

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

**EDLE 612, Section 602/603: Education Law
3 credits, Summer 2024**

**Meeting Day: Wednesdays, May 15 through July 17, 2024, 4:45 - 7:45 p.m.
Synchronous/Asynchronous Online**

Faculty

Name: Regina D. Biggs, Ph.D.
Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Location: Thompson Hall, Suite 1300, Fairfax Campus
Phone: 703-993-4679 **Fax:** 703-993-3643
Email: rbiggs@gmu.edu

Prerequisite(s): B- or higher in EDLE 620, EDLE 690, and EDLE 791.

University Catalog Description: (3:3:0) Provides legal foundations of U.S. public schools. Examines general principles of constitutional, federal, statutory, and case law and applies judicial decisions to educational environments. Focuses on legal responsibilities, constraints, and opportunities of public school officials. Includes components of Special Education law.

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

Course Delivery Method: This course is delivered 100% online via a hybrid synchronous and asynchronous format via the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. This course incorporates a variety of instructional methods, including large—and small-group instruction, cooperative learning activities, the Internet, lectures, individual presentations, case studies, simulations, and written and verbal assignments. The course site will be available on May 15, 2024.

Under no circumstances may 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.

Technology 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/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- As part of course requirements, students may be asked to create log-ins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or download trial software to their computer or tablet.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desired.]
 - 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/

Email: All candidates are required to activate and monitor their GMU email accounts. Per university policy and in compliance with federal law, I will only communicate with candidates via their GMU email accounts. I will not respond to emails from other accounts (i.e., Gmail, Yahoo, work email, etc.). Any announcements concerning the course will be sent to your GMU email address. I will respond to emails within one business day of email receipt (i.e., excluding holidays and weekends).

- **Video Conferencing:** Students are encouraged to communicate with each other and the instructor using Blackboard Collaborate or Zoom for both group collaboration sessions and the instructor's virtual office hours.
- **Microsoft Office:** All students will require access to Microsoft Office. We will be using Word for this course. If you do not have access to this software, you must obtain it within the first two weeks of the course. The most recent software version is best, but it is not required.
- **Google Account:** This semester, we will use Google Drive to organize our collaborative work. Students will post work products on Blackboard Discussion Boards for class commentary and assessment. All students are required to have an active Gmail account to participate in these activities. This Gmail account should be distinct from your school email address, even if you can access Google through your school account (email should end in @gmail.com).

Online Expectations

- **Office hours-** see Blackboard for hours and Calendly link
- **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 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 using all course technology. Students struggling with the course's technical components are expected to seek assistance from the College or University technical services.

- **Technical Issues:** Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and budget their time accordingly. **Late work based on individual technical issues will not be accepted.**
- **Workload:** Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. **Students are expected to meet specific deadlines and due dates referenced in the Class Schedule presented on the Blackboard 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 web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- **Confidentiality:** By federal law, any materials identifying specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.
 - Video recordings — whether made by instructors or students — of class meetings that include audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private and must not be shared outside the class.
 - Live video conference meetings (e.g., Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household or recorded and shared outside the class.
- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed online 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 to 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 accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services and provide the instructor with a Faculty Contact Sheet. Academic accommodations are initiated through Faculty Contact Sheets, which are not retroactive.

Course Learning Objectives

This course serves as the foundation for understanding the legal process related to education in the Master's sequence in Education 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 about education law (internship-related assignments);
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 schools and school divisions; and
5. Learn how to use the internet to obtain legal information.

Candidate Learning Outcomes

Students will focus on significant 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 constitutional, case, and statutory law to issues of student discipline
4. Apply federal and case law to issues of sexual harassment and child abuse; and
5. Analyze key education law issues in a manner that reveals comprehension of political, social, ethical, and legal influences, specifically the principles, laws, policies, cases & regulations applicable in education as they apply to special populations.

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 achievement of all school-aged youth.

Relationship of Course to Internship

Although the internship is a separate course, the Education Leadership program has integrated "embedded experiences" into coursework. This means that some of the work for this class is related to your internship. You may write about embedded experiences in your internship journal and Collective Record, but they can only count over and above the minimum 320 hours required for the internship.

National Standards and Virginia Competencies

The course addresses VADOE Competencies and NELP Standards dealing with education's legal, ethical, and political context. 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 explicit understanding of Virginia's "Child Abuse and Neglect Recognition and Intervention Act (Code of Virginia 22.1-98). Such an understanding will include:

1. Recognizing child abuse and neglect
2. Reporting child abuse and neglect
3. Intervention following a Child Protective Services investigation

Required Texts

- Alexander, K., & Alexander, M.D. (2022). *The Law of Schools, Students, and Teachers* (7th ed.). West Academic Publishing
- Shapiro, Joan P. & Stefkovich, Jacqueline A. (2022). *Ethical Leadership and Decision Making in Education* (5th ed.). Routledge
- Additional required readings and research will be required. Instructions will be posted on Blackboard.

Texts are available in the GMU Bookstore in the Johnson Center. Additional materials and hand-outs will be posted on Blackboard and/or distributed in class.

Suggested Resources:

Virginia Code: <http://legis.state.va.us/Laws/CodeofVa.htm>

United States Code: <http://uscode.house.gov/search/criteria.shtml>

U.S. Dept. of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

George Mason University Library/LexisNexis Academic: <http://library.gmu.edu/>

Classroom Materials:

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

Cancellation Policy: If a cancellation is necessary, the class will be made up via an electronic activity. Specifically, candidates are expected to log on to the computer to participate in an electronic discussion/activity as directed, which will replace the missed class.

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).

To maximize learning and engagement in the online environment, students are expected to participate actively in asynchronous and synchronous class discussions, and group activities and serve as critical friends to other students. Each week, there will be assignments, prompts, and activities in which students must participate. The assessment rubric for this aspect of class engagement participation can be found on the Blackboard site via the *Orientation* Link.

Expectations for Written Work

Use appropriate grammar.

Writing should be the caliber of a graduate candidate.

Use Times Roman or Arial 12-point font.

Spell correctly.

Type all work.

Write clearly.

Include a cover page with name, date & assignment.

Follow **APA guidelines** (double space, references, etc.)

Find a good proofreader!

Avoid plagiarism

Expectations for Group Work

- Each team member has a clearly identifiable role of contribution.
- Practice conflict resolution and consensus building.
- Proofread documents and multimedia.
- Use clear transitions.
- Manage time.
- Conduct a practice run.

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 emergencies that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in advance of the due date. Papers are due as indicated on the reading schedule that follows. ALL ASSIGNMENTS must be submitted **electronically, either through Blackboard or VIA**. If you happen to be absent on the day an assignment is due, the due date remains unchanged.

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement:

Every candidate registered for any Education Leadership course with a required performance-based assessment (designated as such in the syllabus) is **required to submit these assessments to VIA through Blackboard**. In EDLE 612, the required performances are the *Code of Ethics and Case Study Analysis* and the *Special Populations Analysis of Special Education Law*. The rubrics for these two assignments are presented on the course Blackboard site under the heading of Assessments. These performances **must** be submitted to VIA through Blackboard (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course, or part of an undergraduate minor.) Evaluation of the performance-based assessments 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 Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Professional Dispositions

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

George Mason University Policies and Resources for Candidates

Policies

- 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 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 when the instructor receives the written letter from Disability Services (see <http://ds.gmu.edu>).
- Students are invited to share their name and gender pronouns with the instructor and how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her for myself, and you may address me as "Regina Biggs" or "Dr./Professor Biggs."
- 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 the 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.>
 - **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
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Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703- 993-2380. You may also seek assistance 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:

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 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 email (don't cite or forward someone else's email 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, 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 release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy <https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/>
