

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Education Leadership Program

Fall Term
August 28, 2013 – Dec 18, 2013

EDLE 420 001 Organization and Management of Schools

Instructor: Eric L Stewart
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Class Schedule Information

Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 4:30 pm-7:10pm
Location: Thompson Hall – Room L018
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

EDLE 420 – Organization and Management of Schools – Students will study basic organizational theories and models of leadership and management of schools. The course content will explore theories and models of effective school leadership, with special emphasis on communication skills, system thinking, and personal and organizational change. Class discussions and activities will bridge theory with practical applications in school settings.

Course Textbooks & Materials

Smith, Stuart C. and Piele, Philip K., School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence in Student Learning, Corwin Press, 4th Edition, 2006.

Course Goals

Organizational and Management of Schools is intended to provide students with an opportunity to explore meanings of leadership in schools, the leader's role in school change and restructuring and the ways school leaders make sense of school organization. Students will explore how organizations function and the leadership choices within organizations, and they will have an opportunity to begin to develop a vision of their leadership principles and potential practices. This will be examined within the larger context of American public education.

Student Outcomes

In order to develop leadership competencies, students will deepen their understanding of how organizations function and how leaders influence school change and improvement. At the conclusion of this course successful students should be able to:

1. Articulate their core beliefs about teaching, learning, and leadership, and relate these to their vision of effective school leadership;
2. Understand major perspectives for analyzing organizational behavior and outcomes in schools;
3. Understand the broad governance context of school leadership;
4. Understand state and national standards for school leadership performance and leadership dispositions; and
5. Begin to articulate how they plan to develop their leadership capabilities.

Relationship of Course Goals to Program Goals

This course is intended to introduce students to theory and practice in school leadership. All of the program goals are active, to a greater or lesser degree, in this course. Students will:

- refine their perspectives on education administration as they hone their leadership skills;
- develop a personal philosophy of education and a personal vision relating to their leadership practice;
- assess their leadership strengths and areas for development;
- understand leadership roles in schools and school districts in settings characterized by diversity;
- use various social science perspectives as the foundation for advocacy and change;
- learn how to work with the larger community; and
- enhance their oral and written communication skills.

Evaluation and Grading.

Attendance & Class participation – (15%)

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and to interact with the instructor and other students. It is expected that students will arrive on time and will notify the instructor, in advance, when an unavoidable conflict prevents the student from either arriving on time to class or attending a class. Maximum credit for class participation will be earned by students who are present for each class and who actively engage in class activities and interaction.

Written assignments – (3 different ones at 15% each)

For this class, you will be asked to do a variety of written work that involves developing your leadership capabilities and understanding of the application of organizational theory to

schools.

Class presentations – (two different ones at 20% each)

Each student will make presentations to the class and receive feedback from colleagues. You will be expected to give constructive feedback to your colleagues for their use in analyzing their presentations. Making use of assigned time is a skill that will be emphasized in this class.

Late Work

Assignments are expected to be submitted on the due date. Writing assignments will not be accepted after the due date. Students may revise and re-submit papers to improve their performance. Such revisions are due no later than one week after receiving feedback on the previous draft.

Grading Scale

A+ = 100 percent	B = 83 – 85 percent
A = 95 – 99 percent	B- = 80 – 82 percent
A- = 90 – 94 percent	C = 75 – 79 percent
B+ = 86 –89 percent	F = 74 percent and below

George Mason University Policies and Resources for Students

- Academic integrity (honor code, plagiarism) – Students must adhere to guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- Mason Email – Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- Counseling and Psychological Services – The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- Office of Disability Services – Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor in writing at the beginning of the semester <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- The Writing Center (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- University Libraries (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Libraries provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See <http://library.gmu.edu/>].

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/>

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COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics/Content</u>
8/28/13	Introductions – Syllabus and course expectations Topics: School Leadership in the 21 st Century Characteristics of an Effective Leader Case Study Exercise: <i>Principal “Experiences”</i> Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 1, “The Landscape of School Leadership”
9/4/13	Topics: What is the “ <i>Landscape of School Leadership?</i> ” What are “Essential Acts of Leadership?” Review of the Personal Assignment Assignments: Smith & Piele, Ch. 2 “ <i>Effects of Leadership</i> ” and Ch. 3, “ <i>Portrait of a Leader</i> ”
9/11/13	Topics: Portraits of Effective School Leaders Case Study Exercise – <i>My First Job and Lessons Learned</i> * Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 6 & 8, “ <i>Ethical & Cultural Leadership</i> ” Assignment Due on 9/25
9/18/13	Topics: How Do We Assess Leadership Values? Visionary Leaders: “ <i>My Mistakes and What I’ve Learned</i> ” *

- Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 9&12, *“Accountable & Political Leadership”*
Bring a local school’s Report Card (NCLB)
Assignment Due on 10/23
- 9/25/13 Topics: **Presentations and Round Robin**
AMO – History and Future Implications
Review of Local School Report Cards
Develop questions for Panel of Principals
Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 13, *“Instructional Leadership”*
- 10/02/13 Learned Topic: **Panel of Administrators** – Lessons Learned and Lessons to Be Leading in the 21st Century
Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 15, *“Learning Focused Communities”*
- 10/09/13 Topics: Learning Focused Communities
Case Study Exercise– **Balancing Instruction and Climate**
Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 16 & 17, *“Communication”*
- 10/16/13 Topics: Communicating and **Engaging the Public**
Improving Student Achievement
Case Study – **Working with PTA / PTO**
Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 18, *“Managing Data for Decision Making”*
- 10/23/13 Topics: **Data – Driven Decision Making**, How to Make it Work for Students
Case Study Exercise – Examples from Your Work Sites
Presentations Due Today
- 10/30/13 Topics: How Do I Learn this New Job? – A Panel of Assistant Principals
Assignment: **Mock Interviews**
- 11/08/13 Topics: Presentations on Current Topics
Assignment: Smith & Piele, Ch. 19, *“Allocating Human, Financial & Physical Resources”*
Case Study – Opening a New School
- 11/13/13 Topics: How to Manage Human, Financial & Physical Resources
Presentations on Current Topics and School Board Resource Use
- 11/20/13 Topics: **Presentations** on Current Topics and School Board Resource Use
- 12/04/13 Topics: Presentations on Current Topics
Assignment: What Have I Learned?
- 12/11/13 Topics: What Have We Learned?
What Are Our Next Steps?
Course Evaluation

*- Includes group work or Blackboard discussions

ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Personal Best – 15 %

This assignment borrows an exercise from James Kouzes' and Barry Posner's book, *The Leadership Challenge*. As a part of their studies of leaders and followers, they asked leaders to write a **personal best case**, which they analyzed to discover themes about leader behavior.

For this paper, ask a principal to think back over his/her own leadership experiences as a new principal and choose one that you consider to be a "lesson learned" -- a time when you performed at your peak as a leader but inexperience led to promising to do it differently the next time. Review the experience in your mind, and ask / principal the following:

- What characterized the situation? Who was involved, where and when did it take place, and who initiated the situation?
- What motivated you to get involved? How did you challenge yourself and others?
- How did you build enthusiasm and excitement? How did you involve others and foster collaboration? How did you build trust and respect?
- What principles and values guided you and others? How did you set an example?

The above helps you describe a leadership situation. To complete the paper, utilize Michael Fullan's model of leadership as an analytic tool, as follows: **In what ways did you excel as a leader in the situation you described? What might you have done differently to enhance your performance? What lessons did you learn about leadership from the experience?** This is a short paper (3-4 pages), which should be typewritten and double-spaced. Come prepared to **share** your case in a 3 minute summary or less.

Writing Assignment Rubric

<i>Levels:</i>					Score
<i>Criteria:</i>	1 falls below expectations	2 approaching expectations	3 meets expectations	4 exceeds expectations	
Thesis & introduction	There is no clear purpose of the paper; seemingly little attempt to create a thesis statement	Attempt to create a thesis statement and communicate the purpose in introduction	Evidence of thesis can be found in a clear introduction to the paper	Establishes thesis in introduction and maintains clear purpose via suitable voice and tone	
Description of personal best case	Description of the case is largely missing or wholly inadequate.	Description of the case is incomplete or poorly constructed	The case is described thoroughly, but detail is lacking on why the case represents a "personal best"	The case is described thoroughly, including an accounting of the "personal best" situation and why it was selected as a "personal best."	
Case analysis	Analysis is unrelated to the case, is largely missing or wholly inadequate.	Analysis is weak or incomplete, or superficially considers the Fullan model.	Fullan's model is used adequately to assess how the case exemplifies effective leadership.	Fullan's model is summarized and then used to thoroughly assess how the case exemplifies effective leadership.	
Implications for leadership development	Conclusion and implications are largely missing or wholly inadequate.	Lessons relating to future actions and/or personal leadership development are superficial	General lessons are presented relating to future actions and/or leadership development	Lessons are derived relating the need to develop specific leadership dispositions and/or proficiencies	
Organization of paper	Paper lacks logical progression of ideas	Paper includes brief skeleton (introduction, body, conclusion) but lacks transitions	Paper includes logical progression of ideas aided by clear transitions	Paper is powerfully organized and fully developed	
Mechanics	Frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation	Errors in grammar and punctuation, but spelling has been proofread	Occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice	Nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading	

(2) Platform of Beliefs – 15 %

The Maine School Leadership Network developed the Platform of Beliefs exercise as a tool they use with school leaders as a way of helping them identify the core beliefs that form the foundation of their decision-making and professional practice.

Each person approaches a reflective exercise like this somewhat uniquely, based on past experiences, knowledge, and hopes for the future. In preparation for this presentation, you may complete the visioning exercise posted to Blackboard, in which you develop a sense of the ways you would like to improve teaching and learning in your school. You may also want to reflect on the results of the LCI. To do your platform:

1. Identify three or four core beliefs that are important to you when you think about *teaching, learning, and leadership*.
2. For each of these, explain why it is a critically important belief, and how it relates to the other beliefs.
3. Expand on each belief by including a few principles that describe what the belief means and how it appears in school practices, i.e. what are people actually doing when this belief is manifested in behaviors.
4. Interview a principal regarding mistakes he/she made and how he/she recovered (more details discussed in class).

Come prepared to make a **presentation** of your vision and beliefs.

Assume you were just hired as assistant principal at the Great American School, and the principal asked that you introduce yourself at the next faculty meeting by talking about your perspective as a school leader. Hence, consider what kind of first impression you want to make for your new faculty. What is important to you? How will you lead? (**Note** – the principal runs a tight meeting – **you have three minutes!**)

Presentations

Levels:	1	2	3	4	Score
<i>Criteria:</i>	1 falls below expectations	2 approaching expectations	3 meets expectations	4 exceeds expectations	
Attention to Audience	Did not attempt to engage audience	Little attempt to engage audience	Engaged audience and held their attention most of the time by remaining on topic and presenting facts with enthusiasm	Engaged audience and held their attention throughout with creative articulation, enthusiasm, and clearly focused presentation	
Clarity	No apparent logical order of presentation, unclear focus	Content is loosely connected, transitions lack clarity	Sequence of information is well-organized for the most part, but more clarity with transitions is needed	Development of thesis is clear through use of specific and appropriate examples; transitions are clear and create a succinct and even flow	
Presentation Length	Greatly exceeding or falling short of allotted time	Exceeding or falling short of allotted time	Remained close to the allotted time	Presented within the allotted time	
Content	Thesis is unclear and information appears randomly chosen	Thesis is clear, but supporting information is disconnected	Information relates to a clear thesis; many relevant points, but they are somewhat unstructured	Exceptional use of material that clearly relates to a focused thesis; creative use of supporting ideas	
Speaking Skills	Monotone; speaker seemed uninterested in material	Little eye contact; fast speaking rate, little expression, mumbling	Clear articulation of ideas, but apparently lacks confidence with material	Exceptional confidence with material displayed through poise, clear articulation, eye contact, and enthusiasm	

(3) Presentation on Current Topic – 15%

Education leaders are frequently called on by various constituencies to discuss, explain, defend, and/or advocate for topics of interest to that group in particular or to the community in general. Accuracy and clarity are key points in getting the information across. In addition, sticking to the time allotted is critical.

For this assignment, look over the list of topics below and select one of interest to you. Administrators are frequently asked to speak on topics about which they have passing knowledge. In fact, they may be asked to speak on these topics without much opportunity to prepare.

You may use Power Point, overheads, hand-outs, group participation or any other format that will contribute to the topic selected. Knowing your audience and what will appeal to them is part of planning a presentation.

Your presentation should be 5-10 minutes in length.

Individual Presentation Topic Ideas

1. First General Faculty Meeting

You, the recently appointed principal, will make a presentation at the opening general faculty meeting (beginning of the school year). In preparing for this presentation, you will consider those priorities that you will highlight as well as the personal/professional information about your background that faculty may need to know.

Be aware that you have just been appointed (within the past three weeks) to this position, and that you have not had the opportunity to meet most of the faculty. In fact, you have yet to meet one of your experienced assistant principals who has been on annual leave since your first day on the job in your new office, approximately one week ago.

2. Presentation to School Board—Safe Schools

You have recently been asked by the superintendent to address the school board relating to the school system's focus on safe schools. The school board is interested in hearing about your priorities and strategies for ensuring that students will be taught in a safe and secure learning environment.

You are aware that several well-publicized gang incidents dominated the news during the final two months of the last school year. These incidents occurred at the school to which you have just been appointed principal. (You have been on the job for several months now.) This will be your first formal opportunity to address the school board.

3. Speech to Local Chamber of Commerce

You, a new assistant principal, have been invited to make a presentation to the local Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has a history of being very supportive of the local schools and their efforts to improve education. Several very influential members, however, have recently removed their children from the public schools and have chosen other alternatives (home schooling and private schools).

The Chamber president, a strong supporter of the public schools, has asked you to speak at the quarterly meeting on the merits of public schooling. The president has invited you because of your good work during your first few months on the job as the newest assistant principal in the local school district.

4. Presentation to PTA Council

You, the school principal, have been asked to address the school district's council of PTA presidents on the block-scheduling program that has been implemented in many of the region's secondary schools. You are a proponent of block scheduling, as you served on the steering committee that explored this as an option and subsequently recommended its approval to the superintendent.

You are aware that a number of the council members are not as convinced as you that block scheduling is making a positive difference in the academic lives of students. The superintendent has met with you and suggested that you carefully prepare a well-balanced presentation with both pros and cons of the block-scheduling program.

5. Presentation to Elementary School Parents—Academics at the Middle School

You, the middle school assistant principal, have been asked by the elementary feeder school principals to address the elementary school parents about the academic program at the middle school. The parents are concerned because eighth grade SOL scores have been lower than fifth grade scores since the first year the tests have been given.

Parents have had a study group to look at options for middle school organization. They want a more traditional academic program; the elimination of teams is a topic of intense feelings with the parents being evenly divided. You are a strong advocate for teams and the pure middle school model.

It should be noted that you are being considered for one of the elementary feeder principalships when the principal retires in June.

6. Presentation to Special Education Parents—Modified Diploma or Regular Diploma

You, the middle school assistant principal in charge of special education, have been directed by the principal to meet with special education parents to give an overview of the types of diplomas available to special education students. You need to be clear and specific about the differences between the two diplomas and the timeline for deciding which diploma to pursue.

Be aware that you have recently been assigned to supervise special education because the previous assistant principal did not meet timelines or treat parents respectfully. The parents are not knowledgeable about the law, but they are angry with the school about how they feel their children have been labeled and the lack of information they have been given.

7. Presentation to the School Board—Half-day vs. Full-day Kindergarten

You, a newly appointed elementary principal who most recently served as a high school assistant principal, have been asked by the superintendent to address the school board about the differences between a half-day and a full-day kindergarten program. The school board has included funds in its budget to phase in full-day kindergarten in all of the schools over the next three years. There is a group of parents opposed to this change and many are parents from your school.

It should be noted that there were concerns in the community about appointing a high school assistant principal to an elementary principal position. Some school board members also questioned your appointment. The superintendent used your experience as a family and consumer science (FACS) teacher who taught child development classes as a factor in your selection.

8. Presentation to Parents—Creating a Magnet Year-Round School

You, an elementary principal with one year's experience, have been asked by the superintendent to make a presentation to the school board on converting one of the district's elementary schools to a year-round school. There is federal magnet school funding available to make the change and to fund the first year. This is your first presentation to the school board.

It should be noted that the superintendent wants to convert your school to the year-round magnet. Before you accepted your current position, you lived and worked in another state and your children attended a year-round school. As a parent, you were dissatisfied with several aspects of the year-round school program.

9. Community Forum—Finalist for Principal at New School

You have been informed that you are one of three finalists for the new principalship at Model **ES/MS/HS** (your choice). The central office director of human resources has notified you that you will have 20 minutes to present yourself at a community forum. Parents, students, media representatives and the general public will be invited to attend. Following your presentation, the director of human resources will solicit input from those attending and compile it for the superintendent.

The new school is located in a recently developed planned community. As the first principal, you will be expected to have excellent community relations skills as you work with parents and their children to establish priorities and a sense of belonging in this new environment. Statistics reveal that many of your parents are affluent, well-educated and are new residents to this part of the state.

10. Press Conference—SOL Scores Drop after School Boundaries Are Redrawn

You, an assistant principal who has been on the job one year, have been asked by the superintendent to accompany your principal to a press conference about the 20-point decline in SOL test scores since the school board redrew the boundaries for your school. The neighboring school, which also has been redistricted, had a 10-point increase in SOL test scores. You are in charge of the testing program, including the remediation component. The scores for your white and Asian students have remained about the same, but the scores for your African American and Latino students have dropped precipitously. You will be making the initial part of the presentation to the press and will be followed by the principal.

The principal has never used data to analyze the school's performance and does not understand why everyone is so upset. He has been under fire from the NAACP for insensitivity to minority students. He refuses to put up signs in Spanish even though the school population is now 20% Latino.

It should be noted that the superintendent is considering removing the principal and putting you in the job for the remainder of the school year, and possibly next year.

Other Topics are possible – see Eric with a different idea