I. CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Relationships between school districts and other societal institutions and their public opinions and attitudes; relationships with news media; conducting bond campaigns; the use of citizens’ advisory boards.

II. RATIONALE:

Recent changes in our society and economy have substantially increased the need to equip educators--particularly school and school district leaders--with public relations skills. School districts can no longer afford the passive one-way communication programs which had been practiced in the past. Today, savvy educational administrative leaders are marketing their services and accomplishments in a much more aggressive fashion. School districts, in order to compete for shrinking dollars and to fend off unnecessary criticism, must be proactive in dealing with both the internal and the external public. This course is designed to be an integral part of the course work required for the Superintendency Certification and focuses on the ten competencies of SBEC relating to communication, community relations, planning and development, ethics, and finance.

III. STATE PROFICIENCIES AND TExES COMPETENCIES:

These DOMAINS covered in this course consist of:

Domain I--School Community Leadership

Domain II--Instructional Leadership

Domain III--Administrative Leadership

See attached Domains and Competencies related to the superintendent TExES
V. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Examine and explore the history and philosophy of school public relations.

2. Recognize the need for public relations policy and an organized public relations program based on action in the public interest.

3. Demonstrate the importance of two-way communication.

4. Plan, identify and assess the components of an effective school public relations program and the array of internal and external publics it serves.

5. Understand and determine the roles of school and community groups in interpreting the school to its public.

6. Understand, explore and assess the methods that foster effective school-community relationships with the media.

7. Formulate and develop the skills and strategies necessary to organize, administer and assess public relations efforts.

8. Understand and assess community education as both a movement and a communications medium.

9. Explore, determine and assess why public relations is an important management function.

10. Understand, explore and analyze community power/political structures and their impact on support for schools.

11. Design a series of marketing strategies for winning community support.

VI. COURSE TOPICS:

School Public Relations students will be required to address the following topics for superintendency students during the semester:

The Scope of Public Relations
Characteristics of an Effective Public Relations Program
Internal and External Publics and Their Importance
Key Communicators and Their Importance in Successful PR Efforts
Different Types of Communication: Verbal and Non-verbal
Building Confidence in Our Schools
Developing a Public Relations Program for a School District
Policies, Goals and Objectives and Their Importance
Survey Instruments for Collecting Data
Dealing with the Media
Public Relations and Politics
Bond Issues and Strategies for Successful Bond Elections
Public Relations and the School Board
Public Relations and the Improvement of School Climate
School Safety and Crisis Plans for School Districts

VII. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS & ACTIVITIES:

This course will employ a variety of instructional methods to ensure understanding of the public relations function in education as it applies to the superintendency program. Among these methods employed will be the traditional lecture/discussion; clinical experiences with group presentations and guided discovery and interaction; field experiences culminating in attendance at a school board meeting and assessing the public relations implications.

VIII. EVALUATION & GRADE ASSIGNMENT:

The assessment will consist of a 5-8 page position paper relating to some aspect involving public relations principles or strategies; attendance at, and classroom discussion of, a public relations event at a school board meeting; a 60 second school public service announcement suitable for a local radio or television station; a 5 minute speech/presentation called “Facts About Your Schools” or “Good Things are Happening in Our District” designed for presentation to a civic organization and a crisis plan of action. Students will be expected to participate and to interact in a variety of activities relating to the public relations function of an administrator. The grading scale for this class will be based on the traditional scale in that it will be designated that

A--exceeds expectations
B--meets expectations
C--is below expectations

The percentages of the course assignments are:

Class discussion/participation--10%; Sixty second spot--15%; Crisis Plan of Action- 15%; Civic organization presentation/speech--15%; Position paper--45%
IX. COURSE SCHEDULE AND POLICIES:

This is a graduate class. While you are expected to be at every class meeting, the professor recognizes there are certain family/school obligations that may necessitate your missing class. Try to let me know, if possible. The departmental rule on attendance is: one absence allowed with no penalty of grade reduction; the second absence will result in the highest grade obtainable being a “B”; the third absence will result in the highest grade obtainable being a “C”. Three absences and you are strongly encouraged to retake the class at a later date. You should have a classmate obtain any handouts for you, as well as any classroom lecture/discussion notes. Class participation is necessary to receive optimum benefits from this class. All reports, projects, etc. are expected in a timely fashion.

CELLULAR TELEPHONE USAGE IN CLASS:

Cellular telephone usage should be limited to emergency purposes only and cell phone should be on a “vibrate” mode so as not to disturb the class. This should be cleared in advance with the professor. Personal use of cellular telephones including “texting” (usage not related to class or to an emergency) may result in a grade deduction. Please turn off all electronic devices the start of class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/DISHONESTY:

Academic dishonesty, in all forms, including plagiarism, is not tolerated. All written assignments must be in your own words and all quotes and citations from others must be acknowledged in acceptable APA format giving appropriate credit and acknowledgment. Students found responsible for violating this rule and engaging in any form of academic dishonesty will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of University Regulations (see current TAMUCC catalog and student handbook). Please understand the seriousness and recognize it is the student’s responsibility to become acquainted with these regulations and policies. Additionally, students are not to use the same materials for other classes as each class has a different focus. All student work is subject to scrutiny by a commercial computer program, Turnitin, designed to detect plagiarism and to verify originality of submitted work.

DROPPING A CLASS:

I hope you never have to find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be certain it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the
course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10, 2015 is the LAST DAY TO DROP without an automatic grade of “W” this term.

GRADE APPEALS:

As stated in University rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the professor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of dys allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at 361.825.5816 in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disabilities Services office for assistance at 361.825.5816.

STUDENTS NEEDING VETERANS ASSISTANCE:

Students needing assistance with the transition from military to academic life or with appropriate veteran’s benefits should contact the Veterans affairs Office in Cubicle 101 of the Student Services Center or telephone 361.825.2331 or email them.
COURSE INFORMATION:

Time: 7:00 -9:30 p.m.
Days: TH
Dates: January 22-May 7, 2015
Room: Island Hall 158

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:

CLASS MEETING #1: January 22
School Public Relations/Social and Political/Legal and Ethics
   A. Introduction
   B. What is School Public Relations?
   C. Perspectives of Public Relations
   D. Underlying Themes
   E. Social Conditions and Schools
   F. Political Conditions and Schools
   G. Legal Dimensions
   H. Ethics
   I. Building Public Confidence in our Schools

CLASS MEETING #2: FEBRUARY 2
Personal Public Relations
   A. Introduction
   B. Interpersonal Communication
   C. Nonverbal communication
   D. Presentation Tips
   E. Listening Skills
   F. Feedback
   E. Write to Communicate, Not to Impress
   F. Conflict Management

CLASS MEETING #3: FEBRUARY 19
Public Relations Programs
   A. PR Goals and Objectives
   B. Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Programs
   C. Using Technology
   D. Common Mistakes When Starting a PR Program
   E. PR Staff Development
   F. Getting the Job Done
CLASS MEETING #4: MARCH 5

Community and Media Relations
   A. Relationships and Communication
   B. Improving Community Relations
   C. Positive Relationships with Parents

CLASS MEETING #5: MARCH 26

Responding to Crisis
   A. Safety and Security Planning
   B. Crisis Communication
   C. Issues Management
   D. Role of the Mass Media

CLASS MEETING #6: APRIL 9

Public Opinion and Funding Campaigns
   A. Defining Public Opinion
   B. Civic Engagement and Policy
   C. Surveying Opinions
   D. Coalition Building
   E. Community Power Structures
   F. Marketing a Bond
   G. Evaluating the Campaign

CLASS MEETING #7: APRIL 23

Board Meetings and Education and the Art of Politics
   A. National Trends Regarding Openness of Meetings
   B. Executive Sessions and Problems They Create
   C. Discussing Education at Every Meeting
   D. Involving Students and Parents for Maximum PR
   E. Planning the Board Meeting
   F. The Politicizing of Education

CLASS MEETING #8: MAY 7

Class presentation on position paper
Position paper due
X. REQUIRED TEXT(S):


Additionally, the professor will provide materials which will relate to various public relations topics of the course.

XI. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:


Sharp, W.L. and Walter, J. K. (2003). The principal as school manager (2nd ed). Lanham, Maryland, the Scarecrow Press, Inc..


Additionally, students may use the following journals and publications:

Community Education Journal
Journal of Educational Relations
Journal of Educational Public Relations
Public Relations Review
Public Relations Journal
Public Relations Research and Education
The School Administrator
The School Community Journal