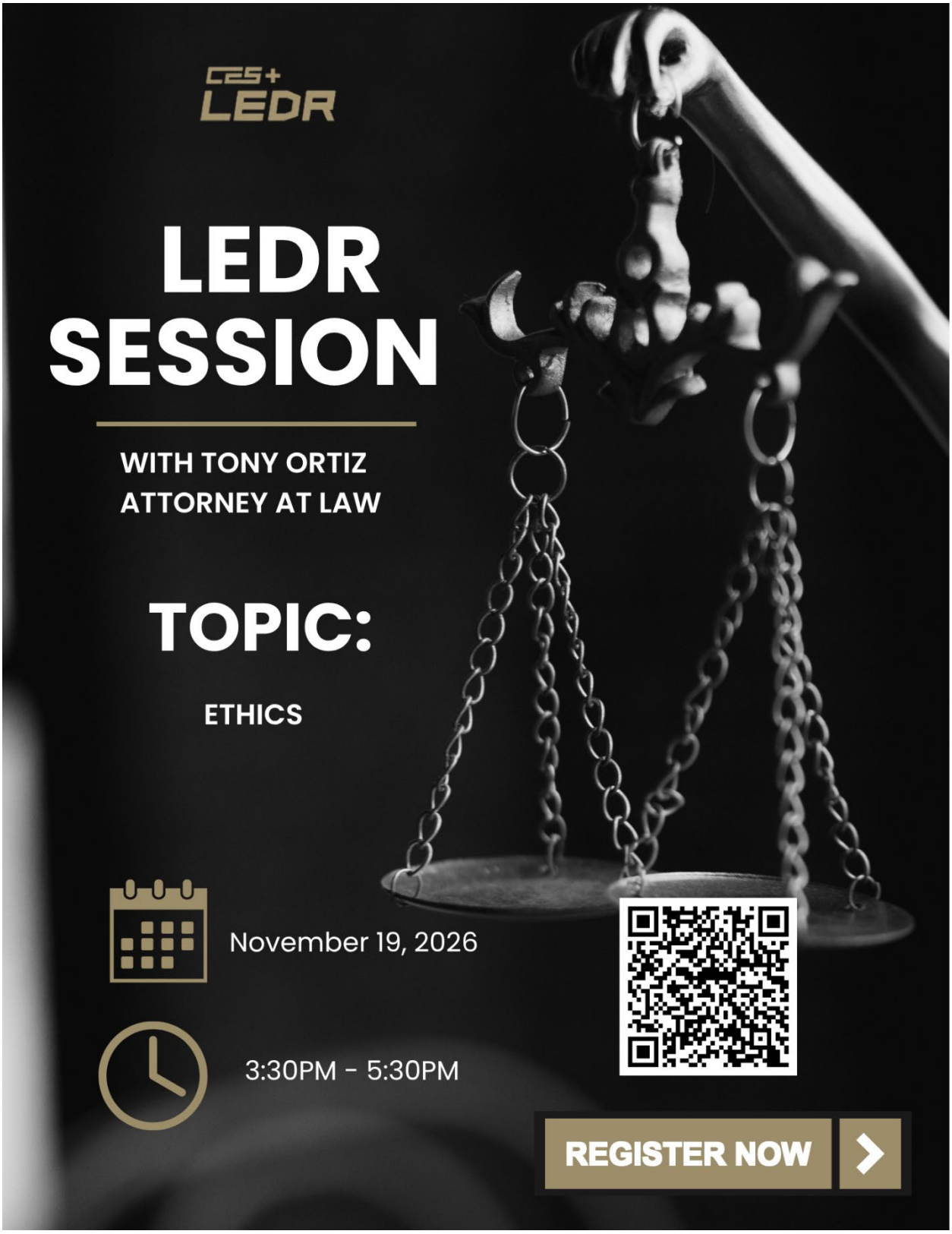
Presenter: Superintendent Elisa Begueria

Topic: Multilingual Learners

Register Here




LEDR SESSION
With Lorie Gerkey, Attorney at Law
It Starts in General Education: The Principal's Role in Bridging General and Special Education
November 5, 2026
3:30PM - 5:30PM
REGISTER HERE!
CES+
LEDR


CES+
LEDR
LEDR SESSION
WITH TONY ORTIZ
ATTORNEY AT LAW
TOPIC:
ETHICS
November 19, 2026
3:30PM - 5:30PM
REGISTER NOW

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 IEP 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
- Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (LRBI) Guidelines

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
- Harm Alternative Educational Setting (HAS) Guidelines

Register Here

Questions? Reach out to Leadershipdevelopment@ces.org



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.

CES CONTACTS

Mohamed Al-Hussaini
Procurement & Contract Specialist
Email: mohamed@ces.org
Phone: Ext 128

Kim Alvarado
Purchasing Specialist
Email: kalvarado@ces.org
Phone: Ext 137

Jim Barentine
NM Southern Services Mgr, Social Media Services
Email: jim@ces.org
Phone: 575.646.5965

Kelly Bassham
Financial Specialist (AP)
Email: kelly@ces.org
Phone: Ext 135

Mathew Bayhan
IT Specialist
Email: mathew@ces.org
Phone: Ext 152

Paul Benoit
NM Northern Services Mgr, REAP Services
Email: paul@ces.org
Phone: 575.562.2922

Steve Brown
ID Regional Manager
Email: sbrown@ces.org
Phone: 208.604.2138

Mandy Cardiel
Purchasing Specialist
Email: mcardiel@ces.org
Phone: Ext 147

Marisol Carrasco
Leadership Admin Assistant, Social Media Assistant
Email: mcarrasco@ces.org
Phone: 575.390.6231

David Chavez
Executive Director
Email: dchavez@ces.org
Phone: Ext 109

Katherine Densmore
Purchasing Specialist
Email: katherine@ces.org
Phone: Ext. 148

Katie Effert
Executive Admin Assistant
Email: katie@ces.org
Phone: Ext 127

Alexis Esslinger
LEAP Director
Email: alexis@ces.org
Phone: Ext 139

Drew Evans
ID Regional Manager
Email: devans@ces.org
Phone: 208.899.5537

LeAnne Gandy
Leadership Development Program Director
Email: leanne@ces.org
Phone: 575.704.9904

Loretta Garcia
TAP Director
Email: lgarcia@ces.org
Phone: 505.985.8454

Mason Goold
UT Regional Manager
Email: mgoold@ces.org
Phone: 801.664.0742

Peggy Green
UT Regional Manager
Email: pgreen@ces.org
Phone: 435.327.1693

Norma Henderson
Finance Manager
Email: norma@ces.org
Phone: Ext 104

John King
Construction Analyst (N)
Email: jking@ces.org
Phone: Ext 150

Jenny Malvern
Purchasing Specialist
Email: jmalvern@ces.org
Phone: Ext 134

Yolanda Mares
Purchasing Specialist
Email: ymares@ces.org
Phone: Ext 120

Doug Marshall
IT Director
Email: dmarshall@ces.org
Phone: Ext 114

Margaret Mikelson
Finance Specialist
Email: margaret@ces.org
Phone: Ext 126

Kim Mizell
SITE Director
Email: kmizell@ces.org
Phone: Ext 136

Monica Myers
Business Office Admin Assistant
Email: monica@ces.org
Phone: Ext 145

Bertha Ochoa
Purchasing Specialist
Email: bertha@ces.org
Phone: Ext 123

Thad Phipps
Construction Analyst (S)
Email: thad@ces.org
Phone: 575.308.3193

Lianne Pierce
Director of Ancillary
Email: lianne@ces.org
Phone: Ext 103

Julie Ponce
Purchasing Specialist
Email: julie@ces.org
Phone: Ext 106

Jeanne Rayburn
Office Assistant/Reception
Email: jeanne@ces.org
Phone: Ext 101

Lisa Romo
Procurement & Contract Specialist
Email: lromo@ces.org
Phone: Ext 129

Gustavo Rossell
Procurement Director
Email: gustavo@ces.org
Phone: Ext 117

Teresa Salazar
Chief Operations Officer
Email: teresa@ces.org
Phone: Ext 149

Angelina Sandoval
Ancillary Admin Assistant
Email: angelina@ces.org
Phone: Ext 119

Ilene Sandoval
Finance Specialist (AR)
Email: ilene@ces.org
Phone: Ext 122

Kara Scheib
Lead Purchasing Specialist
Email: kara@ces.org
Phone: Ext 125

Kelley Scheib
Financial Specialist (Payroll)
Email: kelley@ces.org
Phone: Ext 107

Robin Strauser
Chief Financial Officer
Email: robin@ces.org
Phone: Ext 108

Yvonne Tabet
Human Resources Director
Email: yvonne@ces.org
Phone: Ext 113

Angela Valadez
Procurement Admin Asst
Email: avaladez@ces.org
Phone: Ext 116

Anita Valencia
Purchasing Specialist
Email: anita@ces.org
Phone: Ext 110

Joe Valencia
Procurement & Contract Specialist
Email: joe@ces.org
Phone: Ext 124

Misty Wade
LEAP Admin Assistant
Email: mwade@ces.org
Phone: Ext 144

Victoria Watson-Morales
Purchasing Specialist
Email: vwatson-morales@ces.org
Phone: Ext 131

Valerie Yoakum
Ancillary Admin Assistant
Email: valerie@ces.org
Phone: Ext 111