

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College Of Education and Human Development
Education Leadership Program

EDLE 613 Section DL1 – Education Law for Independent and Nonpublic Schools
3 Credits, Fall 2023
August 23 through December 2, 2023

Faculty

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Prerequisite(s): **EDLE 620; EDLE 690, and EDLE 792.**

Catalog Description: (3:3:0) Provides legal foundations of independent, private, and parochial schools. Examines general principles of contract, statutory, and case law, and applies judicial decisions to nonpublic education environments. Focuses on legal issues, responsibilities, constraints, and opportunities of nonpublic school constituents. Includes component addressing Governing Board Responsibilities and Liability.

Course Overview: Through readings, case studies, court cases, and presentations, students will learn how to analyze and resolve legal and ethical dilemmas, how to interpret, synthesize, and apply contract, statutory, and case laws to PK-12 nonpublic school-based scenarios, and how to use legal research resources.

Course Delivery Method

This 100% online course uses an **asynchronous** format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason e-mail name (everything before "@masonlive.gmu.edu") and e-mail password. The course site will be available on August 21, 2023.

Under no circumstances may candidates participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard, up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers, see:
https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices, see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU e-mail and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.
- **Video/Screencasting Tools:** There will be instances when you will need to use video/screencasting tools to post activities/assignments. ZOOM, Screencast o matic, or Kaltura are among the options you may consider. Select one with which you are most comfortable to record presentations consistent with assignment descriptions and instructions.
- **Group Work:** You will use **Google Docs** to complete the collaborative aspects of your assigned group work. The work products will be posted on Blackboard Discussion Boards for class commentary and assessment.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
 - **Adobe Acrobat Reader:** <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - **Windows Media Player:**
<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - **Apple QuickTime Player:** www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Online Expectations

- **Course Week:** Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will **start** on Wednesday and **finish** on Tuesday.
- **Login Frequency:** Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU e-mail for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least three times per week.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, including viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services if they are struggling with technical components of the course.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- **Workload:** Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section, as presented on the Blackboard course site. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities, and assignments due.
- **Instructor Support:** Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should use the scheduling link on the Bb site to schedule a one-on-one session.

- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them so others do not consider them personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- **Accommodations:** Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Course Learning Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to understand the legal process related to education in the Master's sequence in Education Leadership, with a concentration in Independent School Leadership. All of the program goals are active, to a greater or lesser degree, in this course. Students taking this course will:

1. engage in reflective practice with regard to education law;
2. strengthen and improve their communication skills through class discussion, writing, and collaborative group work;
3. understand the legal implications and responsibilities associated with cultural, economic, and learning diversity;
4. reflect on the intersection of law and ethics and the ethical implications of applying education law to everyday situations in nonpublic schools and
5. learn how to use the Internet to obtain legal information.

Candidate Learning Outcomes

Students will focus on major legal and ethical issues in education. At the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. evaluate school-based dilemmas through the use of philosophical and theoretical ethical models;
2. identify precedent and emerging issues in education law;
3. apply contract, case, and statutory law to issues of school safety;
4. apply federal antidiscrimination law to issues in faith-based and independent schools; and
5. analyze key legal issues in a manner that reveals comprehension of political, social, ethical, and legal influences, specifically the principles, laws, policies, cases, and regulations that are applicable in education as they apply to students with disabilities.

Relationship of Course Goals to Program Goals

This course will enable students to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will prepare them to create and maintain learning environments that value diversity, continual knowledge acquisition, instructional leadership, innovative and ethical decision-making, reflective practice, and successful achievement of all school-aged youth.

National Standards and Virginia Competencies

The course addresses VADOE Competencies and NELP Standards dealing with the legal, ethical, and political context of education. Specific NELP Standards addressed include 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 5.3, and 6.3. Virginia competencies include: c(6) Legal issues and e(1) Philosophy of education that reflects honesty, fairness, caring, and equity. In addition to these competencies, students will develop an understanding of how ethical and legal literacy informs reasonable decision-making consistent with the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA) standards.

NAIS Principles of Good Practice – Equity and Justice

The course addresses the following PGPs:

1. The school establishes the foundations for its commitment to equity and justice in its defining documents (mission, core values, and/or philosophy statements).
2. The school respects, affirms, and protects the dignity and worth of each member of its community.
3. The school uses inclusive language in all written, electronic, and oral communication.
4. The school adopts a nondiscrimination statement applicable to the administration of all of its programs and policies in full compliance with local, state, and federal law. That said, the school makes the law the floor — not the ceiling — for establishing itself as a diverse, inclusive, safe, and welcoming community for all students, staff, and families.

Required Texts

- Russo, C. J., and Permuth, S. (Eds.) (2018). *Legal Issues of Faith-based and Other Nonpublic Schools* (7th ed.). Education Law Association.
- Additional readings and research will be required. Detailed instructions will be posted on the Blackboard course site.

Suggested Web Resource:

- State Regulation of Private Schools:
<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/regprivschl/regprivschl.pdf>

Classroom Materials:

To complete required assignments successfully, candidates must have access to a personal computer with internet access, be able to use basic word processing and e-mail, and access appropriate websites (see suggested resources) for supplemental materials. **Correspondence by e-mail will use your Mason e-mail account.**

Outside-of-Class Resources:

Candidates are required to use Blackboard as part of this course. Vital information for the course will be posted on the Blackboard site; we will communicate regularly through this site. Candidates are required to submit their course assignments electronically using the Blackboard website. Online access is vital for the distance learning aspects of the course and is an integral part of the course participation grade. **All candidates are required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts.**

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

Graded assignments account for 75% of the overall grade, and online course participation accounts for 25%. Each assignment relates to the application of ethics and law in the independent school context. Detailed assignment descriptions are presented on the Blackboard course site. Rubrics for the Performance-Based Assessments and Participation and Reflection requirements are presented on the Blackboard course site. Students are expected to submit all assignments on time, in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

Assignments: (75%)

Participation and Reflection Requirements (25%)

To maximize learning and engagement in the online environment, students are expected to participate actively in asynchronous class discussions asynchronous and synchronous group activities, and serve as critical friends to other students. Each week, there will be assignments, prompts, and activities students must participate in. In this course, participation points are accrued by unit rather than per learning activity. The assessment rubric for class participation can be found at the end of the syllabus. All required learning activities, by session, are listed on the Course Schedule and presented on the Blackboard course site. Completion of the learning activities in accordance with the schedule will allow you to maximize your point yield toward your overall participation grade. All learning activities will time out at the end of each session.

Expectations for Written Work

- Use appropriate grammar.
- Writing should be the caliber of a graduate student.
- Use Times Roman or Arial 12-point font.
- Include a cover page with name, date & assignment.
- Follow APA guidelines (double space, references, etc.).
- Type all work.
- Spell correctly.
- Write clearly.
- Find a good proofreader!
- Avoid plagiarism.

Expectations for Group Engagement

- Each team member has an identifiable role of contribution.
- Use clear transitions.
- Practice conflict resolution and consensus-building.
- Proofread multimedia in use.
- Manage time.

Grading Scale:

A+	=	100 percent	B+	=	89 - 86 percent	C	=	79 - 75 percent
A	=	99 - 95 percent	B	=	85 - 83 percent	F	=	74 percent or below

A - = 94 - 90 percent | B- = 82 - 80 percent |

Course Policies

Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the dates listed on the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted except in emergency situations that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in advance of the due date. Assignments and activities are due as indicated on the Bb course schedule. ALL ASSIGNMENTS must be submitted **electronically through Blackboard**. If you happen to be absent on the day an assignment is due, the due date remains unchanged.

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason e-mail account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ds.gmu.edu>).
- George Mason University takes pride in the diversity of our university community. We aim to create an environment at Mason, in our classrooms and beyond, that is inclusive, inspirational, and focused on the needs of those we serve. Please view the [Mason Diversity Statement](#) for more information.
- Students are invited to share their name and gender pronouns with the instructor and how

best to address you in class and via e-mail. I use she/her for myself, and you may address me as "Regina Biggs" or "Dr./Professor Biggs."

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viaIAhelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/via>. Questions or concerns regarding the use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>.
- **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee" and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as the [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or e-mailing titleix@gmu.edu.
- **For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website:** <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.

Other reminders:

GMU Add/Drop Policy: The last day to drop this class without any penalty is provided on the GMU academic calendar page <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendar/>. It is the student's responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled, as no credit will be awarded to students who are not.

Plagiarism: Students must avoid plagiarizing the work of others. Specifically, when referencing a source or author, students must give appropriate source documentation, and when using direct quotes, students must use quotations, provide page numbers, and ensure that credit is given to the author of the quoted material. If a candidate's work contains plagiarism, the candidate will receive no credit for the assignment.

Copyright: Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, and information from Web sites, including graphics. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to put any graphic that you did not create on your web page unless the materials are made available through a fair use claim or consistent with the TEACH Act.

Academic Integrity & Inclusivity: This course embodies the perspective that we all have differing perspectives and ideas, and we each deserve the opportunity to share our thoughts. Therefore, we will conduct our discussions with respect for those differences, meaning we each have the freedom to express our ideas, but we should also do so, keeping in mind that our colleagues deserve to hear differing thoughts in a respectful manner, i.e., we may disagree without being disagreeable. <http://integrity.gmu.edu/>

Diversity, Religious Holiday: Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

Student Privacy Policy: George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for the release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy <https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/>