

## **Policy Implementation in Education (EDUC 1650)**

Professor Jonathan Collins, Ph.D.

Department of Education

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Class Time: Mondays 3-5:30pm

Class Location: Page-Robinson Rm 202

Office: 164 Angell St. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Office 264

Office Hours: Mondays & Tuesdays 11am-12pm or by appointment

This course offers an analytical foundation for students who are interested in public policy implementation, with particular emphasis on education.

Drawing on social science research, the course examines the strengths and limitations of various education reform initiatives at the federal, state, and local level. We will also apply analytical concepts to school reform issues.

The assigned readings for this class will delve into various substantive aspects of policy design and implementation. These issues include:

(1) *How do we study education policy implementation?* What are the analytical frameworks that best explain governmental structure, decisions, and processes? Can we differentiate governmental responsibilities at the federal, state, district, and school level? How do we consider the broader political and social context in understanding policy implementation? How to conditions of racial and class-based inequity factor in? How important is organizational capacity? How critical is political will? What kind of impact can community engagement have?

(2) *What are the key challenges in addressing performance-based accountability, equity, and innovation?* What are the effects of federal education initiatives on state and district school systems? What are the areas of intergovernmental contention? How do school systems respond to charter schools and other school choice initiatives? How do we implement policy to improve the quality of instruction in the classroom? How are these issues managed? And what are the promising strategies that raise student performance and narrow the achievement gap? How do implementation strategies differ for childcare and higher education?

## ***Grading***

The final grade will be based on: (a) critical question memos that discuss the readings and their policy implications for real districts (35%); (b) team-based policy briefing project (25%), (c) final research paper (30%), and (d) class participation.

## **Selecting an Urban District**

Students will select an urban district of focus from the following list:

(Charlotte, NC; Miami, FL; Jacksonville, FL; Austin, TX; Tampa Bay, FL; San Diego, CA; Greensboro, NC; Houston, TX; Washington D.C.; Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; Las Vegas, NV; Boston, MA; Fort Worth, TX; Chicago, IL; Louisville, KY; Atlanta, GA; New York City, NY; Albuquerque, NM; Memphis, TN; Fresno, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Cleveland, OH; Philadelphia, PA; Baltimore, MD; Milwaukee, WI; Detroit, MI)

This district will be the subject of your individual writing assignments throughout the semester. No district can be selected by multiple students.

**Three Critical Question Memos (35%):** Students will turn in 3 memos over the course of the semester. Each memo should be no more than 3 pages (double-spaced). Memos should include a title page (not included in the page count) that includes an original title and a short 2-4 sentence executive summary. Memos should also include a reference page (also not included in the page count) in either APA or Chicago format.

### **Memo 1**

Describe the intergovernmental dynamics between your district and the state your district is in. Provide your argument as to how power should be distributed in order to foster racial and economic equity in your district. In developing your argument, identify how much decision-making authority the district currently has relative to the state. Identify what role (if any) that other local actors (e.g. the mayor, city council, school-level administrators) have in school decision-making. Rely on the course readings and related academic research to make your case.

## Memo 2

Detail an argument for what court case has had the biggest impact (positive or negative) on your district. Policies will typically involve school desegregation or school finance, but you are not limited to these issue areas. Provide the details of the court case and briefly describe the ruling. Discuss whether a policy was passed (or stricken down) as a direct result of the ruling. Use evidence to support your argument as to why this case and accompanying policy behavior have had such a significant impact on the district.

## Memo 3

Make an argument for a policy reform that you would recommend your district implement. **Be bold and innovative.** Describe what type of policy or protocol that the district currently has in place to address the problem at the center of your reform idea. Cite research-based academic studies that provide evidence that your reform would work in your district.

Due dates are identified in this syllabus. Grading will be on a scale of 1 to 5 (5=high).

**Team-based Policy Briefing Project (35%):** Students will form working groups to examine the policy-making process within the actual governing environment. Students will sign-up to be a part of groups studying one of the following governing institutions:

- The Providence Public School District School Committee
- The Pawtucket Public School District School Committee
- The Central Falls Public School District School Committee, or
- The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) State Board of Education Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

Groups must collect data on the school district using a combination of the following two methods: 1) board meeting observations (can be general meetings and committee meetings), 2) interviews of a district officials (board member, superintendent, district office employee, teacher, principal, etc.) or stakeholders (parents, students, district residents). Groups should mine at least three observations (e.g. 3 meeting observations; 3 interviews; 2 interviews and 1 meeting observation; 2 meeting observations and 1 interview). Groups are to identify a policy debate happening amongst the

governing board and evaluate the implementation process. Is it clear what policy (or policies) the board is considering? How democratic is their process of crafting the policy? Is there a discernable commitment to equity? Groups should then offer suggestions on how institutions could improve the implementation process. What specific mechanisms could be put in place to make it more democratic and/or more equitable? Why the specific mechanisms you propose? What will be the indicators of whether or not your new process is successful?

Research papers should be 10-15 pages in length (not including title page and reference page). Each group must create interactive and engaging presentations for the final class meeting.

**Final Research Paper (50%):** Each student will write a 12-page (double-spaced) final research paper. In the paper, students must do the following:

- Identify the most pressing problem that their district is facing
- Provide a primary argument for what type of policy reform needs to be implemented
- Provide a secondary argument for what type of governance reform needs to be implemented to ensure the sustainability of the policy
- Describe the specific aspects of the policy reform and use evidence-based research to buttress the utility of the policy
- Describe specific aspects of the governance reform and use evidence-based research to demonstrate how it should be effective at making the policy implementation better in some specific way (More democratic? More efficient? More reflective of parent and student voice?)

The paper must apply at least one of the analytical concepts or approaches to examine issues in education policy implementation. A one-page research paper proposal is due in class on **April 30th**. The final paper is due on **May 15th by 11:59P.M.**

### **Policy on Late Assignments:**

All late submissions will receive a penalty. Assignments submitted within 2 hours of the deadline will be docked 10 points. Assignments submitted between 2 hours after the deadline and 24-hours after the deadline will be docked 20 points. Any submissions received more than 24 hours late will be docked 30 points. Unless students have official medical documentation,

there are no exceptions. If you anticipate issues completing assignments, you should begin working on assignments well in advance and submit assignments early.

### ***Required Readings***

The following four required books are available at the Brown University Bookstore and are on reserve at the Rockefeller Library. The required and additional readings are available on E-reserve (OCRA password 'collins') and on 3-hour reserve at the Rockefeller Library. A few additional readings can be accessed at the websites of various organizations as specified in the syllabus.

- Russakoff, Dale (2015) *The Prize: Who's in charge of America's schools?*
- Copperman, Michael. *Teacher: Two years in the Mississippi Delta*. Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2016. (Entire Book).

Goals, Policies, and Curricula from Six Nations. Readings marked by an asterisk (\*) are required. They should be read by the date of discussion. Marked articles are on E-reserve (OCRA password 'wong'). Over 14 weeks, students will spend 3 hours per week in class (42 hours total). Required reading is expected to take up approximately 6 hours per week (84 hours). In addition, writing critical question memos, working on team briefing project, and conducting research on the final paper will take approximately 60 hours over the course of the term.

### ***Reading Assignments***

#### **January 27th: General Introduction**

- Course Overview and Expectations on Key Tasks
- Overview of Providence Public School District & Rhode Island Department of Education
- Outlining Key Policy Areas

- Landscape Analysis of Providence Public Education

## **ESTABLISHING THE STAKES FOR EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND POLICY**

### **February 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Dale Russakoff, *The Prize*. (Entire Book).

J. Cole. "Brackets." (Lyrics).

Dead Prez. "They Schools." (Lyrics).

### Policy Readings

[Providence Public School District: A Review](#). *Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy*.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ARRANGMENTS IN EDUCATION POLICY**

### **February 10<sup>th</sup>**

McGuinn and Manna, "Education Governance in America: Who Leads When Everyone is in Charge?" Chapter 1 in Manna and McGuinn (edited), *Education Governance for the Twenty-First Century*

Richard Briffault. "The Local School District in American Law." *Besieged: School Boards and the Future of Education Politics*. Pp 228-253

Henig, "The Rise of Education Executives in the White House, State House, and Mayor's Office," Chapter 9 in Manna and McGuinn (edited), *Education Governance for the Twenty-First Century*

### Policy Readings

\*municipal charter for your home city and school district

## ASPECTS OF GOVERNANCE

**February 17<sup>th</sup>**

No Class

### ***Bureaucracy***

**February 24<sup>th</sup> (Memo 1 at 11:59pm)**

Kirst, Michael and Frederick Wirst. "The Chief Administrator as Professional and Politician." *The Political Dynamics of American Education*. Ed: 4<sup>th</sup>.

Bjork, Lars G., and Theodore J. Kowalski. *The Contemporary Superintendent: Preparation, practice, and development*. Corwin Press, 2005. Chapters 1-2.

Larson, Colleen L., and Carlos J. Ovando. *The Color of Bureaucracy: The Politics of Equity in Multicultural School Communities*. Taylor and Francis Group. Chapters 1-3.

### **Policy Readings**

[State Boards Reflect the History of Public Education in America](#). *National Association of State Boards of Education*. (2018).

### **Localism**

**March 2<sup>th</sup>**

Hess and Meeks, "Rethinking District Governance," Chapter 6 in Manna and McGuinn (edited), *Education Governance for the Twenty-First Century*

Henig, Jeffrey R., Richard C. Hula, Marion Orr, and Desiree S. Pedescleaux. *The color of school reform: Race, politics, and the challenge of urban education*. Princeton University Press, 2001. (Chapters 1-2).

Wong, Kenneth K., Francis X. Shen, Dorothea Anagnostopoulos, and Stacey Rutledge. *The education mayor: Improving America's schools*. Georgetown University Press, 2007. (Chapters 1-2).

Morel, Domingo. "State Takeovers and Black and Latino Political Empowerment." *Takeover: Race Education and American Democracy*. (Chapter 3).

## **Federalism**

### **March 9<sup>th</sup>**

U.S. Department of Education. [\*Every Student Succeeds Act\*](#) (ESSA).

[The Every Student Succeeds Act: A keynote address by Senator Lamar Alexander](#).

Wong, "Education Governance in Performance-Based Federalism," Chapter 8 in Manna and McGuinn (edited), *Education Governance for the Twenty-First Century*

## **The Courts**

### **March 16<sup>th</sup>**

Linn, Robert L., and Kevin G. Welner. "Race-conscious policies for assigning students to schools: Social science research and the Supreme Court cases." (2007).

Jackson, C. Kirabo, Rucker C. Johnson, and Claudia Persico. "The effects of school spending on educational and economic outcomes: Evidence from school finance reforms." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131, no. 1 (2015): 157-218.

Samuels, Alana. "[The City That Believed in Desegregation](#)." *Atlantic*..

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "[It was Never about Busing](#)." *New York Times*.

### **March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Spring Break – No Class

## **March 30<sup>th</sup> (Memo 2 Due at 11:59pm)**

Fung, Archon. *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy*. Princeton University Press. (Chapters 1 & 4).

Moffit, Susan. "Participatory Bureaucracy in Practice." *Making Policy Public*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 2).

Mendelberg, Tali. "The Deliberative Citizen: Theory and Evidence." *Political Decision-Making, Deliberation, and Participation*.

Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster. (Chapters 1 & 16-18).

Collins, Jonathan. "[LeBron James Opens a School and Speaks Democracy to Power](#)." *Education Week*.

## **POLICY ISSUES**

### **Teacher Policy and Standardized Testing**

#### **April 6<sup>th</sup>**

Copperman, Michael. *Teacher: Two years in the Mississippi Delta*. Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2016. (Entire Book).

#### **April 13<sup>th</sup>**

Jackson, C. Kirabo. "The Full Measure of a Teacher." *Education Next*.

Glazerman, S., Mayer, D., & Decker, P. (2006). "Alternative routes to teaching: The impacts of Teach for America on student achievement and other outcomes." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*: 25(1), 75-96.

Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4-36.

Meier, Deborah, and Matthew Knoester. *Beyond testing: Seven assessments of students and schools more effective than standardized tests*. Teachers College Press, 2017. (Chapters 1-2).

### **Supplemental Reading**

[2018 Brown Center Report on American Education: Trends in NAEP math](#),

[reading, and civics scores](#). *Brookings Institute*.

## **School Choice**

### **April 20<sup>th</sup>**

William Howell and Paul Peterson. "School Choice and American Democracy." *The Education Gap: Vouchers and Urban Schools*. Pp 1-20.

Jeff Henig et al. "Privatization, Politics, and Urban Services: The Political Behavior of Charter Schools." *Journal of Urban Affairs*. Pp. 37-54

Gary Orfield. "Choice and Civil Rights: Forgetting History, Facing Consequences." *Educational Delusions*. University of California Press. Chapter 1.

## **School to Prison Pipeline**

### **April 27<sup>th</sup> (Memo 3 at 11:59pm)**

Hoffman, Stephen. "Zero benefit: Estimating the effect of zero tolerance discipline polices on racial disparities in school discipline." *Educational Policy* 28, no. 1 (2014): 69-95.

Gregory, Anne, Russell J. Skiba, and Pedro A. Noguera. "The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin?." *Educational Researcher* 39, no. 1 (2010): 59-68.

Noguera, Pedro A. *The Trouble with Black Boys: And other reflections on race, equity, and the future of public education*. John Wiley & Sons, 2009. Chapters 2-3.

### **May 4<sup>th</sup>**

Group Presentation of Preliminary Findings of Final Research Projects

### **May 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Research Paper Due by 11:59 P.M.**