



**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Education Leadership Program**

Spring 2024

1/16/24 – 4/29/24

**Course Number/Title: EDLE 610.DL2 Leading Schools and Communities (3 credits) –
Independent School Leaders Cohort**

Course Information

Class Dates/Times: 100% Asynchronous – Our class for each week will start on **Tuesday** with reflection activities and discussion posts due by **Monday** of the following week.
January 16, 2024 – April 29, 2024

Instructor

Name: Dr. Andrew Buchheit
Office Hours: By Appointment
Phone: See Blackboard
Email:
Twitter:

Website: Blackboard [<http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>]

Prerequisites: EDLE 620, EDLE 690, and EDLE 791.

Required Text:

Recommended Resource:

Virginia Standards of Learning; VDOE Website

APA Reference

Course Description

EDLE 610 Leading Schools and Communities

Examines critical functions of leadership and organizational management, complex decision-making responsibilities of school executives, and constructive relationships between schools and communities. Incorporates historical, ethical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of American education and the impact of organizational structure on **reform, equity, inclusion, culturally responsive behavior and student achievement**. Practical and academic emphasis on leadership skill development and dispositions.

Course Overview

Students will deepen their understanding of (1) the use of research findings and tools to lead schools and communities, (2) the nature and strengths of diverse communities, (3) how organizations function, 4) how leaders influence school and community change and improvement; 5) **cultural competence skills and social justice values needed in leadership.**

Additionally, they will sharpen their oral and written communication, and reflection and general leadership skills, and (5) how to collaboratively design, communicate, and evaluate a district mission and vision that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered in a 100% asynchronous format with assignments throughout the semester via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before "@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password.

This course will be available on Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students 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.

Although this is an Asynchronous class, it is not self-paced. Assignments will be posted each week on Monday. Work, responses, activities will be due by 11:59 pm each Saturday. If you need to respond to another student's reflections or work, these responses will be due by 11:59 pm on Sunday.

Online Expectations

1. **Course Week:** The course week will begin on **Tuesday** and end on **Monday** by 11:59pm. **When there is a discussion post, please respond to classmates on Sunday by 11:59pm.**
2. **Log-in Frequency:** Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least several times a week.
3. **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

4. **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
5. **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.
6. **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 of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
7. **Instructor Support:** Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
8. **Accommodations:** Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.
9. **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 as others do not consider them as 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.

Technical Requirements –

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

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- 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 email 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 course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player:
<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Course Objectives –

Candidates taking this course will deepen their understanding of:

1. the use of research findings and tools to lead schools and communities,
2. the nature and strengths of diverse communities,
3. how organizations function, and
4. how leaders influence school and community change and improvement.

Course Learner Outcomes

Students will emerge from the course able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and skills needed to collaborate with families and other community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources to create and maintain a positive school culture.
2. Identify, assess, and apply elements of a constructive relationship between a school and its community to support the school's mission and vision.
3. Gain insight into power structures and pressure groups in the school community to create coalitions and increase support for school programs and goals.
4. Identify leadership knowledge and skills that promote success of all students through integrity, fairness, and ethical behavior on the part of faculty and staff.
5. **Understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture (NELP 3.1)**

Relationship of Course to Internship

Although the internship is a separate course, the Education Leadership program has integrated “embedded experiences” into course work. This means that some of the work for this class is related to the internship. Students may write about embedded experiences in their internship journal and Collective Records, but they can only count over and above the minimum 320 hours required for the internship. There is one exception. This course requires a focus group and as a result this project can qualify for the required activity- “Organize and run one or more community focus groups dealing with suggestions for improving visibility and communications with the local school community. Present recommendations to administration”

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).

Every student registered for any Education Leadership course with a required performance-based assessment are required to submit these assessments, the School/Community Leaders Assessment of School Effectiveness and Parent Involvement assignments, to VIA through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in VIA through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to VIA (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required VIA submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Assignments and/or Examinations Students’ grades are based on their proficiency with respect to the student outcomes stated above. Each outcome will have an oral (class participation) and/or a written component. Educational leaders must be able to use current research in making informed decisions and improving community relations. With this in mind, a primary objective of EDLE 610 is to have students deepen their understanding of the use of research and tools to lead schools and communities. Consequently, you should find opportunity throughout the course and assignments to explore existing research on a specific topic, organize and evaluate that research, and then share your findings with your classmates and/or in your journals.

Below are the basic percentages for the various kinds of work required for the class. Students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily my judgment about your performance. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing the course, not the level of effort you put into it.

Reflection, Research, Class participation	25 percent
Written assignments	75 percent

Other Requirements

Class participation and Attendance

To maximize learning and engagement in the online environment, students are expected to participate actively in asynchronous class discussion and group activities and serve as supportive colleagues to other students. In this course, participation points are given by unit rather than per learning activity. Participation will be demonstrated by:

1. Reading Reflections
2. Discussion Posts for it. Such an absence will cause you to lose participation
3. Other Activities or assignments (not including the two performance-based assessments).

Attendance is determined if you complete the weekly participation activities. If you must be absent, please notify me by e-mail or phone. Absences may result in a reduction in participation points.

Performance-based assessments

Two performance-based assessments will be completed during the semester. The School/Community Leaders Assessment of School Effectiveness and Parent Involvement assignments represent the required program-level performance-based assessments for this course. Each assignment relates to the application of educational research in your school setting. A description and directions for each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

Participation Assignments and Written Work - Consistent with expectations of a master's level course in the Education Leadership program, grading is based heavily on student performance on written assignments. Overall, written work will be assessed using the following broad criteria:

1. Application of concepts reflected in learning modules.
2. Original thinking and persuasiveness; and
3. Clarity, concision and organization.

Late Work - I expect all students to submit work no later than midnight of the due date. Any work submitted more than 48 hours late will not be graded. 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. **Late penalties may be assessed for persistently late work.**

Course Submission Policies

Assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the dates listed on the syllabus, electronically via Blackboard. Please take advantage of instructor office hours and availability to get assistance prior to assignment deadlines.

Because EDLE 610 is a graduate level course, high quality work is expected on all assignments. Assignments are graded by a rubric. In this way, the rubric can both inform the completion of the assignments and serve as an instrument to assess your grade for the activity.

This course is designed to further develop and expand your educational leadership skills. You will be assessed on your ability to analyze situations from the broad perspective of an emerging school administrator and be expected to view the impact of the decisions from a systematic perspective and from the benefit to student learning.

Resubmission of Work - Students may resubmit an assignment (other than the final paper) for re-grading within one week of its assessment. Students who wish to do this must request the resubmission by email. If you wish to discuss your work, I am willing to do so at a time of mutual convenience.

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures>

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

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirements

Every student registered for any EDLE Course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit these assessments in **EDLE 610 School/Community Leaders Assessment of School Effectiveness and Parent Involvement** to VIA through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor).

Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in VIA through Blackboard.

Failure to submit the assessment to VIA (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required VIA submission, the IN grade will convert to some F nine weeks into the following semester.

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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (**see** <https://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 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 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced 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 <https://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>
- **For information on the College of Education and Human development, please visit our website** <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .
- **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, 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 [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 <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .

Other reminders:

Plagiarism Statement: Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting (Statement of English Department at George Mason University).

Plagiarism and the Internet: 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, 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. Shareware graphics are not free. Freeware clipart is available for you to freely use. If the material does not say “free,” assume it is not. Putting someone else’s Internet material on your web page is stealing intellectual property. Making links to a site is, at this time, okay, but getting permission is strongly advised, since many Web sites have their own requirements for linking to their material.

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/>

Other Concerns: If you have concerns or issues relating to the content or conduct of the class, please talk with me directly. As a matter of policy, I do not respond to anonymous e-mails.

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

Please see the Safe Return to Campus Guidelines for Students - in a separate link below the Syllabus.

Professional Standards (National Standards and Virginia Competencies)

The course addresses selected Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Competencies, The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, and National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Standards. Specific NELP standards addressed include:

NELP Standard 1.0: Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and wellbeing of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to collaboratively lead, design, and implement a district mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

NELP 1.1: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively design, communicate, and evaluate a district mission and vision that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

NELP 1.2: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to lead district strategic planning and continuous improvement processes that engage diverse stakeholders in data collection, diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation.

NELP Standard 3: Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and wellbeing of each student

and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture.

NELP_3.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture.

NELP 3.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to safe and nurturing schools and the opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships, necessary to support the success and well-being of each student.

NELP 3.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, advocate, and cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.

NELP Standard 5: Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and wellbeing of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and engage families, communities, and other constituents in the work of schools and the district and to advocate for district, student, and community needs.

NELP 5.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to represent and support district schools in engaging diverse families in strengthening student learning in and out of school.

NELP 5.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to understand, engage, and effectively collaborate and communicate with, through oral, written, and digital means, diverse families, community members, partners, and other constituencies to benefit learners, schools, and the district as a whole.

NELP 5.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to communicate through oral, written, and digital means within the larger organizational, community, and political contexts and cultivate relationships with members of the business, civic, and policy community in support of their advocacy for district, school, student, and community needs

NELP Standard 7: Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the present and future success and wellbeing of students and district personnel by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to

cultivate relationships, lead collaborative decision making and governance, and represent and advocate for district needs in broader policy conversations.

NELP 7.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to represent the district, advocate for district needs, and cultivate a respectful and responsive relationship with the district's board of education focused on achieving the district's shared mission and vision.

NELP 7.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, cultivate, and evaluate effective and collaborative systems for district governance that engage multiple and diverse stakeholder groups, including school and district personnel, families, community stakeholders, and board members.

NELP 7.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, engage in decision making around, implement, and appropriately communicate about district, state, and national policy, laws, rules, and regulations.

NELP 7.4 Program completers understand the implications of larger cultural, social, economic, legal, and political interests, changes, and expectations and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate and represent district needs and priorities within larger policy conversations and advocate for district needs and priorities at the local, state, and national level.

Specific VDOE standards addressed in this course include:

a.7. Identification, analysis, and resolution of problems using effective problem-solving techniques;

d.2. Working collaboratively with staff, families, and community members to secure resources and to support the success of a diverse population;

d.3. Developing appropriate public relations and public engagement strategies and process; **d4.** Principles of effective two-way communication, including consensus building and negotiation skills;

f.3. Identify and respond to internal and external forces and influences on a school

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Principals of Good Practice

The NAIS Principals of Practice provide common ground for interaction between independent school professionals and their many constituents (parents, students, colleagues at other schools, and the public). The NAIS Principles of Good Practice define high standards and ethical behavior in key areas of school operations to guide schools in becoming the best education communities they can be, to embed the expectation of professionalism, and to further core values of transparency, excellence, and inclusivity.