EDAD 5368 / 6368: “School Public Relations” (Spring 2017)

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Classroom Bay Hall, Room 128

Class Hours F2F 12:00-2:30 p.m. on 3/3; 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. on 3/22; 4/5; 4/19; 5/3
       Online as scheduled

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines topics related to a school district’s internal and external relationships, with specific emphasis on the superintendent’s role in developing and maintaining those relationships in a positive, ethical, and effective manner. Topics include, but are not limited to, relationships among school districts and other societal institutions; determination of public opinions and attitudes; relationships with news media; conducting bond campaigns; and considerations in planning an effective school public relations program.

II. RATIONALE:

Recent changes in our society and economy have substantially increased the need to equip educators, particularly campus 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 education leaders are marketing their services and accomplishments in a much more aggressive and intentional fashion. To maximize shrinking resources and fend off unwarranted criticism, school districts must be proactive in dealing with both internal and external publics. The course is designed to be an integral part of the course work required for the Superintendent Certification in Texas and focuses on the SBEC-adopted competencies relating to communication, community relations, planning and development, ethics, and finance.

III./IV. STATE ADOPTED PROFICIENCY DOMAINS / TEXES COMPETENCIES:

Domain I--Leadership in the Educational Community

• Competency 1--The superintendent knows how to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner in order to promote the success of all students.
• Competency 2--The superintendent knows how to shape district culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the educational community.
• Competency 3—The superintendent knows how to communicate and collaborate with families and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources to ensure educational success for all students.

• Competency 4—The superintendent knows how to respond to and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context, including working with the board of trustees, to achieve the district’s educational vision.

Domain II—Instructional Leadership

• Competency 6--The superintendent knows how to advocate, nurture, and sustain an instructional program and a district culture that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Domain III—Administrative Leadership

• Competency 8--The superintendent knows how to apply principles of effective leadership and management in relation to district budgeting, personnel, resource utilization, financial management, and technology use.

• Competency 10--The superintendent knows how to apply organizational, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to facilitate positive change in varied contexts

State Certification Examination (TExES): The Texas Examination of Educator Standards is based on the domains and competencies listed in the Test Framework that is a separate handout. Please see the SBEC website, http://www.sbec.state.tx.us, for the framework and the Superintendent Study Guide.

V. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The student will:

• Examine and explore the history and philosophy of school public relations
• Recognize the need for public relations policy and an organized program of public relations based on action in the public interest
• Demonstrate the importance of two-way communication
• Plan, identify and assess the components of an effective school public relations program and the array of internal and external publics it serves
• Understand and determine the roles of school and community groups in interpreting the school system to its publics
• Understand, explore and assess the methods that foster effective school-community relationships with the media
• Formulate and develop the skills and strategies necessary to organize, administer and assess public relations efforts.
• Understand and assess social media as both a movement and a communications medium
• Explore, determine and assess why public relations is an important management function
• Understand, explore and analyze community power/political structures and their impact on support for schools
• Design a series of marketing strategies for winning community support
VI. COURSE TOPICS:

The following general topics will be included in this course. Other topics may be added as appropriate:

- 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
- Building Confidence in Public 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 AND ACTIVITIES:

- Lecture and Discussion
- Research
- Online discussion
- Guest Speakers
- Student Presentations

VIII. EVALUATION, GRADE ASSIGNMENT, AND DELIVERABLES:

School District Public Relations Assessment (30 points maximum): Each student will prepare a summary assessing a school district’s public relations program, using standards adopted by the National School Public Relations Association. Specific guidance on the format and content of the summary will be provided during the first face-to-face class session.

Model District PR Presentation (20 points maximum): Each student will develop and prepare an oral presentation, between 5 and 7 minutes in length, with media component (e.g., Power Point, Prezi, or similar), that would be presented to a community organization on the topic, “Good News About our Schools,” “Facts About our District,” or similar. Quality of both the oral presentation and the media component will be evaluated for a final grade. Specific guidance on the format and content of the presentation will be provided during the first face-to-face class session.

Attendance at Superintendent PR Event / Reflection Paper (20 points). Each student will attend a community event involving a public school district superintendent. Subsequently, a reflection paper of 2-3 pages will be developed describing the event and how evidence was or was not shown of the school public relations principles and goals discussed in class. Specific guidance on the format of and content of the reflection paper will be provided during the first face-to-face class session.
Mini-Quizzes (20 points): Four (4) mini-quizzes will be administered online based on content from the text, lectures, presentations, and online activities and resources.

Class Attendance and Participation (10 points): While it is understood that many students have personal and professional responsibilities to fulfill during the term of this class, regular and punctual class attendance, as well as participation in online experiences, is expected. Thoughtful, collegial participation in online forums is required.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE, EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES:

- This is a hybrid online / traditional course. In addition to online requirements, the class will meet for four (4) traditional “face-to-face” classroom sessions. Availability of outside speakers and opportunities may impact the topics. The detailed class schedule will be distributed during the first class meeting and will be posted on Blackboard. The instructor reserves the right and discretion to change the schedule in order to take advantage of opportunities that may arise during the semester.

- This is a graduate course, and graduate-level performance is expected. Students will be expected to comport themselves accordingly, arrive punctually for class, and refrain from texting or using cell phones during class time. Written assignments will be expected to demonstrate graduate-level writing skills. Students who need assistance with writing skills should avail themselves of assistance at CASA.

- Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Late assignments WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND CREDIT WILL NOT BE GIVEN unless in emergency situations, pre-approved by the instructor. Acceptance of late work and any grade penalties imposed will be at the discretion of the instructor.

- The textbooks are integral resources for this class, as are other readings required by the instructor. Students are expected to read all assigned textbook chapters and additional readings prior to class discussion.

- Attendance and class participation—both online and in class—are expected and will be considered in the computation of the final grade. Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the uses of Blackboard and WebEx in order to navigate the online class environment.

- Professional conduct is expected in this course. Professional conduct includes, among others, interactions with peer colleagues, faculty, timely completion of assigned tasks and responsibilities; adherence to professional ethical standards; and adherence to University policies regarding plagiarism. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary actions. All written work submitted must be the student’s original work and conform to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) available online and via their publications. This means that any substantive ideas, phrases, sentences, and/or any published ideas must be properly referenced to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency in the selling of term papers of other academic materials. It is the student’s responsibility to know all relevant university policies concerning plagiarism. Any documented cases of plagiarism can and will result in dismissal from the course with a failing grade, and may result in other more serious sanctions by the College of Education and Human Development and the University.

- The department aspires to create a safe and diversity-sensitive learning environment that respects the rights, dignity, and welfare of students, faculty, and staff. Diversity means the fair representation of all groups of individuals, the inclusion of minority perspectives and voices, and appreciation of different cultural and socioeconomic group perspectives. We aspire to foster and maintain an atmosphere that is free from discrimination, harassment,
exploitation, or intimidation. Departmental courses will strive to provide opportunity for all students to discuss issues of diversity including, but not limited to, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.

X. Required Texts:

The following text is required reading for this course:


Additionally, the instructor will provide materials which will relate to various course topics.

XI. Bibliography and Resources:

The following represent source material for this course:


The following represent resources that may be helpful in completing the required assignments for this course:

- Bell Library – http://rattler.tamucc.edu/
- EndNote – http://endnote.com/
- OWL at Purdue – http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

XII. Grade Appeals:

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that 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 instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of
days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site 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.

XIII. 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 Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.