



**College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Fall 2023

EDSE 843 001: Leading Change in Special Education and Disability Policy

CRN: 81845, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Joy Banks	Meeting Dates: 8/21/23 – 12/13/23
Phone: 703-993-6588	Meeting Day(s): Wednesday
E-Mail: jbanks21@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm – 7:10 pm
Office Hours: By Appointment	Meeting Location: Fairfax; Finley 114
Office Location: Finley 202A	Other Phone: N/A

Note: This syllabus may change according to class needs. Teacher Candidates/Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.

Prerequisite(s):

Admission to PhD in education program, or permission of instructor.

Co-requisite(s):

None

Course Description

Examines leadership issues among varied stakeholders within the special education field including leaders in PK-12, higher education, government agencies, and special interest groups. Investigates possible solutions through varied social, educational, and political frameworks. Explores current challenges and opportunities in the effort to support and promote appropriate services for individuals with disabilities through case studies and projects.

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress in your program. Students in Special Education and Assistive Technology programs can contact the Special Education Advising Office at 703-993-3670 or speced@gmu.edu for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

Course Delivery Method

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define leadership and differentiate the roles of various stakeholders and organizational partners such as PK-12, higher education, government agencies, and special interest groups.
2. Describe the general behavioral and affective elements that define good leaders.
3. Identify specific forms/styles of leadership and explain how the behaviors relate to specific organizational goals.
4. Contrast the core principles of varied social, educational, and political frameworks (e.g., disabilities studies, conventional special education, and disability justice) that impact special education policy, practices, and advocacy.
5. Analyze how core principles of disability frameworks influence special education leadership and equity-focused decision-making.
6. Articulate their core beliefs about leading change and relate these beliefs to their vision of supporting and promoting appropriate services for individuals with disabilities through engagement in the profession.
7. Analyze major leadership and organizational theories and apply these to the understanding of real-world puzzles associated with leadership practice.
8. Distinguish the general manner in which policies are made to address challenges and leverage opportunities to use:
 - a. types of policy decisions
 - b. various constituent groups affected by each type of decision
 - c. goals that are often sought in policy-making
 - d. political and rhetorical tools used in policy-making
 - e. factors that contribute to uncertainty in policy-making
 - f. types of errors that affect policy making
 - g. tools for reducing uncertainty and error in policy making.
9. Illustrate reform movements and how they gain momentum by providing examples of the political and rhetorical tools relative to selected reform movements that affect special education.
10. Analyze educational policy-making discussions, describe the elements of policy-making, and discuss how policy-making may lead to more equitable access.
11. Choose a theoretical framework that aligns with their leadership approach and analyze how that theoretical framework influences decision-making.
12. Assess current change initiatives in the context of historical education reform proposals/policies considering the following:
 - a. fidelity of the reform outcome with the intended purpose

- b. internal consistency of logic in the arguments for or against the reform
 - c. the efficacy of the reform in meeting the stated goals of the policy-makers
 - d. unintended consequences of the reform.
13. Explain how special education laws and policies conform or fail to conform to expectations for genuine change using frameworks for analyzing organizational behavior and outcomes.
 14. Articulate the leadership role(s) they aspire to take at the conclusion of their program of study.
 15. Conduct a self-assessment to articulate how they plan to develop their leadership capabilities in the near future.

Professional Standards

Not applicable

Required Texts

Crockett, J.B., Billingsley, B., & Boscardin, M. L. (2019). *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education*. Routledge.

Shapiro, J. P., & Stefkovich, J. A. (2021). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education* (5th edition). Routledge.

Voulgarides, C. K. (2018). *Does compliance matter in special education? IDEA and the hidden inequities of practice*. Teacher College Press.

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2019). *The miniature guide to critical thinking concepts and tools* (8th edition). The Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Required Resources

Access to Blackboard

Additional Readings

Additional will be made available on Blackboard.

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).

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

It is critical for the special education program to collect data on how our students are meeting accreditation standards. Every teacher candidate/student registered for an EDSE course with a required Performance-based Assessment (PBA) is required to upload the PBA to VIA/SLL (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate

minor). A PBA is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC, InTASC or other standard connected to the course. A PBA is evaluated in two ways. The first is for a grade, based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for program accreditation purposes. Your instructor will provide directions as to how to upload the PBA to VIA/SLL.

For EDSE 843: No requirement to upload a Performance-based Assessment (PBA) to VIA/SLL.

Assignments and/or Examinations

Performance-based Assessment (VIA submission required)

None

College Wide Common Assessment (VIA submission required)

None

Other Assignments

Charting Your Most Pivotal Moments (Reflection Assignment): As a leader you will want to review the experiences which have influenced your personalized leadership approach. Your personalized leadership approach is shaped by Three Essentials- education, experience, and exposure. In this reflection assignment, you will identify important events that have impacted your personal attributes, career choices, and leadership approach. In an essay format, discuss three to four events in each area— education, experience, and exposure. Each section should end with a summary of how the events individually and collectively contribute to your leadership journey. The final section of your reflection assignment will include a discussion of your three areas of specialization within the leadership and special education domains.

Differentiated Assignment in Special Education Leadership: The driving force behind pursuing a terminal degree in the social sciences is to prepare effective scholars and leaders of special education who can “address problems of policy and practice regardless of their position” (Boscardin, 2019, p. 251). The overarching goal of the differentiated assignment is to allow you identify a problem of practice which requires critique and/or improvement in special education leadership. Your assignment will focus on ways to increase the number of students who receive equitable special education services and supports. You will work with the course instructor to determine the best focus and design for your specific assignment. You may work in groups of no more than 3 classmates. The final product will result in a publishable manuscript that addresses theory and/or practice which makes recommendations for more equitable outcomes in special education services and supports.

Course Presentation: The course presentation requires that you present the differentiated assignment to the class in a formal presentation.

Assignment Summary

Participation	150 points
Reflection	25 points
Differentiated Assignment	150 points
Presentation	50 points
Total Points:	375 points

Student Evaluations of Teaching:

The student evaluation of teaching, or SET, is an online course survey. You are strongly encouraged to complete this form for each course as this feedback helps instructors and administrators improve your class experiences. Towards the end of the course, you will receive email and Blackboard notifications when the evaluations open. Your anonymous and confidential feedback is only shared with instructors after final grades have been submitted. More information about the SET can be found on The Institute of Effectiveness and Planning website at <https://oiep.gmu.edu/set/>

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality in a timely manner. When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that points earned for participation activities during a time of absence will not be earned and typically cannot be reclaimed.

Late Work

Points will be deducted for work submitted late (up to 10% per day). This includes any items that are not submitted upon request due to class absence or tardiness. This includes items initiated or modified during class as well as those listed in the syllabus.

Grading

(Traditional rounding principles apply)

A	=	95 – 100 percent	A-	=	90 – 94 percent
B+	=	85 – 89 percent	B	=	80 – 84 percent
C	=	70 – 79 percent	F	=	Below 70

***Note:** The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See [Academic Integrity Site \(https://oai.gmu.edu/\)](https://oai.gmu.edu/) and [Honor Code and System \(https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/\)](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/). Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university

community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Work submitted must be your own new, original work for this course or with proper citations.

Unauthorized downloading, file sharing, or distribution of any part course materials, or using information for purposes other than student’s own learning, may be deemed a violation of George Mason University’s Student Conduct Code and subject to disciplinary action (see Code of Student Conduct Code: Acts of Misconduct).

Academic Integrity

Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as your own. Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant. You must take great care to give credit to an author when you use either exact words or paraphrased ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper citation. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will result in a zero on the assignment and a report of the incident to the registrar and Dean’s office.

Electronic Media

The use of electronic devices that record class or photograph individuals or materials may not be used without instructor permission. Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time. Routine access (daily) to e-mail and Blackboard for communication and assignments is crucial to participation in the course. Retain electronic copies of all course products for use during the portfolio phases of the M.Ed. or Ph.D. programs.

Workload Expectation

For each in-class hour devoted to this course content, students are expected to spend at least 3 hours outside of class on course-related assignments, which is a typical in-class to out-of-class ratio for graduate level coursework. Exemplary work should be considered for presentation or publication opportunities.

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See [Policies and Procedures \(https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/\)](https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/).

Class Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Date	Topics	Assignments Due
1. 8/23	Introduction & Course Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership Questionnaire	
2. 8/30	Personalizing Leadership in Order to Lead Change	Crockett, Billingsley, & Boscardin- Ch. 1;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in an exchange of personalized leadership narratives and examine one leadership model that allows you to apply your personal leadership traits. 	Submit Personalized Leadership Self-Reflection
3. 9/6	Identifying Personal Strengths through Clifton StrengthsFinders	Bring Clifton StrengthsFinders Assessment Results Submit Clifton StrengthsFinders Assessment Results by Friday, September 1 st . Crockett, Billingsley, & Boscardin- Ch. 3 & 4
4. 9/13	Expanding the Leadership Framework to Explore Policy, Preparation, and Professional Standards	Shapiro & Stefkovich, Ch. 1 & 2
5. 9/20	Policy and Advocacy in Special Education: Examining Histories of Exclusion and Inclusion	Crockett, Billingsley, & Boscardin- Ch. 8
6. 9/27	Examining Leadership through a Critical Lens	Crockett, Billingsley, & Boscardin- Ch. 9 Submit summary of your differentiated assignment
7. 10/4	Applying Frameworks to Ethical Dilemmas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest speaker: TBD 	Shapiro & Stefkovich, chapters will vary
8. 10/11	Does Compliance Matter in Special Education: IDEA and the Hidden Inequities of Practice	Voulgarides, Introduction, Ch. 1, conclusion, & methodology
9. 10/18	Does Compliance Matter in Special Education: IDEA and the Hidden Inequities of Practice	Voulgardies, Ch. 2 & 3
10. 10/25	Does Compliance Matter in Special Education: IDEA and the Hidden Inequities of Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest speaker: TBD 	Voulgardies, Ch. 4 & 5
11. 11/1	Understanding the Socio-political Philosophies that Inform Your Topic	Will Not Meet as a Class; Assignment will vary
12. 11/8	Leadership and Instruction: Evidence-based Practices in Special Education	Crockett, Billingsley, & Boscardin- Ch. 17

		& chapter of your choice; Assignment will vary
13. 11/15	Equity and Accountability in Special Education	Crockett, Billingsley, & Boscardin – Ch. 21 & 23; Assignment will vary
14. 11/22	University Closed	No Class
15. 11/29	Presentations	
16. 12/6	Final Assignment Due	

Core Values Commitment

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

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code. See [Honor Code and System](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See [Responsible Use of Computing](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/) (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email 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 email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. See [Disability Services](https://ds.gmu.edu/) (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>.

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to [Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students](https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/) (<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>).
- [Learning Services \(learningservices@gmu.edu\)](mailto:learningservices@gmu.edu) - Provides a variety of experience-based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. Services include support to students with learning differences, individual study strategy coaching, individualized programs of study, and referrals to tutoring resources. Presentations on a variety of academic topics such as time management, reading, and note taking are available to the university community. The programs are open to all George Mason University students free of charge.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website [College of Education and Human Development](http://cehd.gmu.edu/) (<http://cehd.gmu.edu/>).

Appendix

Assessment Rubric(s)

None