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CES MEMBER NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2025

What Would Happen If the U.S. Department of Education Were Closed? A Neutral Analysis for Educators and Local Policymakers

In recent years, the idea of closing the U.S. Department of Education has occasionally surfaced in national political discussions. While no president has successfully pursued this course, the concept raises valid questions for local education leaders and practitioners about what such a change could mean in practical terms.

This article provides an objective, research-informed overview of the likely effects of closing the Department of Education (ED), with a focus on how it could affect funding, oversight, student services, and local autonomy.

As President Trump's administration moves forward to carry out this closure, it will be critical that educational leadership and interested constituents remain aware of how the roll out of closure is accomplished and its impacts upon local educational programs.

1. Redistributing Federal Responsibilities

If the Department of Education were to be closed, its functions—currently centralized—would need to be reassigned or phased out. These include:

- Administering federal financial aid for college students
- Enforcing civil rights laws in education
- Supporting data collection and research

- Distributing federal funding to K–12 schools

Possible outcomes include shifting responsibilities to other federal departments (e.g., Health and Human Services, Justice, Treasury), devolving authority to states, or creating new structures entirely. The exact structure would depend on how the closure is legislated and implemented.

2. K–12 School Funding Impacts

Currently, federal funds make up about 8–10% of total public K–12 education funding in the U.S., with a larger share going to high-need districts through programs like:

- Title I (for low-income students)
- IDEA (for students with disabilities)
- Rural Education Achievement Programs

A closure could lead to two main scenarios:

1. **Funding is preserved but administered by states or other agencies**, giving states more flexibility in spending.
2. **Funding is reduced or eliminated**, potentially requiring

states and districts to backfill or reprioritize.

Educators and district leaders would need to monitor how such changes affect program stability, especially in areas with high concentrations of disadvantaged students.

3. Higher Education and Student Aid Administration

The Department's Office of Federal Student Aid manages more than $100 billion annually in grants, loans, and work-study support. Closing the department would require reassignment or restructuring of these programs.

Potential outcomes include:

- Shifting loan servicing and oversight to the Treasury Department or private entities
- Transferring grant and aid responsibilities to states or universities
- Reimagining federal student aid policy entirely

For college-bound students, especially those from low- and middle-income backgrounds, this could change how aid is applied for, awarded, or repaid.

4. Civil Rights and Educational Protections

The Department currently enforces laws that protect against discrimination based on race, sex, disability, and other factors. In its absence, responsibilities could be assigned to:

- The Department of Justice (for enforcement)
- State education agencies (for monitoring and compliance)

The key question for local leaders is how consistently and equitably such protections could be upheld without federal coordination. Outcomes would depend heavily on the capacity and commitment of state and local agencies.

5. Data, Accountability, and Transparency

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a part of the Department, supports critical data collection that underpins local decision-making—from graduation rates to teacher labor trends.

If the department were closed, possibilities include:

- Transferring data collection duties to another federal agency
- Delegating research and statistics to state agencies or private institutions
- Reducing or eliminating federal data collection altogether

This could affect how educators and policymakers access reliable, comparable data across districts and states.

6. Increased Local and State Autonomy

One potential outcome often cited by proponents of closure is enhanced local control. States and districts could gain broader authority over:

- Curriculum standards
- Assessment policies
- Teacher certification and licensure
- Resource allocation

This could allow more customization to meet local needs. However, it could also increase disparities between well-resourced and under-resourced areas, depending on how each state chooses to operate.

7. Transition Complexities and Considerations

Closing a federal department involves significant legal, administrative, and logistical complexity. Key questions for local leaders might include:

- Who becomes responsible for existing federal grant programs?

- How are special education services guaranteed under IDEA maintained?
- What happens to federal accountability frameworks currently in place?

The scope of change would depend on whether the department's closure is accompanied by a comprehensive restructuring plan or a broader reduction in federal involvement.

Conclusion: Preparing for Possibility, Not Certainty

While the Department of Education remains in operation today, the conversation about its future reflects broader debates about the role of the federal government in education. For local educators and policymakers, it is not about advocating for or against closure but about understanding how such a policy shift might affect operations, services, and students. Monitoring federal policy discussions and proactively assessing how your district or agency might navigate changes to funding, compliance, or data systems can help leaders prepare for a range of scenarios—regardless of the extent to which this one

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4/1 April Fool's Day
4/1 TAP: Support Student Movement in New Activities, Environments & Settings
4/1 NMSBA Spring Region I Meeting – Dulce
4/2 TAP: IDEA Part C to Part B Compliance Guidelines
4/3 TAP: Visual Supports Across ALL Settings
4/8 PCSNM '25 Legislative Recap
4/8 TAP: Section 504
4/8 NMCEL Executive Board Meeting
4/8 National Library Workers Day
4/8 NMSBA Spring Region V Meeting – Portales
4/8-9 NMML Clerks' Certification Workshop
4/9 TAP: The "New" Gifted IEP: Spotlight on Schedule of Service &
Specially Designed Instruction
4/9 NMSBA Spring Region IV Meeting – Rio Rancho
4/9-11 NMASBO/PED School Budget Conference
4/10 TAP: Transition Planning 101: Developing Quality Transition Plans
4/11 Deadline for Governor action re 2025 Legislation
4/14 NMSBA Spring Region III Meeting – West Las Vegas
4/14-16 NMPPA Conference
4/15 Official Tax Day
4/15 TAP: Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS):
What is it and what should it look like?
4/15 NMSBA Spring Region VII Meeting – Hatch
4/18 Good Friday
4/20 Easter
4/23 TAP: Learning Strategies to Improve Memory, Attention, Organization,
& Additional Executive Function Skills!
4/23 Administrative Professionals Day
4/24 TAP: Instructional Methods to Meet the Needs of
Special Education English Language Learners

4/29 TAP: Skills & Strategies for Positive Learning Environments
& Meaningful Student Engagement
4/30 TAP: Transitioning to Summer: Strategies for Students & Their Parents

April						
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) Contract Extensions:

Amergis Healthcare Staffing: 2021-28-C115-ALL- 1 year Extension
iStation: 2020-12N-AC02-ALL 6 mo. Extension
Fidalgo CPA, Accounting & Consulting LLC: 19-036N-C003-ALL Exp. 6/22/2025
The Vigil Group LLC: 19-036N-C001-ALL-Exp. 6/23/25
Labatt Food: 2020-30N-C101-ALL Exp. 6/29/2025

2) New Contract Awards:

RFP	Awardee	Contract Number
2025-11 ***Student Management, Special Education & Educational Managed Curriculum*** **Category 1:** Lot 1-Student Management & Data Software	Edupoint Educational Systems Infinite Campus, Inc. PowerSchool Group LLC	2025-11-C111-ALL 2025-11-C112-ALL 2025-11-C113-ALL
2025-11 ***Student Management, Special Education & Educational Managed Curriculum*** **Category 2:** Lot 1- Special Education Tracking Software	Ed Tech Soft, Inc. Edupoint Educational Systems Infinite Campus, Inc. TTCO Holding Company, Inc. PowerSchool Group LLC	2025-11-C211-ALL 2025-11-C212-ALL 2025-11-C213-ALL 2025-11-C214-ALL 2025-11-C215-ALL
2025-11 ***Student Management, Special Education & Educational Managed Curriculum*** **Category 3:** Lot 1- Educational & Training Software	MindPlay Education, LLC Edmentum, Inc. PowerSchool Group LLC Imagine Learning LLC n2y LLC	2025-11-C311-ALL 2025-11-C312-ALL 2025-11-C313-ALL 2025-11-C314-ALL 2025-11-C315-ALL
2025-11 ***Student Management, Special Education & Educational Managed Curriculum*** **Category 3:** Lot 2- Instructional Management System	Edmentum, Inc.	2025-11-C321-ALL
2025-12 ***Temporary Employment and Recruitment Services***	Keeda Inc ITSQuest, Inc. 22nd Century Technologies Inc Infojini, Inc. COGENT Infotech Corp Empat Speech Language Path. P.C.	2025-12-C111-ALL 2025-12-C112-ALL 2025-12-C113-ALL 2025-12-C114-ALL 2025-12-C115-ALL 2025-12-C116-ALL
2025-13 ***Flooring Systems & Related***	High Tech Floors Inc Robert Cohen Co LLC Benchmark Wood Floors, Inc. ARBO's Floor Service LLC Stout Hardwood Floor Company Floor Tech Contracting LLC	2025-13-C111-ALL 2025-13-C112-ALL 2025-13-C113-ALL 2025-13-C114-ALL 2025-13-C115-ALL 2025-13-C116-ALL

	Atmosphere Commercial Interiors WWRC	2025-13-C117-ALL
	AAA Restoration & Construction Services INC	2025-13-C118-ALL
	Restoration Enterprises, Inc.	2025-13-C119-ALL
	Global Maven Enterprises, LLC	
	Southwest Carpet and Floors	2025-13-C1110-ALL
	Advanced Healthstyles Fitness Equipment Inc.	2025-13-C1111-ALL
		2025-13-C1112-ALL
		2025-13-C1113-ALL

3) Current & Upcoming Solicitations:

RFP #	RFP Description	Release	Due	Award
2025-05 (PaaS for PED)	*Community Schools Accreditation (NMPED)*	11/18/24	12/6/24	12/20/24
2025-14	*Health & Training Supplies*	1/21/25	2/14/25	3/3/25
2025-15	*School Safety Audits, Inspections, Consulting and Training Services*	1/21/25	2/14/25	3/3/25
2025-16	*2025.5 AEPA – eRate Consulting Services*	1/21/25	2/14/25	3/3/25
2025-17	*Construction Management Services*	2/21/25	3/21/25	4/7/25
2025-18	*In Vehicle Telematics Systems*	2/21/25	3/21/25	4/7/25
2025-20	*Fleet Management System*	2/21/25	3/21/25	4/7/25
2025-21	*Supplemental Employee Benefits –* **a)** *Section 125* **b)** *Retirement* **c)** *other Benefits*	3/24/25	4/25/25	5/13/25
2025-22 new Category	*Public Sector Payment Systems*	3/24/25	4/25/25	5/13/25
2025-24 new Category	*SCADA Systems*	3/24/25	4/25/25	5/13/25

4) Procurement Issues and News:

New Contract Awards – <u>Descriptions</u>

2025-11
Student Management, Special Education & Educational Managed Curriculum:

Category 1 – Student Management & Data Software
These contracts allow for qualified and experienced Offeror or Offerors to provide quality student management and data system software that interface with STARS to enable data exchange as needed by school districts. STARS is a collaborative effort of the New Mexico Legislature, Public Schools and the Public Education Department (NMPED). STARS is a comprehensive student, staff, and course information system that provides a standard data set for each student served by New Mexico's 3Y/4Y – Grade 12 public education system.

Category 2 – Special Education Tracking Software

These contracts allow school districts to collect, organize and report on special education data required by IDEA and the state of New Mexico. The information system requested allows for a secure environment to protect privacy issues while having the versatility to allow Member's administrative team, instructional staff and service providers to input, update and retrieve data relating to an individual or groups of students. The systems have the capacity to interface with other management systems used to submit for Medicaid reimbursement, transmit data to the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) or interact with existing student management systems found in the CES Member's operation.

Category 3 – Educational Multimedia Curriculum & Software – These contracts allow for qualified and experienced providers that have an electronic catalog of educational software to deliver curriculum-based content to individual or groups of students; developed, marketed and implemented ASP and/or computer-based curriculum delivery applications in a variety of disciplines; packaged and licensed computer software commonly used in K-12 classrooms, college, university courses, businesses and industries.

2025-12
Temporary Employment and Recruitment Services

RFP 2025-12 seeks proposals for temporary employment and recruitment services on behalf of Cooperative Educational Services (CES) and its members. It covers staffing needs across multiple categories, including education, administration, security, maintenance, transportation, and healthcare, ensuring that personnel meet required certifications and qualifications.

2025-13
Flooring Systems & Related

Flooring System & Related is a complete line of high quality, durable, commercial non-hardwood and/or hardwood floor coverings with a long-life cycle at an economical price.

Order Corner

Help Us Help You—A Quick Tip for Smoother PO Processing!

At CES, we know how important it is to get your Purchase Orders moving quickly so your projects can stay on track. Our goal is always to process your PO and get it back out to the vendor as efficiently as possible.

One small thing can make a big difference: when you upload your PO, don't forget to include the vendor's quote! Lately, this has been one of the most common reasons for processing delays.

As your cooperative, CES adds value by carefully reviewing every quote for contract compliance—it's part of the protection we proudly offer as a key part of our service. For the vendor-covered 1.25% administrative fee, we're here to help you stay audit-ready and fully confident in your purchases.

With CES in your corner, you can relax knowing we're watching the details. Thanks

The Reading Room:

Tips and Tricks

**Teaching Syllable Division /
Why & How**

This month we will be focusing on why we teach syllable division and the rules that govern that process. Syllable division can help students break down long multisyllabic words into manageable chunks to help with decoding.

*"That, fundamentally, is the idea of syllabication in decoding. When you confront multi-syllable words, it may help to break them into smaller parts.
It's kind of like that old joke:
How do you eat an elephant?
One bite at a time.
That may seem pretty sensible, but where do you bite?" Shanahan 2021*

Knowledge of syllable division rules helps students identify syllable patterns, notice vowels, and focus on the structure of words and can be particularly helpful in learning morphological patterns. One could argue that it also helps with vocabulary development as students learn the meaning of word parts such as prefixes, suffixes, and Latin and Greek roots.

for partnering with us—we're proud to support you!

Syllable division can be sort of an inexact science. Different dictionaries often have different division patterns for the same word. There are several rules that are fairly consistent and will get students close enough to decode the word. Take the word *constructive*. We could divide by following the base word/suffix division which would be *con-struct-ive* or the rule that you divide between two consonants which would be *con-struc-tive* . Chances are your students will be able to read the word either way.

So, let's talk about those rules that work pretty consistently. Before we go into the specific rules, teach students to identify the vowels and count how many consonants are between them. They can put a dot under each vowel, or they can put a finger under each vowel and then count the consonants between them.
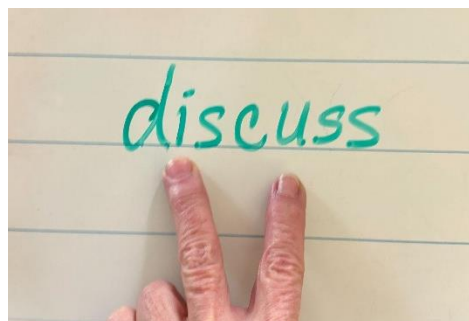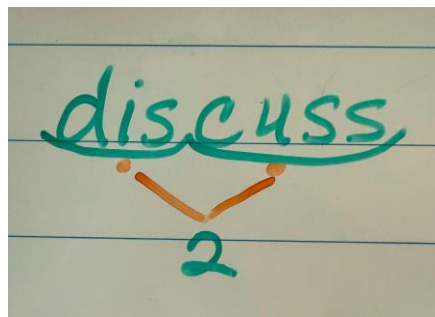
Specific Syllable Division Rules

<u>Twin Consonants - ten-nis</u>
There are many, many words that have twin consonants in the medial
position between the vowels. Examples of this: muf-fin, rab-bit, ten-nis
The rule is that you divide between those twins.

<u>Non-Twin Consonants – pub-lic</u>
This rule is very similar to the first rule. If you have two consonants in the middle of the word, you also divide between them. Examples of this rule: nap-kin, cac-tus, rus-tic

<u>Digraphs Stick Together - rock-et</u>
Digraphs, <u>wh</u>, <u>ch</u>, <u>sh</u>, <u>th</u>, <u>ck</u> - do not split up.
Examples: tra<u>sh</u>-can, mo<u>th</u>-ball

<u>One Consonant - mo-ment, rel-ish</u>
Once students learn the open syllable type, they must learn to be flexible with the rules. They learn here that the most common division is to divide after the first vowel. Students may have to try both ways, but it will get them close enough to decode the word.

<u>Three Consonants - hun-dred</u>
When you have three consonants together between the vowels and they make a blend in either direction, the blend most often will go to the second syllable. Examples: dis-tract, in-flict

<u>Four Consonants – gang-plank</u>
This rule applies to compound words for the most part. When you have four consonants between vowels, split down the middle. Examples: hand-clasp, trans-plant

<u>Two Vowels in Different Syllables – po-et</u>
Sometimes two vowels occur together and look like vowel teams, however they are in different syllables, so they are split.
Examples: li-on, tri-al, ra-di-o

<u>Suffixes - tion, sion, age, ate, ture, sure, ous, create their own syllables.</u> Examples: dangerous, nature, mansion

Morphological Syllable Division
Teaching your students about morphemes will have multiple benefits, including help with dividing longer multisyllabic words into manageable, decodable parts. Provide your students direct instruction in reading, spelling, and defining common prefixes, suffixes, and roots or base words.
Examples: predictable: _pre(before)-dict(to say)-able(ability to)_
If students have studied the common prefixes, they will automatically know how to divide words into their morphemes.
As with any Structured Literacy instruction, you want to teach each concept to mastery and provide plenty of examples and practice. Model for your students using the, _I do, We do, You do,_ approach. Make sure your instruction is explicit and multisensory.

Resources:
Reading Rockets - Common Prefixes/Suffixes, Latin Roots, Greek Roots
https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/spelling-and-word-study/articles/root-words-suffixes-and-prefixes#prefixes-and-suffixes

https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/spelling-and-word-study/articles/root-words-suffixes-and-prefixes#common-latin-roots

https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/spelling-and-word-study/articles/root-words-suffixes-and-prefixes#common-greek-roots

Tim Shanahan on Teaching Syllabication
https://www.shanahanonliteracy.com/blog/on-eating-elephants-and-teaching-syllabication

Compliance Corner

April 2025
By Cindy Soo Hoo, TAP Consultant

Is it Hit or Miss Regarding Your Prior Written Notice?
(Part 3 of 4)

In previous editions, we've had the opportunity to examine portions of the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) regulations regarding a Prior Written Notice (PWN). In the February edition, we looked at the regulations. In the March edition, we separated the regulations in terms of the potential scenarios in which a PWN would be required. This month, we will focus on data that can be used to support the decisions made by the Local Education Agency (LEA).

The decisions regarding whether the LEA agrees or rejects a proposal are based on discussions held during the course of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. These decisions follow in-depth discussions regarding what we know about the student, including his/her strengths and needs as well as how the student's disability affects his/her access to the general education curriculum. Decisions include identifying the goals the student is expected to achieve, the supports and services the student requires and the setting or environment in which those goals will be implemented. All of these decisions are made with the determination of whether the proposal is necessary in order to provide the student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The more information and data the LEA uses to justify their decisions, the less likely the decisions are to be challenged.

The discussions surrounding the items listed above are based on quantitative information. The decisions are tied to information we can measure. In other words, they are based on data. William Edwards Deming, who as an American economist, consultant and statistician, once said, "Without data, you're just another person with an opinion". Without the data, one may make decisions based on emotions and/or speculation. Because of this, there is a risk of basing decisions on information that is incorrect or misleading.

That does not mean there is no place for anecdotal information. That information can help support the data that is able to be measured in some quantifiable way. This information may come from parents who are likely not taking data regarding their child. However, the information is vital to the discussions held and the decisions made. Their observations of how their child is performing at home may support or perhaps conflict with data taken while the child is at school. This allows the IEP Team to determine an appropriate course of action based on the information discussed.

The IDEA lists the sources of information to consider when making decisions.

34 CFR §300.503(b)(1)(2)(3) states:
Content of notice. The notice required under [paragraph (a)] *of this section must include—*
(1) A description of the action proposed or refused by the agency;
(2) An explanation of why the agency proposes or refuses to take the action;
*(3) A description of each **evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report** the agency used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;*

So, what could that look like in terms of each of the items listed? The list below is by

no means exhaustive but can provide IEP Teams with ideas for considering proposals. These sources could serve as the rationale for either accepting or rejecting a proposal.

Evaluation Procedure
- ▶ Initial evaluations (diagnostic, psychological, related service)
- ▶ Reevaluations
- ▶ Independent evaluations
- ▶ Parent-provided evaluations

Assessment
- ▶ State assessments
- ▶ District assessments
- ▶ Curriculum-based assessments
- ▶ Chapter tests
- ▶ Unit tests

Record
- ▶ Progress on IEP goals
- ▶ Current academic performance data
- ▶ Current behavioral data

Report
- ▶ Parent reported information
- ▶ Description of the effectiveness of accommodations and modifications
- ▶ Description of functional skills (participation, social skills, behavior, independence, communication, etc.)

So, what could a sample PWN look like when referencing sources of data? Below are some examples:

- **Parent proposal:** A full-time EA for Susie

- **Decision:** Rejected by IEP Team

- **Justification:** Susie is making progress with her current level of services, and a full-time EA is not necessary.

  vs.

- **Parent proposal:** A full-time EA for Susie

- **Decision:** Rejected by IEP Team

- **Justification:** Susie's general education teacher, special education teacher and related service providers report that Susie is steadily gaining independence regarding task completion as evidenced by her daily tracking and observational sheets. Based on the daily tracking and observational sheets, Susie is increasing her independence by 25% each quarter. The committee feels that increasing support from a paraprofessional would increase a sense of dependency and decrease her independence.

There are several questions to ask when considering the parents' proposal:

1) What data exists to support or refuse this proposal?

2) If needed, in what way(s) and under what circumstance(s) will the paraprofessional be needed in order to support the student?

3) Is the service needed for academic instruction and/or behavioral support?

4) Are there concerns associated with the type of support being considered?

5) Is there a plan to fade or remove the support of a paraprofessional?

The first example does not include specific data on which the decisions were made. Parents are not provided with any information to support the LEA's statement that progress has been made. The statement sounds more like an opinion. The second example references the sources of data (daily tracking sheets and observational sheets) that help support the decision. That information would be shared in some type of graphic form for all participants to review, question and discuss. It also addresses the negative concerns that support of this type might pose for the student.

Let's try another example:

- **Parent proposal**: Increase speech and language services for Susie from 30 minutes per week to one hour per week as recommended by the parent-provided private evaluation.

- **Decision:** Accepted by the LEA
- **Justification:** Susie demonstrates significant needs in the area of communication

vs.

- **Parent proposal:** Increase speech and language services for Susie from 30 minutes per week to one hour per week as recommended by the parent-provided private evaluation.

- **Decision:** Accepted by the LEA

- **Justification:** Susie is demonstrating difficulties in reciprocal conversations and maintaining eye contact when speaking as evidenced by the private evaluation by Dr. Ima Expert on November 11, 2024. Susie has demonstrated a reluctance to speak with her peers or contribute in class as observed by the regular classroom teacher. Additional support is needed at this time to provide Susie with more opportunities to practice her communication skills.

There are several questions to ask when considering the parents' proposal:

1) What data exists to support or refuse this proposal?

2) If accepted, are revisions to existing goals necessary?

3) Will the additional time be provided in the same environment or is there a need to vary the setting(s) in which the services are delivered?

4) Is there a need for a combination of instructional staff and related service providers who will be responsible for implementing the services?

Again, the first example does not provide any information or data to support the decision. While the parent's proposal was accepted, the IEP Team does not cite any source of data to justify the acceptance. The second example cites an evaluation provided by the parent with anecdotal information provided by the classroom teacher to support the decision.

In conclusion, recording decisions in the Prior Written Notice can be challenging. In some cases, there have been extensive discussions during the course of the IEP, perhaps making it difficult to capture all the information. Keeping track of all proposals and the decisions that accompany those

proposals is essential. Tying the decisions to either an evaluation procedure, assessment, record and/or report will assist IEP Teams in making decisions while negating the risk of decisions being based on emotions or speculation.

DEAR MS. M
Gifted Education Questions Answered

Dear Ms. M,

What does the new Gifted Budget Code for New Mexico mean for schools?

In March 2025, New Mexico introduced a new rule that changes how schools handle funding for gifted education. The gifted budget code is the fulfillment of the 2023 Gifted Rule update, a big step forward in ensuring that gifted students get the support they need. I interviewed Christopher Vian, the Gifted Specialist at the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), to find out more

about the new code and how it'll affect schools across the state.

Q: What was the new gifted budget code rule that passed earlier this week?

Join me for the May edition of Compliance Corner when we will discuss the remaining provisions of the PWN regulations.

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.
The new rule, called Code 4050, is a pretty exciting change for gifted education in New Mexico. For the first time ever, gifted education funds will be tracked separately. This means that every dollar spent on gifted students will be accounted for, making sure that funds are actually going to support those students. The goal is to make it clear how districts are using these funds to support gifted programs, and schools will now report these expenses in their Gifted LEA Plan. It's all about creating a system that's more focused and transparent.

Q: What does this mean for New Mexico's school districts and charter schools?
For districts and charter schools, this rule is a game changer. Now, they will have specific funds just for gifted education, making it much easier to ensure that gifted students get the resources they need. Christopher Vian mentioned that it's a great opportunity for schools to be more intentional with their gifted programs. However, he also expects there might be some bumps along the way, especially since this is the first time a budget code like this has been put in place. But overall, it's a move that will improve the quality of education for gifted students.

Q: What does this mean for budget allocation?
With this new code, districts will need to allocate a specific amount of their budget to gifted education. Every gifted student generates funds, which are detailed in the

New Mexico's Technical Assistance Manual (TAM), available on page 8. This will help schools better understand how much funding they'll receive based on the number of gifted students they have. The key is to work with the district's budget office to make sure those funds are reported correctly. If a district hasn't identified any gifted students, they won't get any funds until they do, so it's important for schools to start identifying students to ensure they're receiving the right resources.

Q: What if a school district has never had a gifted budget? Who do they need to talk to, and what do they need to do?
If a district has never had a gifted budget before, the first step is to reach out to the NMPED. The team there can guide schools through the process of setting up their gifted education budget. The district will need to start identifying gifted students because that's what drives the funding. Vian stresses that it's crucial for schools to identify gifted students according to state guidelines to ensure they can receive the funding.

Q: How is the reporting and tracking going to be done?
Tracking and reporting for gifted education will follow the same procedures as the rest of the school budget. However, Vian will be specifically looking at gifted education expenditures and offering support to schools throughout the process. Schools will need to keep detailed records of how the gifted funds are being spent, whether it's on teachers, materials, or enrichment programs. The goal is to ensure that the money is being used effectively and transparently.

Q: How can we use these gifted funds?
The gifted funds can be spent in a variety of ways. For personnel, schools can use the funds to support gifted teachers, subject matter experts, instructional assistants, and even social workers if they're working with gifted students. The funds can also cover substitutes for professional development or for teachers taking time off.
When it comes to supplies, the funds can be used for everything from textbooks, software, and technology to classroom materials and student travel for enrichment opportunities. There are a lot of options for how the funds can be spent, as long as they directly benefit gifted students.

Q: Can it be used for professional development?
Yes, absolutely! The gifted funds can be used to provide professional development for teachers, which is a big deal. Educators will have the opportunity to attend workshops, training sessions, and conferences that help them learn more about how to best support gifted students. This could include training on differentiated instruction or understanding the social and emotional needs of gifted kids. The goal is to ensure that teachers have the tools they need to make a real difference for gifted students.

Q: Can it be used for gifted teachers?
Yes, the new budget code can definitely be used to support gifted teachers. Schools can use the funds to pay gifted teachers, provide stipends, or even hire new staff specifically focused on gifted education.

This is a great way to make sure that gifted students have educators who are well-equipped to support their unique needs. Additionally, schools can use these funds to hire coordinators or specialists to oversee gifted programs.

The new gifted budget code is a huge step in improving how New Mexico supports gifted

students. By ensuring that funds are tracked, allocated correctly, and used intentionally, the state is creating a system that's more focused on meeting the needs of these students. While there may be some growing pains as schools adjust, the hope is that this new system will lead to more effective and targeted resources for gifted education

By 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. Kate is the president-elect of the New Mexico Association for the Gifted..

From Chaos to Calm
By Rene Rohrer, M.A.
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APRIL 2025

SEL: The Power of Self-Management for Educators in the Classroom

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a vital component of education, fostering the

emotional intelligence students need for academic and personal success. At the core of SEL is self-management, an essential skill that enables both educators and students to regulate emotions, behaviors, and thoughts effectively. When teachers harness the power of self-management, they create a classroom environment that promotes learning, resilience, and positive social interactions. This article explores key concepts of self-management, including co-regulation, self-regulation, mindfulness, and tools like the "*Zones of Regulation*". It also provides practical strategies for integrating SEL into daily instruction.

Understanding Self-Management in SEL

Self-management is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. It includes skills such as self-regulation, stress management, impulse control, goal setting, and self-discipline. When educators develop strong self-management skills, they model these behaviors for students, who in turn learn to manage their emotions and behaviors effectively. One of the foundational skills within self-management is self-regulation. Self-Regulation is the ability to recognize, identify, and manage our emotions. We must begin with the ability to recognize feelings, to identify our own feelings in the moment, and to identify and apply appropriate strategies that support our ability to regulate and be ready to learn and engage. Educators can model self-regulation skills, co-regulate with students, and

support students in building those skills within themselves.

Co-Regulation: Partnering with Students to Build Self-Regulation

Co-regulation is the process by which educators support students in managing their emotions until they can self-regulate independently. This can be especially important for younger students or those who struggle with emotional regulation. Students might not have had the models or may have other barriers to the development of self-regulation skills, such as trauma or neurodiversity. Educators can engage in co-regulation through modeling, validating students' feelings, and providing safe and supportive environments. In this way, we can partner with students so that they can identify, practice, and build the necessary self-regulation skills.

__Strategies for Co-Regulation__:

1. Coach and Reinforce: Verbally acknowledge and validate students' emotions and guide them toward constructive responses. Acknowledge when they have taken steps, however tiny, towards self-regulation.
2. Modeling Calm Behavior: Demonstrate deep breathing, a calm tone, and controlled movements when responding to challenging situations. Think aloud around the use of strategies in the moment and across the school day.
3. Create Safe Spaces: Create a designated calming area in the classroom where students can self-regulate with sensory tools, fidgets, or reflection journals. Teach students when and how to use the safe spaces, navigating in and out as needed throughout the school day.

4. Empathy and Validation: Show understanding of students' emotions without judgment, validating their emotions, reinforcing that all feelings are acceptable, and discerning between who the student is and how they behave. Supporting students to identify and communicate their needs and emotions pro-socially.
5. Regulation Routines: Implement daily check-ins using tools like mood meters to help students recognize their emotions and plan regulation strategies. Give them opportunities to practice and to learn new skills when they are regulated. Use consistency and routine to build habits and skills for regulating their own emotions and managing their own behavior.

Here is a great visual with steps for co-regulation in the classroom. *Retrieved March 2025 from* https://turnaroundusa.org/what-is-co-regulation-and-what-does-it-look-like-in-the-classroom/

Co-Regulating Moves	This Might Look Like:
Set the scene	Using lighting as a cue – dimmer to bring the energy down, brighter to bring the energy up
Match volume and tone	When a situation is escalating, keeping a quiet or moderate volume with a serious, calm, steady tone
Check your physical presence	Getting on students' eye level to balance power
Use reflecting language	Naming the emotions students express as a way to show you are listening to or seeing them
Prompt strategies and choices	Remind students of available supports or strategies, when they might not be at their best

Self-Regulation: Empowering Educators and Students

Self-regulation builds upon co-regulation, equipping students to manage their emotions and behaviors independently. For teachers, their own self-regulation is crucial in maintaining a positive classroom climate and preventing burnout. Students learn behavior socially and through models within

their environment. It is critical to integrate the teaching and learning of these key social emotional skills across the school day. This can be done through modeling, through direct instruction, or through integration using social situations such as group work or morning meeting.

Strategies for Self-Regulation:

1. Mindful Awareness: Engage in mindfulness exercises such as deep breathing, meditation, or grounding techniques to maintain emotional balance. This can be done at any level and there are many fantastic resources on YouTube or online that support integration into your classroom routine.
2. Cognitive Reframing: Practice positive self-talk and reframe challenges as opportunities for growth. This speaks to the need to model and teach a growth mindset and the ability to reframe situations with language and perspective that results in more fluid thinking.
3. Structured Routines: Establish predictable classroom procedures to provide stability and reduce stress for both teachers and students. Predictability allows students to focus more on what they are

learning and less on perceived threats or the unknown. Structure and consistency can support students with "felt safety", which supports regulation.

4. Emotion Labeling: Teach students to identify and verbalize their feelings, making it easier for them to choose appropriate responses. Students cannot manage a feeling if they are not able to identify and communicate their feelings in the moment. Once they are able to identify and communicate what they need, the next step can be identifying and applying a strategy that works for them.
5. Self-Monitoring Tools: Encourage throughout students to use self-assessment checklists to reflect on their emotions and behaviors the day. This can be any visual or tool that students are taught how to use. The generalization of a tool comes from knowing how to use it, being able to practice it across situations and settings, and being reinforced for using it. *"Zones of Regulation"* *https://zonesofregulation.com/* is a great resource.

Teaching Self-Regulation Across the School Day

Self-regulation should be embedded into daily classroom activities to reinforce the development of these skills in a natural and ongoing manner. Here are some common activities that can support this implementation.

Morning Meetings:
- Use morning meetings to model, teach, and practice social emotional skills.

-

Panorama Education Resource Responsive Classrooms

Morning Meetings: Building Community in the Classroom   YouTube
YouTube · Edutopia · Oct 3, 2017

In this video

00:41 Benefits of Morning Meetings
01:08 Parts of a morning meeting
01:18 Greeting
02:36 Glitter Jar

Video Link: https://youtu.be/U6_pLkwaCeY

Instructional Time:

- Integrate movement breaks to help students release energy and improve focus.
- Teach coping strategies, such as positive self-talk or stretching exercises, to help students manage frustration during challenging tasks.

Video Link: https://youtu.be/SsKLihqkcd0

Transitions:

- Implement countdowns or soft music to signal transitions, helping students shift gears with ease. You-Tube has many timers paired with calming music for transitions.
- Use visual schedules to provide students with a sense of predictability and control.

End-of-Day Reflections:

- Allow students time to reflect on their emotions and behaviors, discussing what strategies helped them self-regulate.
- Encourage goal setting for the next day, reinforcing a growth mindset.

Teacher Toolbox

Teacher Toolbox – April 2025

By Margaret Wood, Speech-Language Pathologist and TAP Consultant mwood@ces.org

Video Link: https://youtu.be/yt8q9BS_xaY

Mindfulness in the Classroom:
Mindfulness helps students stay present, manage stress, and develop emotional awareness. Educators can integrate mindfulness into daily routines through breathing prompts and exercises, sensory activities, or movement and yoga breaks.

Self-management is a foundational skill in SEL, shaping both educators' effectiveness and students' ability to navigate challenges successfully. Incorporation of SEL into the learning community supports emotional well-being and academic achievement. By incorporating these strategies into daily routines, teachers empower students to develop the resilience and self-discipline needed to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

Inclusion Strategies for Students with Autism:
Creating confident educators via quality professional development

The basic idea of inclusion is a general education setting where students learn together – both with and without learning differences. Inclusion is a term tossed

around quite frequently in the education setting but is often misunderstood and not always effectively implemented. With adequate planning and professional development support, educators can provide inclusive classrooms that will bring significant benefits to all students. For students with autism, inclusion often leads to improved social functioning, via learning age-appropriate and expected social behaviors and communication techniques through observation and peer interaction, which would not otherwise be available in a self-contained setting. Simultaneously, non-autistic students benefit by developing empathy, understanding, and acceptance of differences, which prepares them for a diverse world outside of school.

If you have been in education for any amount of time, you may recall that IDEA requires students with disabilities to be accommodated in the general classroom "to the maximum extent possible." To determine this, an educational team must answer two questions:

- Can an appropriate education in the general education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services be achieved satisfactorily?
- If a student is placed in a more restrictive setting, is the student "integrated" to the "maximum extent appropriate"?

It is true that in some cases, it may not be possible to meet certain needs in the general classroom. When this is the case, schools must make every effort to meet those needs before determining that the student must spend part or all of their educational day in a different setting. However, we must keep in mind that the goal of inclusion in education is to default to providing an education in a general classroom, using the standard curriculum, whenever possible. This may be a challenging undertaking for some districts with fewer resources. Many students require special accommodation and specialized school staff and programming to be in place for this to be achieved. For example, students who require more intense individualized (one-on-one) support, may require more than one educator in the inclusion classroom, such as:

- Co-teachers, who split their time between general instruction and student support

- Special Educators (SPED), who may "push in" or "pull out" of classrooms as needed
- Paraprofessionals (aka educational or teacher assistants) who support students one-on-one or in small groups

In addition, students with ASD or other needs will often need special accommodation, such as changes in seating or access to specialized devices or materials. Regardless of the type of inclusive settings typically available in your school, it is critical that all school staff that interact with students be provided with quality professional development to equip them with the skills and confidence that will create a successive inclusive setting for all students. Thankfully, New Mexico educators have free access to the Technical Assistance Program offerings through Cooperative Educational Services (www.ces.org). This Professional Development (PD) is a valuable complimentary resource for educators, ancillary staff & administrators and is available to provide support on this topic of inclusion – and many others through live-virtual workshops, previously recorded topics available in the webinar library, and monthly articles like the one that you are currently reading!

Consider the following inclusion strategies to support your students:

1. Use Visual Schedules and Supports to Build Independence
- Visual Schedules: Scheduling and planning ahead are critical preparation strategies. Uncertainty is often the root of the anxiety that is triggered by a transition. Implementing use of daily schedules for the entire class and

individualized schedules for students who struggle more with uncertainty can be an absolute game changer! Providing a classroom schedule for the day, for classroom rules and routines, and sometimes a student-specific schedule provides students with concrete knowledge of what to expect and gives them a sense of control, especially when you involve them in the development of the visual support. First-then schedules are simple and can be used with all ages and developmental levels. It provides the student with a clear expectation of what needs to be completed now and what will happen next, using simple language and clear visuals.

https://images.app.goo.gl/5joBvJmeYWzLutEX6

https://images.app.goo.gl/RYRBi9LskcQAKi5M6

https://autismclassroomblog.blogspot.com/2014/09/morning-routines-in-autism-classroom.html

- Visual Timers and Countdowns: are also evidence-based supports that support all students in the inclusion setting. Many students benefit from seeing "how much time do I have left" before needing to transition to the next setting and/or activity. One tool that may be helpful (especially to students who are still learning

time concepts) is the "time-timer" (www.timetimer.com) which can be set to any number of minutes up to an hour. The red section slowly disappears, providing the student with a visual representation of the time they have left to finish their task before the next transition/task begins. A visual countdown is a related tool where the student is shown how many steps are left until the transition. This defines clear starting and ending points, providing students with some control over their environment, thereby increasing compliance and other positive behavior choices (see examples).

https://images.app.goo.gl/LfEyBChARjsw3EKZ7

Be sure to check out the next CES-TAP *"Autism Toolbox Series: Visual Supports Across All School Settings"* live-virtual webinar on Thursday April 6th for many helpful easy-to-implement tips and tools for your toolbox to help you support all students in many ways, including transitions (see link at the end of this article for more information).

2. Prepare for Over-stimulation, Stress, or Possible Meltdowns

Misunderstandings, over stimulation, or communication breakdowns can easily lead to frustration and even a meltdown. Consider implementing the following evidence-based preparation strategies to improve compliance and other positive behaviors:

- Calm Corner: This could be a desk with dividers or a small area in the corner of the classroom with a bean-bag chair and some headphones. Ideally this area should have a few calming items your student enjoys (e.g., stuffed animals, weighted lap pads, vibrating toys, hand fidgets, etc.) and should never be used as a form of punishment. Make sure this area is free of distractions. Once the student is calm, use the break area to teach other self-regulation techniques, such as using their "sensory toolbox" (see below).

- Sensory Breaks: A sensory or "brain break" is just a break from seated learning activities or sedentary activities. For children with sensory needs, this is often referred to as a sensory diet or sensory break. It is a time for them to gain the sensory input they need in their bodies to stay alert, on task, and focused. For children or adults with modulation disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD), or Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) have difficulty regulating the sensory input they are receiving, which is why sensory breaks are SO important for them.

https://myboardmaker.com/

3. Teach Transitions & Waiting Strategies:
We transition from one setting to another and from one activity to another constantly throughout the day. Children with ASD, developmental delays, and other needs often have a need for routine and predictability. These students frequently have trouble coping with unexpected changes in their routine. Some students may not recognize the subtle cues that signal a transition is coming and do not understand what is coming next or they may be confused by unclear expectations, which often results in them feeling confused, unprepared, and frustrated. Consider the following transition techniques to decrease your students' anxiety by increasing their overall sense of control:

- *"Ease-in" Proactive Warning Strategy*: Tell students about an upcoming change as soon as possible. If you have a zoo field trip planned for next Friday, explain to the students what the schedule for that day will look like, using visuals for easier recall. Explain what parts of the event are within our control (e.g., deciding what day to go to the zoo) and identify other parts that are outside our control (e.g., the weather that day). If you heard the weather report is predicting possible thunderstorms, prepare the class by explaining how that may put the class in danger (so they understand the "why" behind why plans may change. Taking time to also explain what "Plan B" might look like, (e.g.,

going on a "virtual" fieldtrip to the San Diego Zoo live cameras instead) can ease the stress of uncertainty, as we are unable to control the weather.

- *Priming - Setting Expectations ahead of Time:* Reviewing the expectations of an upcoming situation (e.g., going on the zoo field trip), prepares all students for the change of the normal routine as well as the behavioral expectations for that context. Detailing expectations in advance, such as explaining how you will travel from the school to the zoo and what behavior is expected on the bus vs. when at the zoo or at the park eating lunch can prepare students for the uncertainty of the many transitions within this event that is not part of their typical daily routine. For more transition tip ideas, read my October 2024 Teacher Toolbox article: https://www.ces.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Teacher-Toolbox-Transition-Tips-October-2024.pdf

Inclusive education and diverse classrooms encourage differentiated instruction and personalized learning approaches, which benefit students with and without special education needs. Successful inclusion programs promote a welcoming environment where differences are valued and learning opportunities are accessible to all children. No matter what role we play in a child's life, the implementation of these inclusion strategies is a worthy investment of our time and energy!

References and Resources

https://www.incredibleyears.com/blog/autism-in-the-inclusive-classroom

https://nationalautismresources.com/inclusion-strategies-for-students-with-autism/

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10566509/

https://www.weareteachers.com/what-is-inclusion-in-education/

Read on to find out the next topics in the Autism Toolbox Series…

Be sure to register for the next complimentary live virtual professional development workshop AUTISM TOOLBOX SERIES: Visual Supports Across ALL Settings

Go to https://www.ces.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Visual-Supports-Across-All-Settings-All-Day-4.3.35-.pdf to register.

AUTISM TOOLBOX SERIES
Visual Supports Across ALL Settings
April 3, 2025

Margaret Wood, MA/CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist/TAP Consultant
mwood@ces.org

You may also view the previously recorded webinars on this topic in our webinar library at www.cestap.org.

Go to https://www.ces.org/ and click on CES+ for more information!

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT CES

Ancillary Openings:
- Audiologist – Region 2
- Behavior Management Specialist – Region 4
- Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant – Regions 2, 4, 6, 7
- Certified Orientation Mobility Specialist – Regions 1, 2, 4
- Diagnostician – Region 4
- Occupational Therapist – Regions 2, 4
- Physical Therapist – Regions 1, 2, 4
- Registered Nurse – Region 1
- School Psychologist – Regions 4, 7
- Social Worker – Regions 1, 2, 4
- Social Worker (regular ed) – Region 2
- Speech/Language Pathologist – Regions 2, 3, 4

Other CES Openings:
- Professional Services Staff

Watch for CES job postings on *www.indeed.com.*

CES NEW STAFF

Hello. My name is Doug Marshall, and I am the new Information Technology Director at CES. I am a highly experienced IT professional who has been working mainly in the Defense / Aerospace sector for the last 17 years. However, I have worked in other diverse private industries including material conversion and industrial food processing as an IT administrator and applications programmer. I am married going on 35 years with one daughter, who is an officer in the US Air Force currently training to be a helicopter pilot. We also have been foster parents for over 16 years and have two foster daughters.

Katherine Densmore is a new addition to the Purchasing Specialist team. Katherine has held many roles throughout her 8-year accounting career, most recently working with a contract furniture dealership. Katherine loves to innovate in her role whenever possible and has previously created tools such as spreadsheet templates that have improved workflows and become standard use. She aims to contribute to the CES team not only in reliability, output, and workload support, but as a palpably positive presence bringing uplifting energy. In her free time, Katherine loves to draw and create products using her art, and she sells them at numerous local markets and fan conventions.
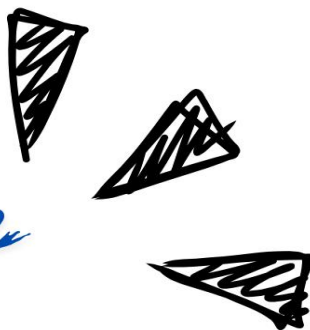
I am Ronda Romero. I grew up in Belen, New Mexico. I have two cats, Meeko and Mushu. I am a master gardener! (just kidding). But I have not killed the plants I currently have, so I feel I am contributing to the world's oxygen level. Previous employers have included Floor Coverings International and Lowe's. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with CES as a Purchasing Specialist.

BULLETIN BOARD

NEW MEXICO NMASBO
NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS

Spring Budget Workshop
April 9-11, 2025
Sandia Resort & Casino
Albuquerque, NM

2025 School Law Conference

June 5-7, 2025

Albuquerque, NM

The New Mexico School Boards Association and the Cuddy and McCarthy Law Firm will host the 46th Annual School Law Conference for school board members, superintendents and school personnel. The conference features presentations on the latest legal issues facing public education and includes numerous breakout sessions to assist new and veteran school board members, administrators and educators.

For those interested in exhibitor or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Carolyn Mole, Finance Director. For those interested in presenting information or workshops please contact Lorraine Vigil, Program Director

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 983-5041
Fax: (505) 983-2450
Hours: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

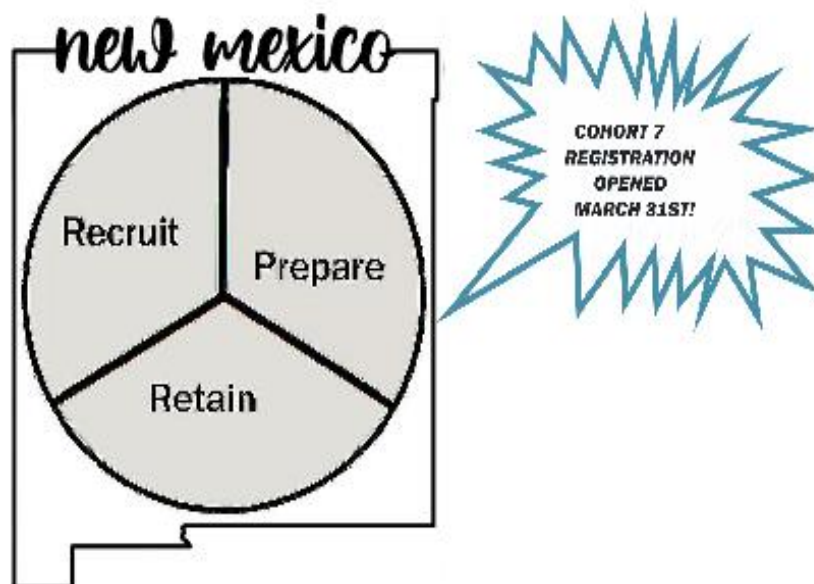| Carolyn Mole	Lorraine Vigil
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LEAP is an **alternative-licensure program** for teachers throughout New Mexico and accredited by NMPED, a credentialing program **offered by CES** in Albuquerque.

COHORT 7 REGISTRATION OPENED MARCH 31ST!

LEAP is staffed by career educators who support new teachers as their instructional coaches across the state and who coach teams of educators during their cohort (LEAP) year. Candidates in LEAP are full-time teachers of record in a classroom who enter the program by an application and interview. Each July after a Pre-Service (induction to teaching), they are candidates in LEAP for the following 11 months of professional development (PD), they participate in a cohort model with a 200-member state-wide network of early-service educators and are trained monthly (in Methods, virtually in the evening) and in PD (on Saturdays, once monthly, all day, mostly in person, in 3 regions) during their LEAP year.

Upon completion of LEAP, completers are provided a program **Transcript** and **Certificate of Completion** and support to apply to NMPED for their licensure, which enables them to obtain a **Level 1 teaching license** in **New Mexico**.

Celebrating Excellence: CES+ LEAP candidate LeeAnn Oliver named Loma Heights Elementary Teacher of the Year!

We are thrilled to celebrate LeeAnn Oliver, a 2nd-grade LEAP teacher at Loma Heights Elementary in Las Cruces, recently named Teacher of the Year at her school! This is an incredible achievement for any educator, but it is even more remarkable that LeeAnn is in her first year of teaching and is a candidate completing LEAP.

LeeAnn's dedication, passion, and ability to create an engaging learning environment have made a lasting impact on her students, their families, and her colleagues. She was nominated for this honor by the parents in her classroom, who see firsthand the difference she makes in their children's lives. Her fellow teachers also recognized her outstanding work and voted for her to receive this well-deserved recognition.

LeeAnn often shares that her colleagues ask, *"How do you know so many great teaching strategies?"* Her answer is always the same: LEAP. She credits the program for equipping her with the tools, knowledge, and support to become the educator she is today. She says she has learned so much through LEAP and could not have become the teacher she is without it.

This award reflects her hard work, dedication, and commitment to student success. LeeAnn's coach during her LEAP year is Angela Stock, and Angela shares: *"As her coach, I commend LeeAnn Oliver for consistently demonstrating exceptional professionalism, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to student success. She submits assignments ahead of deadlines, actively participates in all professional development sessions, and generously supports fellow teachers. Beyond her diligence and teamwork, LeeAnn is deeply invested in the success of each of her students. She teaches with empathy, ensuring that every student feels seen, heard, and valued. Through my classroom observations, I have seen firsthand how she implements all strategies learned through the LEAP program, seamlessly integrating them into her teaching to foster engagement, growth, and achievement. Her keen awareness of her students' needs allows her to tailor her instruction in a way that nurtures both academic and personal development. Her proactive approach, collaborative spirit, and passion for education make her an invaluable asset to our school community and a truly deserving candidate for Teacher of the Year."*

Congratulations, LeeAnn!

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