EDAD 5361 / 6361: “Current Topics: School Law and Facilities” (Fall 2020)

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…or as scheduled by appointment

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Classroom: Online

Class Hours: N/A (Online Course)

In the event of a campus emergency, please check Blackboard.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an overview of educational administration program content and the opportunity to discuss current issues in administration, which include the structure and function of national, state and local agencies of educational governance and the politics of education.

II. RATIONALE:

This course is designed to complement the superintendent certification program by focusing on issues related to school law and facilities planning. Students will examine theories, principles, and practices. Specifically, students will explore planning for facilities bond issues and the legal impact of historic and contemporary legislative and judicial action on school operations.

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 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 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 9--The superintendent knows how to apply principles of leadership and management to the district’s physical plant and support systems to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.

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:

- Demonstrate an understanding of best practices in school facilities planning
- Demonstrate an understanding of the legal and financial implications related to bond issues and bond elections
- Describe the historical evolution of school law at various levels of government, and the role of the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of government in that evolution
- Distinguish among federal, state, and local roles in implementation of laws and policies
- Identify significant areas of school law and the contemporary implications and applications of those laws

VI. COURSE TOPICS:

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

1) Best practices in school facilities planning
2) Legal and financial implications for school bond issues and elections
3) Historical perspectives on public school law development
4) Federal, state, and local roles in school law development and implementation
5) School board policy
6) Significant school law implications for school districts and the superintendents leading them, including but not limited to:
   - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
   - Religious Freedom / Religious Exemptions
   - Title IX
   - Student Privacy (FERPA)
   - Rights to Freedom of Expression for Students and Staff
   - Educator contract rights
   - Emerging LGBTQ+ Issues
   - Texas Open Meetings Act
   - Texas Public Information Act

VII. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Lecture and discussion
- Research
- Online readings, videos, forums, and meetings
- Guest speakers

VIII. EVALUATION, GRADE ASSIGNMENT, AND DELIVERABLES:
• **Mini-Quizzes (40 points maximum):** Four quizzes assessing mastery of course content will be administered via Blackboard over the course of the semester.

• **Major Project:** School Law Review Research Paper (30 points maximum): All students will submit a research paper with supporting bibliography related to a topic relevant to the school law course content, pre-approved by the instructor. The paper should be between 3500 and 4000 words in length (word processed, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double-spaced), plus title and bibliography page, using APA format for bibliographical citations. A minimum of five (5) sources must be cited, one of which may be an interview with a district superintendent. EDAD 6361 students will have an additional WebEx presentation component as part of this research paper. Additional guidance for this paper will be provided at the beginning of the online course.

• Facilities Reflection Paper (10 points maximum). All students will submit a reflection paper / summary of an interview with a school district superintendent regarding facilities planning and management. With the permission of the instructor, an interview with another designated district official responsible for facilities planning and management may be substituted for the superintendent. The paper should be 2-3 pages in length (word processed, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double-spaced). Additional guidance for this paper will be provided at the beginning of the online course.

• **Online participation (20 points maximum).** Students will be expected to participate in online discussion groups and forum activities.

**IX. COURSE SCHEDULE, EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES:**

• This is a fully online course. The detailed class schedule will be posted on Blackboard on the first official day of class. 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 and manage their time effectively in order to meet all class requirements. 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—all 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.

- I hope that you never 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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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. Consult the Academic Calendar on the university website for the final date to withdraw with a grade of “W.”

- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

- In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

X. REQUIRED TEXTS:

The following texts are required reading for this course:


XI. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES:

The following represents source material for this course:

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

- OWL at Purdue – [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](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](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 Corpus Christi Hall 116.

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.