



Simplify procurement.  
Maximize results.



## The Advantages of Using CES as Your Cooperative Purchasing Tool

*Why public entities trust CES to support smart, efficient, and compliant procurement.*

CES has served the public sector since 1979, providing members a trusted, transparent, and audit-ready path to procuring the goods, services, and solutions they need. Whether you are a school district, municipality, county, charter school, higher-education institution, tribal government, or other publicly funded entity, CES exists to simplify complexity, reduce risk, save time, and strengthen outcomes.

Below is a comprehensive overview of the advantages members experience when they choose CES as their cooperative purchasing tool.

### 1. Guaranteed Procurement Compliance

CES contracts are competitively solicited, evaluated, and awarded in strict accordance with procurement statutes.

# CES MEMBER NEWSLETTER December 2025

- Feature Article
- Calendar of Events
- Purchasing News
- Construction Corner
- Education Articles
- CES Job Opportunities
- New CES Staff
- Bulletin Board
- CES Contacts

Benefits include:

- **Reduced legal and audit exposure**—every contract is bid by CES using a fully compliant process.
- **Confidence in every purchase**—members rely on CES as a shield against missteps, bid protests, and inconsistencies.
- **Bonding, tax, and wage-decision alignment**—CES actively helps members avoid common pitfalls.
- **Audit-ready documentation**—CES retains all solicitation, scoring, and award materials.

### 2. Significant Time Savings for Your Staff

Writing RFPs, managing evaluations, and documenting procurement can consume weeks or months of staff time. CES removes that burden.

Members benefit from:

- **Immediate access to awarded vendors**—no need to run your own competitive solicitation.

- **Faster project timelines**—from construction to IT to classroom supplies.
- **Streamlined quote processes**—vendors already understand CES requirements and documentation standards.
- **Fewer meetings and administrative delays**—your staff can focus on operations, not procurement paperwork.

### 3. Financial Efficiency and Cost Avoidance

CES helps public entities stretch limited budgets by leveraging cooperative volume and ensuring transparent pricing structures.

#### Advantages include:

- **Cost-competitive contract pricing** established during CES solicitations.
- **Avoiding costly bidding processes**—saving thousands per avoided RFP.
- **Vendor administrative fee is built-in** and cannot be passed on to members.
- **No membership cost**—membership is free for eligible public entities.
- **Better alignment between quotes, invoices, and PO requirements** prevents costly redo-work or delays.

### 4. Quality Vendors You Can Trust

CES carefully screens, evaluates, and awards vendors based on capability, qualifications, experience, capacity, and value.

#### Members receive:

- **Access to hundreds of pre-qualified vendors** across construction, professional services, technology, fleet, medical, instructional, maintenance, equipment, and more.
- **Vendors required to maintain performance**—or risk suspension or removal from contracts.
- **Local, regional, and national vendors** to match every scale of need.
- **Clear contract scopes** so members know exactly what each vendor is permitted to provide.

### 5. Personalized Member Support Statewide

CES is more than contracts—we are a service organization.

#### Members benefit from:

- **Dedicated regional representatives** who assist with projects, vendors, quotes, and compliance – currently assigned full-time in New Mexico, Utah, and Idaho.
- **Hands-on guidance** through the entire procurement process.
- **Rapid escalation assistance** when a project becomes complicated.
- **Training and informational outreach** on wage decisions, JOC platforms, procurement compliance, and more.

CES staff routinely help members navigate obstacles, resolve issues, and ensure the process is smooth from start to finish.

## 6. Flexible Solutions for Every Project

Unlike product-only cooperatives, CES specializes in complex project delivery—especially construction and professional services.

Members enjoy:

- **Flexible quote requirements** based on project type and contract rules.
- **Direct coordination with vendors** for small, medium, and large projects—no project too big or too small.
- **Support for unique or specialized requests** through tailored contract scopes.

## 7. Administrative Simplicity

CES reduces administrative friction by centralizing and standardizing critical processes. **This includes:**

- **Standardized quote formatting** that aligns with contractual, legal, and audit requirements.
- **Guidance on PO accuracy**, ensuring contract numbers, scope descriptions, bonding, taxes, etc., align.
- **Consistent invoice review support** to prevent errors before they delay payment.

## 8. Statewide and Regional Economic Impact

CES plays a key role in strengthening the economic landscape.

Benefits include:

- **Support for local vendors and workforce development.**
- **Encouragement of small businesses and minority-owned enterprises** through transparent, opportunity-focused solicitations.
- **Job creation and retention**—especially through construction and capital projects.
- **Better use of public funds** by reducing waste and duplication of effort.

## 9. Trust, Stability, and Long-term Partnership

CES has decades of experience supporting public entities with integrity and transparency.

Members benefit from:

- **A stable, member-governed organization** that reinvests revenue into member services, not profit.
- **A long history of successful projects**—from small repairs to multimillion-dollar facilities.
- **A culture of service** built around relationships, responsiveness, and reliability.
- **Nonprofit governance**—every decision is made in support of public entities and the communities they serve.

## Conclusion: A Smarter, Safer, Faster Way to Procure

Choosing CES as your cooperative purchasing tool gives your organization more than pre-bid contracts—you gain a partner dedicated to helping you

accomplish your goals efficiently, compliantly, and with confidence.

From compliance protection and time savings to financial efficiency and hands-on support, CES enables public entities to

focus on what matters most: providing excellent services and outcomes for their communities.

*By Jared Bomani*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

12/2 TAP- Gifted Curriculum Development: Talent Pool, Gifted Pull Out, Gifted Options at the Secondary Level  
12/3 TAP- Supporting Students Mental Health Part 2: Defusing Anger and Teaching Alternatives  
12/4 TAP- School Social Supports - For students of ALL ages/levels with ASD or other needs  
12/4-6 NMSBA Annual Convention  
12/7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day  
12/9 TAP- Transition Program Development  
12/10 TAP- Inclusion: Part 3 – Accommodations (Removing Barriers to Learning in Inclusive Settings)

12/10-12 Annual PCSNM Conference  
12/13 National Guard Birthday  
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			

## PURCHASING NEWS

### 1) Contract Extensions:

Claro Consulting 19-05N-C103-ALL Exp. 12/04/26  
Follett School Solutions 19-05N-C201-ALL Exp. 12/04/26  
Global Payments Inc. – (Heartland Payment Systems, LLC dba Heartland School Solutions)  
Exp. 12/04/26  
Insignia Software Corporation 19-05NC202-ALL Exp. 12/04/26  
PCS Revenue Control Systems 19-06N-C102-ALL Exp. 12/04/26

## 2) PaaS / IaaS – Update

CES is diversifying its product offerings. New services: *PaaS* (Procurement as a Service) and *IaaS* (Infrastructure as a Service) are now being offered by CES Procurement.

- We can do bids & RFPs for members, provide consultation services, serve as a fiscal agent.
- Examples:
  - Participating Entity, Region 4 (RFPs, consultation)
  - Member, Region 7 (Construction advisement)
  - State Agency, Region 2 (RFPs, consultation, fiscal agent)

### CONSTRUCTION CORNER

CES offers two types of Job Order Contracting (JOC) construction contracts, each based upon a task catalog for cost proposal development and pricing. There are distinct differences between them and how they are handled.

In using a CES **Gordian**-based contract,

- Gordian provides a dedicated point of contact.
- Gordian provides direct oversight throughout the project development process.
- Gordian participates in a joint scope meeting conducted on-site with member and vendor to develop/confirm the scope of work.
- Gordian sets up the project in the Gordian platform.
- Gordian works with the vendor to create the detailed cost proposal.
- Gordian reviews the detailed cost proposal for scope accuracy and contract compliance.
- Either Gordian or the vendor sends the detailed cost proposal to the member.
- Member reviews the detailed cost proposal.
- Member issues the PO to CES.
- Member uploads the detailed cost proposal and PO into the CES system via the CES Bluebook.

- CES reviews the submission for contract compliance.
- Gordian fee and CES contract administrative fee are included (embedded) in the vendor's price adjustment factor (paid by the vendor).

In using a CES **RS Means** (JOC Core)-based contract,

- RS Means is a vendor-driven platform. There is no direct oversight by a Gordian-type service provider.
- Member coordinates the joint scope meeting with the vendor.
- Vendor sets up the project in the RS Means platform.
- Vendor creates the detailed cost proposal.
- Vendor sends the detailed cost proposal directly to the member.
- Member reviews the detailed cost proposal.
- Member issues the PO to CES.
- Member uploads the detailed cost proposal and PO into the CES system via the CES Bluebook.
- CES reviews the submission for – primarily for contract compliance.
- CES contract administrative fee is included (embedded) in the vendor's price adjustment factor (paid by the vendor).

It is wise to review the vendor's pricing adjustment factors – stored as a part of their contract document in the CES Bluebook – prior to making a purchasing decision. Here are two examples to illustrate the importance of this practice.

As often occurs, a vendor may quote the same (or very closely similar) adjustment factors for both their Gordian and RS Means pricing. If that is the case, you may be able to get the “extra” services offered by Gordian for either no or little added cost by choosing the Gordian-based contract. These contracts have a ‘G’ in their contract numbers. RS Means contracts have a ‘R’ in their contract numbers.

Two separate vendors may offer the same service – through either of the two types of contracts. By reviewing their quoted pricing adjustment factors, you may find that one or the other vendor has quoted a substantially higher adjustment factor. When there is significant distance between the two quoted factors, it is likely that the higher adjustment factor means a more expensive contractor.

Of course, CES JOC contracts are provided so that you can pursue “Best Value” purchasing – as opposed to “Low Bid”

purchasing. Low bid focuses exclusively on the lowest upfront price. Lowest bid often sacrifices durability, reliability, or performance. This creates long-term impacts such as:

- Premature repairs and replacements
- Higher maintenance costs
- Increased downtime or service interruptions
- Additional staff time spent troubleshooting issues

Best Value evaluates overall value, including:

- Quality of materials and workmanship
- Vendor experience and past performance
- Technical solution and approach
- Schedule and project management capacity
- Risk mitigation strategies
- Warranty, service, and long-term support

Best Value allows evaluators to consider total cost of ownership, not just the initial price.

## EDUCATION ARTICLES

### Compliance Corner

December 2025

By Cindy Soo Hoo, TAP Consultant

### Is the Child the Victim of a Bully? Understand the Ramifications Fully (Part 2 of 2)

In the previous edition of Compliance Corner, we discussed the prevalence of bullying among students who are eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the environments or settings in which instances of bullying are likely to occur and the characteristics the victim of bullying may commonly possess. We also discussed the obligations of school districts in making schools conducive to learning where children feel safe without fear of retaliation.

Because a student who is eligible under the IDEA is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education, or FAPE, schools must take additional steps in determining whether a student has been denied a FAPE. If such occurs, schools must take immediate actions to rectify the situation.

School personnel may notice changes in a child's behavior and/or academic performance. These changes in behavior could include:

- Lower Academic Achievement
- Lower Aspirations
- Higher Truancy Rates
- Feelings of Alienation
- Loneliness
- Depression
- Withdrawal

Should school staff detect any of the above indicators, it is incumbent on them to address the changes in a child's behavior. As required by IDEA, school personnel must convene an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. The changes in behavior will likely result in a lack of progress on the part of the student. School staff would determine if the IEP is reasonably calculated in order for the student to make progress in light of his/her circumstances. (*See Andrew F. v. Douglas County School District, 2017*) A review of the student's educational records would be necessary to determine if and how the student has been impacted as a result of being bullied. School records could include:

- Attendance Records (Is there evidence of increased non-attendance?)
- Nurse's Office Visits (Is there evidence of increased visits to see the Nurse?)
- Special Education Data and Related Services Logs (Is there a lack of progress?)

- Discipline Records (Is there an increase in discipline referrals?)
- Grades (Have the student's grades declined?)
- Participation Reports (Is the student no longer participating in class activities/discussions?)
- Work Completion and Quality (Is the student's work of a lower quantity and/or quality?)
- Homework Submission (Is the student no longer completing or submitting homework?)
- Onset of Behavioral Outbursts (Is there an increase in disruptive behavior?)

The above list is by no means exhaustive. School personnel and parents should be cognizant of any changes in a child's behavior. Discussions in an IEP should center around what services and supports the child may require, and the IEP needs to be revised accordingly. Is there a need to increase the supports and services the child is currently receiving? Is there a need to revise the current Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), as applicable? Is there a need to change the environment of the child? In doing so, be cognizant of whether this change could result in a violation of the student's Least Restrictive Environment or LRE. Keep in mind, it would be appropriate to maintain the child in his/her current placement unless doing so would not provide a FAPE for that student.

Ensuring that schools are safe places for learning for all students is the responsibility of all school districts. Districts should have in place anti-bullying campaigns ensuring students, staff and parents that bullying will not be tolerated. For students who are eligible under the IDEA, school personnel have an obligation to ensure the student is not



being denied a Free Appropriate Public Education. School personnel must proactively address any bullying incidents.

*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.*



**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?**

The new rule, called Code 4050, is an 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 working 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.*



***Doin' OK?***

***Mental Health  
Help***

**December 2025**

***By Gina Langley,  
Ph.D. School  
Psychologist  
[glangley@ces.org](mailto:glangley@ces.org)***

### **Holiday Help for Mental Health**

Hello, and thanks for peeking! This monthly article will be devoted to providing Mental Health Help for You, Your Students, Your School – for you in your classroom, toward the general school atmosphere, and just for your own personal psycho-emotional good. Please send questions or let me know of any specifics you'd like to see covered! I'd love to hear from you.

For now: it's Holiday Time! You've already made it through Halloween (thank goodness!) and Veteran's Day (with thankfulness) and even Thanksgiving (too quickly!). Now you're gearing up for End of Quarter and Semester requirements, and trying to keep the students corralled as they anticipate the break. And then, you **have to** come back after the break!! We need you! We can do this.

First step: put your agenda away for a bit and let's look at what our students are facing. Yes, you've got all that end-of-quarter and 1<sup>st</sup>-Semester rigamarole that needs to be done – but so do they, to some extent. And many of them dread those judgements of their performance, and the repercussions when the folks find out! And they've just been through a Thanksgiving break that may have been pretty traumatic. Even if they're in a loving home now, are they maybe dealing with trauma in their families or their histories? Are they hating having to grow up? Is teenage angst feeling pretty overwhelming to them at times? Are they being pressured to do things they know are wrong, or are they being bullied? Are they being bullies? Let's help them first. It will help us all – believe me. Here are some ideas:

- ❖ Movement breaks. Set the timer and make them move every 20 minutes or so. Just a quick stretch, or a stand-up-and-greet-your neighbors for 30 seconds, or a group dance or shake-it-off.
- ❖ Surprise worksheets. Use some bright paper for your next hand-out, or add a big graphic they can color in or finish designing. Hide a “Happy

Holidays, You!” message in the text. Slip in an occasional answer like a special gift. After they hand in their work, draw a happy face on it with a broad marker.

- ❖ Perked-up atmosphere. Invite each student to create a holiday touch to add to the classroom, maybe cycling through the roster so perhaps 4 students get to add a touch each day. A whiteboard drawing? An ornament? A favorite song? You set the parameters and let them know this is a Holiday Gift – nobody is allowed to ruin it for anyone else! Their name goes on the Scrooge List if they do, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> offense might land them in a quiet corner away from the fun. (Maybe that's what they want. Be compassionate to those who can't handle the pep right now.)
- ❖ Plan to spread the cheer. As a class, come up with ways to brighten others' days. Maybe a hand-made ornament for home? A carol in a teacher-friend's room? A sign for outside the principal's window? A longer-term project to look forward to after the holidays? It's just this once a year!

OK – maybe you've got students who would get way too dysregulated with some of these changes. Print out a couple of fun worksheets or craft projects that they can take home – no schedule disruptions! I'll add some possibilities you can use or modify at the end of this article.

So, now for You. What are you doing to take care of your mental health as you plow through your daily to-do's and worry about all of your holiday gotta-do's? Breathe! Get a nice clean pad of paper and make a list of all the things you can think of that need to be done. Sort it into columns or pages as you go - class tasks, administrative requisites, personal gotta's, sure-would-like-to's,.... Just get it all onto paper. Now, open your Calendar app or start a new list as an Agenda. Prioritize and organize your duties and intersperse with some treats. Oops - did you get side-tracked? Don't scold yourself; you must have needed it. Take some movement breaks yourself! This is taking time you didn't plan to set aside, but it's sure going to feel good to not have to worry about what you might be forgetting in all the hubbub, and to check off your tasks as you sail through them later. In fact, it might be a great way to start next semester, too: make the list, organize it, build in some treats,.... Ahh. All set.

Finally, before you go to sleep tonight, and tomorrow night, give some thought to what you're grateful for. Just think how different life would be if we didn't have those loved ones, privileges, reliabilities, and little treasures to make things so much nicer. And for one more little nice thing: figure out how you're going to treat yourself this week, for getting through the tough stuff and planning all the sweet things to help the others in your life to be mentally healthy. Make it a nice treat for yourself and

follow through! Not only do you deserve it, but you need it. Happy Holidays, sincerely.

Go Be OK!

### ❖ WINTER HOLIDAYS WORD SEARCH

H O L I D A Y C H E E R N  
A N G E L S N H A P P Y A  
N O E L O C O R T O Y S T  
U P S B O D H I D D E N I  
K I D G I F T S A N T A V  
K W A N Z A A T N E W S I  
A I T H A N K M Y E A R T  
H T H U D I W A L I F T Y  
T C H I L D R S T A R S T  
T H R E E K I N G S D A Y



❖ *Decorate the star above. Make a bunch; design them as cookies, or as cartoon characters. Or add lots of glitter and use them as ornaments.*

❖ Use the letters in "Winter Solstice" to make as many words as you can.

❖ *Add some details below - maybe a dog? Snowman? Tree? Color it, then draw a nice, simple picture showing your idea of Winter Joy.*



Original artwork by Dilek Altıntaş, Republic of Türkiye



**The Reading Room: Tips  
and Tricks  
Syllable Instruction:  
Part 2  
December 2025**

Last month we went over three syllable types (closed, v-e, and open) In this month's Reading Room, we will be discussing Syllable Instruction: Part 2 (final stable syllable, vowel

teams, and the r-controlled syllable type), and why syllable instruction is important to teach to our students. There are six syllable types in the English language. Syllables are units of sound made by one impulse of the voice, and they are spoken or written units that have at least one vowel and may include consonants that precede or follow that vowel. When encountering unfamiliar words, skilled readers look for syllables, prefixes, and suffixes, which are the underlying structures of the words. When students don't have a strategy for chunking longer words into parts that are manageable, students often look at a long word and resort to guessing or skipping it. Understanding syllable patterns helps students read longer words with accuracy and fluency, not to mention promotes correct spelling. Knowing the syllable type also ensures that students will know how to pronounce the vowel sound (short or long

sound). These spelling conventions are among many that were invented to help readers decide how to pronounce and spell words. As with all of the components of Structured Literacy, syllable type instruction must be explicit, direct, and multisensory. Struggling readers will need lots of practice with each syllable type before moving on to the next one. The three syllable types we are talking about this month are a bit more complex, especially for spelling. We want our students to master each syllable type before introducing another one. This can take time. Once all of the syllable types have been introduced the instructional activities can include all six types. Do not include a syllable type that hasn't been taught, in an instructional activity. We want our students to be working with what they know so that they will develop confidence and not use guessing as a strategy.

#### **Final Stable Syllable (consonant le):**

This syllable type always comes at the end of a word. An example would be the word apple. The syllables are ap-ple. The ple is the final stable syllable or consonant le syllable. Any consonant can precede the le. The e is silent and just functions as the vowel in this syllable type. This is the only syllable type that does not have a vowel sound. Here are some other examples: puzzle, wiggle, maple, bugle, struggle.

#### **Vowel Team/Double Vowel Syllable:**

This syllable type contains a vowel team such as the word boat. The oa is a team that makes the /o/ sound. There are quite a few of these teams. They can occur in the initial, medial, or final position in the syllable. Words with vowel teams can be difficult to spell as there are many options that make the same sound. Here are some examples: jeep, each, autumn, blue, dough, slow, cow.

#### **R-Controlled Syllable:**

The r-controlled syllable type always has a letter team with a vowel preceding the r, such as the word bird. This syllable type can look

like a closed syllable, but the r is such a powerful letter, it skews the sound of the vowel. Examples of r-controlled syllables: turn, fern, star, corn, earth, world.

#### **Example Activities**

#### **Introducing Syllable Types**

#### **Syllable-Types**

#### **Teaching Big Words**

<https://ufli.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Teaching-Big-Words.pdf>

#### **Vowel Teams**

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FqvhLXqtkvs3XowGIPZmNjUsAjvoX7hs7cK3UiuMBck/edit#slide=id.p1>

#### **R- Controlled Word Cards**

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QWFOHSHF9yqZsuDx1lTy8y tsU2qlvYbIRFG9QOPRjA/edit#slide=id.p1>

#### **Long a**

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aIAWtRfEYhOwWYHYEe5DOwtMquB4fVn3ix4bTtx8U44/edit#slide=id.p2>

#### **Consonant - le**

<https://learningattheprimarypond.com/blog/what-are-consonant-l-e-words-what-are-some-ideas-for-teaching-consonant-l-e-words/>

<https://wordwall.net/resource/12783003/reading/consonant-le-short-long-vowel-sound-word-sort>

#### **Resources**

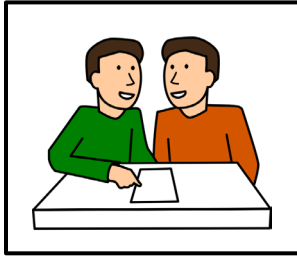
<https://www.howmanysyllables.com/>

For questions, please contact:

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# Teacher Toolbox



## Teacher Toolbox

December 2025

By Margaret Wood, Speech-Language Pathologist and TAP Consultant

[mwood@ces.org](mailto:mwood@ces.org)

### *Students Supporting Students: Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention*

The saying “*It takes a village to raise a child*” can easily be adapted to “*It takes a village to educate a student with autism*”. When we consider this “village”, our mind immediately conjures up the typical educational team members (depending on your district’s resources), often consisting of special and general education teachers, paraprofessionals (education assistants), speech-language pathologists (SLP), occupational therapists (OT), and social workers. Anyone in the educational setting who has worked with a student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) will tell you that this “village” also extends to other critical staff, such as the school nurse, administrators, members of the front office, cafeteria, and custodial staff – all of which frequently interact with students with ASD and can also positively impact these students by

modeling expected behavior and providing them with communication and social interaction opportunities. Wait a minute... Haven’t we neglected to consider a crucial majority of individuals at school? Peers comprise most of the population in the school setting, yet we frequently underestimate their abilities and underutilize their skills, as well as their desire to understand and support peers with challenges.

We know that learners with ASD struggle with social impairments and often have limited opportunities to engage in meaningful social interactions with other children without disabilities. Children do not interact the same way with one another when an adult is present; therefore, the autistic child can be excluded from naturally occurring interactions which can inhibit an oftentimes already stunted social repertoire. The National Professional Development Center on ASD states, “*Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII) involves systematically teaching peers without disabilities ways of engaging learners with ASD in positive and meaningful social interactions. PMII meets the evidence-based practice criteria with 15 single case design studies. The practice has been effective for preschoolers (3-5 years) to high school-age learners (15-22) with ASD. PMII can be used effectively to address social, communication, joint attention, play, school-readiness, and academic skills.*” Like any intervention, PMII will not work for every child in every circumstance. However, it has



been proven to work for many children with ASD and is one of the best researched interventions for children with ASD. PMII increases the frequency that learners with ASD will interact with peers without disabilities. Peers often demonstrate increased levels of tolerance, awareness, and acceptance of differences through this process.

Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention involves a group of specific interventions that address social skills of learners with ASD by training and utilizing neurotypical peers to support peers with ASD, such as:

***Integrated Play Groups:*** An experienced adult guides typical peers and children with ASD in a structured and supportive environment through activities purposefully chosen to encourage interaction. The role of the adult is to establish a consistent schedule, coach the peers through play sessions, and encourage the children on the autism spectrum to stay engaged using cues that the child is familiar with.

***Peer Buddies and Peer Tutors:*** Typically developing peers are assigned to be a “tutor” or “buddy” to a specific child with ASD in their class. The typically developing peer is trained to keep a close eye on their buddy; talking to them, playing with them, and staying by their side. This strategy hopes to create opportunities for natural interactions between children with ASD and their typical peer that encourage incidental learning about social behaviors.

***Group Oriented Contingency:*** Unlike a buddy or tutor system, this strategy involves training an entire classroom of children on some social skill behaviors and techniques in hopes of promoting

supportive behaviors among all the students in a classroom with one or more children with ASD. This option can be useful when teachers have limited additional personnel but would like to provide encouragement for the social growth of a student with ASD.

***Peer Networks:*** A group of peers is trained to form a social “network” to provide support for children with ASD in their classroom. Peer network members may learn things such as the communication system used by the child with ASD, how to initiate and maintain conversations, and how to help provide instructions.

***Pivotal Response Training (PRT):*** Adults can intervene by using role-play to train peers to engage in specific behaviors with children with ASD such as: taking turns, providing narration for play activities, encouraging conversation, and modeling appropriate social behaviors.

***Peer Initiation Training:*** This intervention involves training peers specifically on techniques for initiating interactions with children with ASD such as offering to share, requesting assistance, and strategies for gaining the child’s attention.

Consider the following ways to encourage “students supporting students” in your setting:

- Educate peers, establish learning teams or circles of friends to build a supportive community. If you leave it up to the class to pick groups/partners, students with special needs are often chosen last, causing unnecessary humiliation.

- Identify compassionate, dependable peers who model strong social skills to pair the student with (not always the students who have the highest grades).
- Teach, practice, and give feedback to the selected peers so that they can effectively help teach the identified student the targeted skill.
- Provide peers with strategies for eliciting communication or other targeted objectives but be careful not to turn the peer into a teacher. Strive to keep peer interactions as natural as possible.
- During group activities, define the student's role and responsibilities within the group. Assign a role or help him mediate with peers as to what he should do (for example, 'Sallie is the note taker today.') Rotate roles to build flexibility and broaden skills.
- Ask peers to help in supporting transition time. In elementary classrooms, teachers can ask all students to move from place to place with a partner. In middle and high school classrooms, students might choose a peer to walk with during passing period.
- Pair students with autism spectrum disorder with peers while attending special school events such as school assemblies and clubs.
- Encourage peer volunteers at the middle and high school level to support their partner by keeping him/her on task with gentle reminders.

- Support is a two-way street! Assist students with autism in supporting their classmates by utilizing their strengths to build relationships with peers. For example, a student with ASD who excels in computers can teach his/her classmates how to use a computer.

Peer mentorship plays a vital role in creating supportive environments where autistic individuals can thrive personally, socially, and emotionally, contributing to a more inclusive society that recognizes and values neurodiversity. Teaching students how to support one another's needs through patient understanding is a critical role that should be shared by every educator. This worthy investment will positively impact students with and without disabilities in your classroom today - and throughout their lives!

#### References

<https://autism.org/peer-support-in-autism/>  
<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/article/s/incorporating-typical-peers-into-the-social-learning-of-children-with-autism-spectrum-disorders.html>  
<https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/tipsheets/peerinterventionasdtips.pdf>

*For more helpful strategies to support your students with autism and other needs, access the complimentary Technical Assistance Program (TAP), Hot Topic On Demand Library Pre-recorded Webinars at [www.cestap.org](http://www.cestap.org) or register for the next live-virtual Autism Toolbox Series workshop at [www.ces.org](http://www.ces.org).*

# JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT CES

## Ancillary Openings:

- Ancillary Teacher – Regions 1, 4
- Audiologist – Region 1
- Behavior Management Specialist – Region 4
- Diagnostician – Regions 2, 3, 4, 7
- Diagnostician (Bilingual) – Region 4
- Occupational Therapist – Regions 3, 4
- Physical Therapist – Regions 2, 3, 4
- Recreational Therapist – Region 4
- Registered Nurse – Regions 1, 2, 4
- Rehabilitation Counselor – Region 4
- School Psychologist – Regions 2, 3, 4
- Social Worker – Regions 1, 2, 4
- Social Worker (regular ed) – Region 4
- Speech/Language Pathologist – Regions 3, 4, 8

## Other CES Openings:

- Administrative Assistant
- Professional Services Staff



Watch for CES job postings on [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com).

## NEW CES STAFF



As CES's new Administrative Assistant for Leadership and social media, Marisol values innovation and compassion in her daily work, ensuring that all feel supported and understood. With years of experience managing fast-paced office environments, she is known for her accountability, attention to detail, and commitment to creating efficient processes. She is passionate about empowering others and contributing to a positive workplace culture. Marisol is excited to bring her skills to CES and support the organization's mission and team.

### How can the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) support you and your district?

The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) has been in existence since Spring 2015, funded by NMPSIA in collaboration with CES. Decreasing Special Education litigation is at the focus of the TAP support services. TAP offers valuable complimentary ongoing services, resources and quality professional development for educators, ancillary staff, and administrators.

#### TAP Services

- Monthly virtual live interactive presentations via ZOOM
- “TAP Hot Topic on Demand Webinar Library”, direct link, [cestap.org](http://cestap.org)
- Regional workshops
- Phone, email & ZOOM consultations
- Monthly Guidance Articles
- Monthly Special Education Compliance PD for the CES Leadership Program
- Specialized presentations upon request for staff / district PD
- File & program review
- Direct consultation for programing or student related concerns
- Assistance with NMPED Corrective Action Plans, Due Process and OCR Complaints

Contact: Loretta Garcia, Director [lgarcia@ces.org](mailto:lgarcia@ces.org) 505-985-8454



## 2025 Annual Convention

December 4-6, 2025

[2025 Annual Convention Final Agenda](#)

[2025 Annual Convention Registration Form](#)

The New Mexico School Boards Association will conduct its 2025 Annual Convention December 4-6, 2025. The Convention begins Thursday afternoon, December 4 with Newly Elected Training as well as Veteran Board Member Training and our Board of Directors Meeting. On Friday morning, December 5 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 Saturday, December 6 with several breakout sessions on important school governance and public education topics.



**PUBLIC CHARTER  
SCHOOLS of  
NEW MEXICO**

## 2025 ANNUAL PCSNM CONFERENCE

***Theme: Igniting Impact: The Power of Storytelling***

Inviting charter educators, leaders, governing board members, and advocates to delve into the art and science of crafting compelling stories that resonate with diverse audiences. The stories from this year's presenters will equip participants with strategies and insights to leverage their own storytelling that will drive charter advocacy and support, engage stakeholders, build stronger school communities, and highlight school success and impact.

**December 10-12, 2025 | Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort – Santa Ana Pueblo, NM**

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