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CES MEMBER NEWSLETTER December 2024

Unlock Your Leadership Potential with CES Professional Development Programs

CES offers a comprehensive suite of professional development programs tailored to empower school leaders across New Mexico. From aspiring administrators to experienced superintendents, CES provides customized, practitioner-focused training to address the unique challenges faced by education professionals in the state.

Supporting School Leaders for Longevity and Impact

The primary goal of CES leadership programs is to enhance the longevity and effectiveness of school leaders, fostering stability that directly benefits student learning. These programs cater to a broad audience, including principals, superintendents, instructional coaches, school board members, and central office administrators.

Some of CES' proven key offerings are:

Aspiring Leaders Development (ALD): An alternative licensure program for aspiring administrators aligned with New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) competencies.

Aspiring Superintendents Academy: Preparing future superintendents to lead with confidence.

First-Year Support for Principals and Superintendents: Tailored support with executive coaching, mentoring, and

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targeted training to navigate the complexities of leadership roles.

What Sets CES Professional Development Apart?

CES distinguishes itself by prioritizing relevance and flexibility. Unlike one-size-fits-all programs, CES designs training based on direct feedback from school leaders. By addressing specific needs and challenges,

CES ensures that participants gain practical, actionable skills.

Training sessions are custom built around real-world challenges faced by participants.

Diverse delivery methods include in-person, virtual, or blended formats to suit various schedules and preferences.

Sessions are led by experienced and successful school administrators, many of

whom are actively serving or recently retired.

ALD Program Highlights

The Aspiring Leaders Development (ALD) program is an innovative alternative to traditional university courses, combining flexibility with hands-on learning.

Monthly sessions held on Fridays and Saturdays are conveniently scheduled to minimize disruption to participants' current roles.

Sessions rotate across locations, ensuring no participant travels more than two hours to reach a session, maximizing statewide accessibility.

Activities include role-playing, networking, and collaboration to build practical leadership skills and a real-world focus.

ALD graduates emerge prepared not

only to pass the administrator licensure exam but also to thrive as effective leaders in their schools and districts.

Ongoing Support and Networking

CES emphasizes continuous improvement and long-term support:

Open to all, the free Virtual Leadership Series expands on class topics with insights from active administrators and experts.

One-on-one guidance from retired superintendents and administrators acting as mentors and coaches enhances participants' growth.

Collaborative sessions and contact lists foster connections among leaders statewide, creating a supportive networked professional community.

Successful Outcomes

CES programs have a proven track record of success. Many ALD graduates have gone on to hold leadership positions in New Mexico schools, bringing innovation and strength to their roles. Even participants who remain in non-administrative positions report enhanced leadership skills that benefit their schools and teams.

How to Get Involved

Applications for the two ALD cohorts are accepted in November and May. Participants can complete the program and achieve licensure within one year. Details for other programs, including workshops and regional principal institutes, are available on the CES website (ces.org).

Why Choose CES?

With a mission centered on collaboration and tailored support, CES provides accessible, relevant, and cost-effective professional development. Whether you're an aspiring administrator or an established leader, CES programs are designed to help you grow, succeed, and make a lasting impact in your community.

Take the next step in your leadership journey with CES—because strong leaders build stronger schools.

by Jared Bomani

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

12/2 TAP – “December Survival Guide: Closing Out the Year & Setting the Stage for 2025”
 12/3 TAP – “Transition Program Development”
 12/4 TAP – “Guiding Principals for Understanding Student Behavior”
 12/4-6 NM Law Enforcement Conference
 12/5 TAP – “The Gifted Individual Education plan: Spotlight on Goals”
 12/9-13 LFC Interim Meeting
 12/10 TAP – “Trauma-Informed Practices to Utilize in Preparation for the Holiday Break”
 12/10-12 NM City Management Association Conference
 12/11-13 PCSNM Annual Conference
 12/12-14 NMSBA Annual Convention

12/13 National Guard Birthday
 12/18-20 LESC Interim Meeting
 12/21 December Solstice
 12/25 Christmas Day
 12/31 New Year’s Eve

December						
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				



PROCUREMENT NEWS

RFP	Description	Released	Pre-Proposal	Closes
2025-02 (new Category)	Elevators, Escalators, Pedestrian Conveyors & Related	10/11/24	10/17/24 10:00 am	11/8/24 4:00 p.m. *under evaluation
2025-03 (new Category)	Professional Services for Education	10/11/24	10/17/24 10:00 am	11/8/24 4:00 p.m. *under evaluation
2025-04	<i>AEPA 25.5</i>	Feb 2025		
2025-05 (PAAS for PED)	Community Schools Accreditation (NMPED)	11/18/24	11/21/24	12/6/24
2025-06	<i>Copiers, Printers, MDF's Products- Managed Print Services</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24 10:00 am	12/20/24
2025-07	<i>Computers, Networking Devices, and Related Products and Services</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24 10:00 am	12/20/24
2025-08	<i>IT Professional Services</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24 10:00 am	12/20/24
2025-09	<i>Music Instruments, Music, Performing Arts, Equipment, Materials, Supplies & Related</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24 10:00 am	12/20/24
2025-10	<i>Janitorial Products, Services and Related</i>	11/25/24	12/3/24 10:00 am	12/20/24
2025-11	<i>Student Management, Special Education & Educational Managed Curriculum</i>	12/13/24	12/18/24 10:00 am	1/17/25
2025-12	<i>Temporary Employment and Recruitment Services</i>	12/13/24	12/18/24 10:00 am	1/17/25
2025-13	<i>Flooring Systems & Related</i>	12/13/24	12/18/24 10:00 am	1/17/25

NOTES FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE

With very few exceptions, all your POs will be uploaded to CES via the applicable contract-specific button found in the CES Bluebook. Even for “Direct Purchase” POs, our contracts with the vendors require that approval come from our office, as we check your PO and the vendor’s quote for possible issues of compliance that could otherwise cause your organization to have problems related to the purchase.

We’ve significantly improved our PO processing speed over the past few years.

Now, most traditional POs are processed within 2-3 days, and nearly all direct POs are processed within about one day.

We understand that even these short delays can be a slight inconvenience, but they allow us to provide thorough compliance checks and additional services that add real value—services you won’t find with out-of-state cooperatives. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we work to keep your procurement running smoothly. Thank you for your continued support!

ORDER CORNER

If you would like to know who currently holds a CES contract, and for what, our catalog of contracts (the Bluebook) is accessible via the ‘Login’ link at the top of our homepage, www.ces.org. If a login is

needed to access further details regarding each contract, please contact your CES Regional Manager for assistance in setting up that login.

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CONSTRUCTION CORNER

PROCESS RECOMMENDATION

For EVERY construction purchase based on a “C” contract or an “R” contract, CES recommends that you provide the quote you have received to your CES Construction Analyst to review for contract and pricing compliance BEFORE you issue a PO. Frequently, errors are caught that affect the Total Amount for the quote, and this process will allow you to create a correct PO on the first try. The Construction Analyst will return a verified quote to you, and you can then upload your PO and the quote via the Bluebook portal.

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From Chaos to Calm

By Rene Rohrer, M.A.
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December 2024

What is Trauma?

In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) added Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to the third edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (*DSM-III*). Originally, a traumatic event was defined as a catastrophic stressor that was outside the range of usual human experience. (Retrieved Nov 2023 from [National Center for PTSD](#)). Since then, how we conceptualize trauma and stressors has evolved and trauma discussions center on more than the exposure to the traumatic event, they include our capacity and responses to that stressor. Current research in trauma includes neuroscience and the role our brain and nervous system play in our responses and ways in which we can foster and build resilience. The Center for Addiction and Mental Health defines trauma as “the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event. Experiencing a traumatic event can harm a person’s safety, sense of self, and ability to regulate emotions and navigate relationships” (Retrieved Nov 2023 from [CAMH website](#)). Trauma is not so much about the stressor or event, but rather about how we respond to the experience. The more skills, resources, and support we have in our

response can shape whether we are resilient or whether it is traumatic and adverse experience.

ACES

Starting in 1995, the CDC-Kaiser Permanente adverse childhood experiences (ACES) study collected survey data around childhood experiences and health status and behaviors. ACES were originally categorized into abuse, neglect, and household challenges and the survey questions referred to adverse childhood experiences happening before the age of 18. Questions on the survey centered on emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, divorce, or incarceration in the household, and emotional or physical neglect.

What that study showed was how strongly related ACES are to the development of risk factors for disease later in life. In fact, the more reported the number of adverse experiences the higher the likelihood of negative health and well-being outcomes. Over 25% of students in New Mexico have experienced 2 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) (CDC, 2021).

Early adversity affects all areas of health from mental health, chronic or infectious diseases, brain development, risk behaviors, and limited opportunities in education, income, and employment.

The research around adverse childhood experiences have expanded beyond that original list and includes environmental, societal, and household stressors. Toxic stressors like racism, poverty, unemployment, food scarcity, community violence, natural disasters, and pandemics are all examples of experiences that can activate our stress response systems and

can lead to long lasting wear and tear on the body. There is even research into the *epigenetic* consequences of toxic stress and how that can alter our DNA functions and be passed down from generation to generation. Toxic stress is prevalent in our communities and therefore we see and must deal with the consequences in our classrooms every day.

Preventing ACEs	
Strategy	Approach
Strengthen economic supports to families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening household financial security • Family-friendly work policies
Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public education campaigns • Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment • Bystander approaches • Men and boys as allies in prevention
Ensure a strong start for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood home visitation • High-quality child care • Preschool enrichment with family engagement
Teach skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social-emotional learning • Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs • Parenting skills and family relationship approaches
Connect youth to caring adults and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring programs • After-school programs
Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced primary care • Victim-centered services • Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs • Treatment to prevent problem behavior and future involvement in violence • Family-centered treatment for substance use disorders

Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/media/pdf/resources-for-action/ACEs-Prevention-Resource_508.pdf

How can we Prevent ACE's?

The CDC outlines ways that we can prevent ACE's in early childhood development, outlined in the graphic above. The same strategies translate into the classroom and into trauma-informed educational practices, accessing resources, providing a safe learning environment, teaching skills, and providing connections to adults, creating positive childhood experiences.

PCEs

Understanding the trauma response and how that affects the brain and learning is

essential for our classrooms. As educators, if we can understand neuroscience and inform ourselves, around the resilience research and practices we can strive for trauma informed classrooms.

In the last ten years, researchers have started to examine the impacts of PCEs or **positive childhood experiences** on those

children and adults that have experienced ACEs. A major theme coming from the relevant research shows that PCEs can counter the effects of ACEs. What are PCE's? We know from neuroscience that our brains' plasticity allows for building neural pathways, of changing thinking and behavior, and healing the body and mind. Practices like mindfulness, gratitude, and positive thinking can help build skills for resilience. PCEs can help to reduce the effects of adversity,

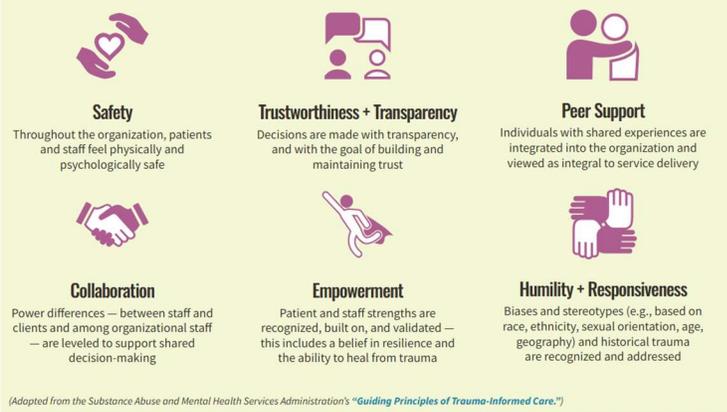
regardless of the history of ACEs.

Common elements to PCEs are felt safety, belonging, consistency, and relationships. Students that have resources, support systems, and healthy relationships with an adult or mentor are much more likely to be able to manage their responses to toxic stressors and alleviate the long-term consequences for their overall health.

What is Trauma-Informed Practice?

SAMHSA outlines six key principles of a trauma-informed organization and approach:

Following are recognized **core principles** of a trauma-informed approach to care that are necessary to transform a health care setting:



(Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "Guiding Principles of Trauma-Informed Care.")

Retrieved from
<https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org/what-is-trauma-informed-care/>

How do we incorporate and foster these principles in our classrooms? In education, we can consider evidence-based practices such as social emotional learning, culturally responsive instruction, restorative discipline, and positive behavioral interventions and support that create communities that honor these principles. If we know anything from our research on brain-based learning, we know that students can't learn if they don't feel safe. A large part of being trauma-informed is providing for felt safety across the school day. How do we create felt safety for students? We do that through consistency and structure, by being clear with our expectations, by offering choice, seeking to understand, practicing empathy, creating situations for success in learning and in social situations, teaching social emotional skills, building relationships, and being open and culturally responsive to all students. Another large part of being able to provide that safety is our own well-being and responses. As educators we can use practices such as mindfulness and social emotional learning to help us to remain

objective and ready to teach. If we have strategies to monitor our own behavior and to bring calm to the classroom, we will be in the place to support felt safety and belonging. It is important for not only the teacher to be responsible for trauma-informed practices, but the entire learning community should work to foster those essential principles of trauma-informed practice. There are many resources available for schools looking to implement trauma informed education. The work starts with developing a common understanding of trauma and why trauma informed education is important.

References and Resources

- 1) The Science of PACES101
<https://www.pacesconnection.com/blog/aces-101-faqs>
- 2) Center on the Developing Child
Harvard University ACES and Toxic Stress FAQ
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/aces-and-toxic-stress-frequently-asked-questions/>
- 3) ASCD Trauma - Informed Teaching Strategies by Jessica Minahan
<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/trauma-informed-teaching-strategies>
- 4) What is trauma? Bessel van der Kolk Video
<https://youtu.be/BJfmfkDQb14>
- 5) Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education by Alex Shevrin Venet



**The Reading Room:
Amira: The AI Reading
Tutor
December 2024**

About a week ago I was listening to National Public Radio while having my coffee in the morning. Something I heard caught my attention, so I went online to listen to the entire segment. As a reading tutor myself, I was particularly interested in this segment. It was about Amira.

Amira is an AI (artificial intelligence) reading tutor. This particular broadcast was about the use of Amira in schools in Louisiana. In fact, approximately 100,000 students are using Amira as a supplement to direct instruction in the Science of Reading. Teachers and administrators are very excited to have this tool. They caution that this is not a substitute for a human teacher but can provide additional individualized support for each student. Many of the students in Louisiana are ELL students so Amira can also tutor in Spanish. Amira can analyze where a particular student is struggling and deliver appropriate research-based practices and strategies to help develop that student’s reading skills. One administrator commented, “I’m old-school. I still believe in people, especially with

reading for little kids - that's where it's at. But this, to supplement good science of reading instruction in the classroom? This is great.” We know that many parents cannot afford private tutoring, so an AI tutor can be very effective.

As I started my research for this article, it became very clear that there are now many AI reading tutors to choose from. Amira is only one of them. The school-based cost for Amira is \$20.00/year per student, which seems quite reasonable.

“The cost of Amira Learning depends on the version and how it's used:

School version: \$20 per student per year, with no cost to the student. This version includes a parent report with information on student progress, vocabulary, and reading age. Teachers also receive training on how to use Amira.

Direct-to-parents version: \$7.99 per month, or \$72 per year with a 25% discount

Amira Assessment: \$8.00 per student per year

Amira was developed to use with students, K-3. I think a good use of an AI tutor would be to use it as a station if you must rotate students through centers. My main concern about using AI tutors would be that some teachers might just use the tutor and not deliver direct instruction.

The preliminary data shows that AI tutors can really help improve students’ reading skills. It will be interesting to see the data from Louisiana’s two-year pilot at the end of this school year. Amira has an assessment associated with it based on

the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) Amira has a very favorable report from the Stanford SCALE Initiative Accelerator for Learning. See the link below.

These AI tutors show very promising results. Please remember they should NEVER replace human direct instruction in the Science of Reading!

Resources:

Some of the other tutors available are:

Readability Tutor - <https://read.readabilitytutor.com/>
\$19.99/per month

Luca Tutor - <https://luca.ai/> \$27.00

More detailed information on Amira.

<https://www.hmhco.com/programs/amira>

[Amira Learning | National Student Support Accelerator](#)

For questions, please contact:

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Teacher Toolbox



Teacher Toolbox –
December 2024

By Margaret Wood, Speech-Language Pathologist and TAP Consultant
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Changes Ahead!

*DIY Social Narratives:
Decrease anxiety &
Increase calm*



<https://pix4free.org/>

As previously discussed, routine and consistency are key for many students, especially those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

However, a natural breakdown of routine and structure

occurs

during the holidays. <https://www.awnmttech.com/2020/12/03/510>
In these settings, including school and home environments. Educators and parents are often left with a mixture of dread and excitement during this time of year, as school days are frequently filled with - both planned and unplanned - holiday projects, performances, and parties, which may increase anxiety for students who thrive on following the same routine. Let's ponder the following important question.



Question:

How do we prepare our students for all these changes, while still enjoying the festivities and school breaks?

Answer:

Create a Social Narrative!

Let's delve more deeply into the **Social Narrative** tool, which is one of the evidence-based practices that I briefly described in last month's Teacher Toolbox article (and throughout several previous **Autism Toolbox** TAP workshops in greater detail – read to the end for more information and web links). Research has repeatedly indicated that when individuals with ASD are given the opportunity to learn with visual supports or cues, they learn more rapidly, complete tasks more independently, demonstrate decreased levels of frustration, anxiety and aggression, and adjust more readily to changes in their environments. One type of visual support is a social narrative, which describes social situations for many types of learners, including those with ASD, by providing:

- relevant cues
- explanation of the feelings and thoughts of others in the social situation
- descriptions of appropriate behavior expectations

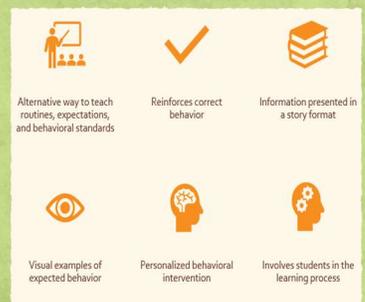
A social narrative is not complicated or confusing. It is simply a short story with pictures and simple text, which helps a student understand and prepare for a particular social situation.

Social narratives may be created using a variety of formats (i.e., Social Stories, Power Cards, Cartooning, Comic Strip Conversations, etc.) and are designed to familiarize your student with who and what to expect during an unfamiliar or infrequently occurring activity (e.g., school assemblies/performances, snow days, and the upcoming winter break). In 1991, Carol Gray created one type of social narrative, called Social Stories. Carol Gray stated, "The goal of a Social Story is to share accurate social information, in a patient and reassuring manner, which is easily understood by its audience." Power cards (Elisa Gagnon, 2001) are a visual priming strategy that uses a child's special interest/character/hero (e.g., Spiderman or Bluey) to help make sense of social situations, routines, the meaning of language and the unwritten social rules. Cartooning and comic strip conversations are also useful types of social narratives that are typically engaging for a developmentally older audience. These formats provide picture and text illustrations of words that are actually said in a conversation, how people might be feeling, and what people's intentions might be. Choose a format that best suits your students' needs.

PowerPoint Slide from ASD Toolbox Series: Social Narratives Webinar by Margaret Wood

Teaching Expectations through *Social Stories*

The story should answer the who, what, when, where, and why about a particular situation or the expected behavior you are trying to elicit from the student.



7 Simple Social Story DIY Steps!

1. Using any word processing software you prefer (e.g., Microsoft Word), type a simple story in first person (from the student's perspective) in the present tense, using simple and positive language that the student will understand.
2. Identify the target behavior, skill, or event in the title. Focus on one skill, behavior, or event at a time and break down the event/task into simple steps by providing three types of statements: *descriptive*, *directive*, and *perspective*.
3. Answer who, what, when, where, and why questions about the event/task (*descriptive statements*).
4. Clearly state the desired behaviors by explicitly stating what the student is expected to say and do in that situation (*directive statements*). Provide 2-3 descriptive sentences for every directive.
5. Explain the likely associated feelings of the student and others (*perspective statements*).
6. Use pictures to support the text, regardless of the developmental age of your student to increase understanding and recall (e.g., Google images and/or www.iconfinder.com for free images to copy/paste into the story).

7. Be sure to save your story as a computer file with student initials for future editing, as needed. Print and laminate or place it in a plastic sheet protector. For those students who may need multiple Social Stories, consider compiling them in a binder for future reference.

Simple (IMPORTANT) Steps for Social Story Success:

- Read through the story with your student and have them read the story to themselves (if possible) when the student is in a calm, "ready to learn" state.
- The social story should be read often and before the situation is expected to occur.
- As your student begins to apply the expected skills, the story can be read less frequently.
- Discuss personal experiences regarding the story to make connections to their real life.
- After reading the story several times, role-play the scenario and the expected behaviors.
- When the child exhibits the expected behaviors, provide genuine positive feedback.
- Be sure to keep the social story near the student so they can have access to it as needed.

Social narratives are a fast and effective tool that is well-worth your time and energy. Keep calm and enjoy Winter Break!

If you would like additional details about today's topic, watch the Autism Toolbox Series: Social Narratives webinar, which can be found here: www.cestap.org.

Check out the following resource websites for excellent examples of Social Narratives!

<https://www.andnextcomesl.com/2019/11/christmas-social-stories.html>

<https://autismclassroomresources.com/free-interactive-social-narrative-for/>

<https://ocali.org/resource-gallery-of-interventions/Power-Cards>

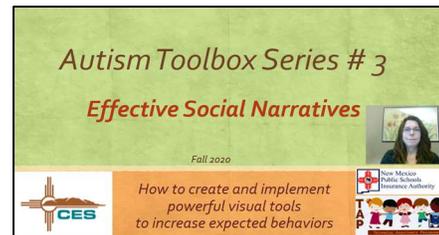
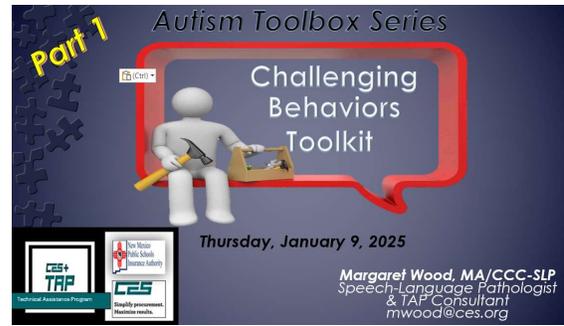
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Christmas-Social-Story-FREEBIE-2-Differentiated-Stories-5096151>

Be sure to register for the next complimentary

AUTISM TOOLBOX SERIES TOPIC:

- **Challenging Behaviors Part 1 (on 1/23/25)**
- **Challenging Behaviors Part 2 (on 1/23/25)**

Go to <https://www.ces.org/> to register!



TAP Guidance Article December 2024



DEAR MS. M
Gifted Education Questions Answered

Dear Ms. M,
What is a talent pool in gifted education?

In August, I took a team of three gifted teachers and case managers to the Talent and Potential Assessment System (TAPAS) alternative gifted identification protocol training in Albuquerque, New

Mexico. In a room full of thirty gifted and special education educators, administrators, directors, and diagnosticians – a common question kept coming up throughout the three-day training – “what is a gifted talent pool and what does it look like in our New Mexico classrooms?”

The talent pool is defined in the New Mexico Gifted Technical Assistance Manual (2023) as “a group of students who demonstrate an advanced ability in a particular area, but do not at this time, meet the criteria for gifted identification...students within the talent pool should receive appropriate programming options and interventions to

address strength and potential growth areas.” New Mexico is not the only state that has gifted talent pools! Colorado, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Kentucky all have systems for creating, developing, and identifying the gifts and talents of students.

What does this look like in New Mexico’s districts, school sites, and classrooms? Central Consolidated School District’s “talent pool” includes kindergarten through eleventh-grade students. Talent pool students are being serviced in various ways across ages, school levels, and school locations. Examples of differentiated learning consist of elementary gifted “pull-out” classes, elementary enrichment “push-in” into regular education classes for enrichment layers, middle and high school Enrichment Seminar classes with cross-curricular curriculum, and National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) teaching and learning standards. These students are also encouraged to participate in activities and specialized electives like coding and robotics, after-school clubs, academic competitions, and field trips.

My goal for my school district is to have my gifted teachers at each school site work collaboratively with regular education teachers and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyze data from interim and state testing to identify students in the top twenty percent of their classes that may have *potential* in growing talents and abilities. In a post-COVID world, educators and administration have been focusing on reversing the learning loss and deficits of

students in the classroom. Although extremely important, it has left our top 20% of students disengaged, bored, frustrated, and uninspired in the regular education classroom setting. These students are being “identified” as a talent pool, and gifted education teachers are working with both the talent pool and gifted-identified students together in many different types of education settings.

The creation of a talent pool allows for the protection of these proficient and advanced students’ rights to a differentiated curriculum using gifted pull-out and push-in techniques to service extension and enrichment in a Layer 3B Multi-Layered Support System at all levels of education. For talent pool development to be successful in your school district, it may require regular education teacher and administrator professional development to understand this is an educational need, not a “reward,” breaking the common practice of keeping students from enrichment opportunities due to behavior, not turning in their work, or low test scores. Gifted pull-out and enrichment programs are an educational intervention for students — a need for gifted students and talent pool students equally.

Kate Morris, MEd Gifted Education

Kate Morris is CES’s Gifted TAP Consultant. She has been in gifted education for 10 years as a gifted educator and gifted instructional coach. She works for Central Consolidated School District in northwest New Mexico serving gifted and talented students in CCSD’s Gifted, Talented, and Creative Program.

Compliance Corner

December 2024

By Cindy Soo Hoo, TAP Consultant

The IEP: Both a Product and a Process- Tips for Making It a Success! (Part 3 of 3-Following the IEP)

You worked hard to prepare for a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. You ensured the required participants and other pertinent people were invited and participated. You made sure the IEP was scheduled at a mutually agreed on time with the parent(s). You also ensured it would be conducted in a venue that would provide confidentiality on behalf of the student.

When conducting the IEP, you employed many skills and techniques that resulted in the development of an IEP that addressed the unique needs of the student. You ensured everyone had a voice to be able to express their own viewpoints. You addressed the concerns of everyone around the table. You asked poignant questions that allowed others to discuss what the student required in order to have his/her needs addressed.

So, you've completed the IEP. Now what? So much is still left to do. It might feel as though the hard work is done. However, some might say the hardest part is yet to come. You now must implement the IEP while ensuring the student is consistently receiving a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). However, there are some challenges that may make this extremely difficult.

People:

Now that the meeting has concluded, a copy of the IEP needs to be provided to the parent(s). Is the equipment in working order and easily accessible to be able to provide a copy in an expedient manner? Or, do you have to retrieve it from another location while asking the parent(s) to wait? Ensuring a copy can be accessible shortly after the meeting will assist in moving along the process and prevent a delay of any meeting(s) that are scheduled to follow. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [34 CFR §300.322 \(f\)](#) emphasizes the requirement to provide a copy to the parent(s). In doing so, it assists in including parents in the IEP process and provides a copy of the decisions that have been made about the instructional programming for their child.

In addition to a copy of their child's IEP, the parent(s) may need to be offered a copy of their parent's and child's rights in special education known in New Mexico as the SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES REQUIRED UNDER IDEA PART B. (See link: [Eng-Procedural-Safeguards-12-23-2020.pdf \(state.nm.us\)](#)). These parent's and child's rights have specific requirements for when they must be provided to the parent but are sometimes provided more often than required. There's no harm in this. By doing so, it is extremely likely schools are in compliance with the requirements for ensuring parents are offered a copy of their rights. In terms of when the procedural safeguards must be provided,

the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states the following:

34 CFR §300.504

(a) General. Procedural safeguards notice: *A copy of the procedural safeguards available to the parents of a child with a disability must be given to the parents only one time a school year, except that a copy also must be given to the parents—*

- (1) Upon initial referral or parent request for evaluation;*
- (2) Upon receipt of the first State complaint under §§ [300.151](#) through [300.153](#) and upon receipt of the first due process complaint under § [300.507](#) in a school year;*
- (3) In accordance with the discipline procedures in § [300.530\(h\)](#); and*
- (4) Upon request by a parent.*

It is important to be available for parents following the IEP. This might be necessary immediately following the meeting or at some time thereafter. Parents may have questions about their child's services or any aspect of the IEP. They may want to know about the days and times their child is expected to receive their related services, what opportunities exist for them to meet their child's provider(s) or how to gain an understanding of their rights. It is crucial someone is available to provide answers to the parents. Being familiar with the procedural safeguards and the child's IEP will assist in being able to answer the parent's questions.

Process:
responsibilities in implementing the IEP. These responsibilities might include

Not only are parents to receive a copy of the IEP, but personnel should have access to it as well. Those who have a hand in its implementation should be familiar with the decisions made by the IEP Team to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities. This might occur with a paper copy of the IEP being provided or through electronic access to the document. IDEA states the following:

34 CFR §300.323

(d) Accessibility of child's IEP to teachers and others. Each public agency must ensure that—

- (1) The child's IEP is accessible to each regular education teacher, special education teacher, related services provider, and any other service provider who is responsible for its implementation; and*
- (2) Each teacher and provider described in [paragraph \(d\)\(1\)](#) of this section is informed of—*
 - (i) His or her specific responsibilities related to implementing the child's IEP; and*
 - (ii) The specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the child in accordance with the IEP.*

Some schools require service providers to sign a document indicating their acknowledgment regarding their accommodations and/or modifications necessary in the general education setting,

the implementation of a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), a School Health Plan, etc.

There may be proposals generated in the IEP that require certain personnel to pursue. This might be a request for a social work assessment, the need to review/revise a student's BIP, a request for an early reevaluation, etc. Failing to follow up on these proposals could result in the denial of a student receiving a free appropriate public education.

Most importantly is the implementation of the IEP. Case managers need to ensure that services are accessible and able to be provided in a timely manner.

34 CFR §300.323

(c) Initial IEPs; provision of services. Each public agency must ensure that—

(2) As soon as possible following development of the IEP, special education and related services are made available to the child in accordance with the child's IEP.

Problem:

There's no denying it. Having a full complement of staff available to serve students in special education is a challenge. School districts across the country have been grappling with staff shortages for years, especially exacerbated by the Covid pandemic. Yet, services for students must still be provided. How is that accomplished when there aren't enough staff members? Many states are employing alternative licensure pathways to address this shortage. Yet, the challenges still exist.

In May 2023, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) under the United States Department of Education provided data indicating the challenges school districts face in recruiting and maintaining staff members in the field of special education. According to Meghan Whittaker, OSERS Special Assistant,

“Today, more than 60% of students with disabilities spend at least 80% of their day in general classes. This wouldn't be possible without special educators who help to customize curriculum that is accessible to all and ensure the individual needs of students with disabilities are met.

Special educators serve a critical role in our nation's public school, yet 45% of schools reported vacancies in special education roles, and 78% reported difficulty in hiring special education staff. Special education teacher shortages have been a longstanding challenge in most states and have only worsened since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic”.

Conclusion:

A student's IEP is more than just the finished document. While it is mandatory to develop an IEP that will address the unique needs of the student, how you get there is also important. It involves a wide range of responsibilities that include preparing for the meeting, conducting the meeting, and following through with the provisions of the IEP after the meeting. Any one of these processes can seem difficult. All three of these processes can seem overwhelming. Yet, all are essential

to ensure the student receives appropriate services and supports because of our mandate of developing an IEP that is reasonably calculated in order for the student to receive a free appropriate public education.

The information included herein is not intended to provide legal advice. Should you need legal advice or guidance on any issue involving special education, please contact the appropriate person for your district.

NEW CES EMPLOYEES



My name is Valarie Castillo, the newest Purchasing Specialist at CES. I come from Albuquerque Public Schools, where I was the bookkeeper for West Mesa High School for the last seven years. I bring with me 20 plus years of Accounting/Bookkeeping experience. I have four children and three grandchildren. When I am not working you will find me either fishing or reading Historical Romance novels. I am so excited to start my new endeavor with CES!

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- Physical Therapist - Regions 1, 2, 4,
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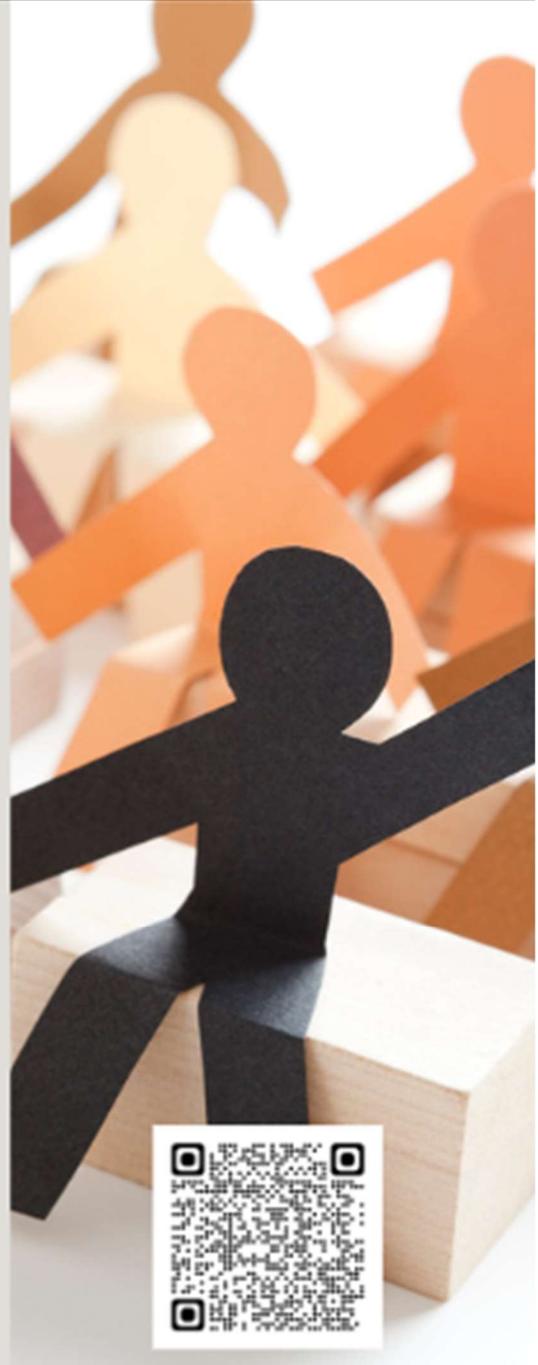
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The New Mexico School Boards Association will conduct its 2024 Annual Convention December 12-14, 2024. The Convention begins Thursday afternoon, December 12 with Newly Elected Training as well as Veteran Board Member Training and our Board of Directors Meeting. On Friday morning, December 13 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 14 with several breakout sessions on important school governance and public education topics.

Visit CES at

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