Mills College
Educational Leadership Program
EDUC 446 – Working with Families and Community
Fall 2019

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By appointment

Course Description

A professional learning community emphasizes the teamwork of principals, teachers, and staff to identify school goals, improve curriculum and instruction, reduce teachers' isolation, assess student progress, and increase the effectiveness of school programs. Professional teamwork is important and can greatly improve teaching, instruction, and professional relationships in a school, but it falls short of producing a true community of learners.

In contrast, a school learning community includes educators, students, parents, and community partners who work together to improve the school and enhance students' learning opportunities.

A well-organized program of family and community partnerships with activities linked to school goals yields many benefits for schools and their students. Research and fieldwork show that such programs improve schools, strengthen families, invigorate community support, and increase student achievement and success.

Students will study what schools and families can do to address child readiness, to foster family-school connections among diverse populations and to engage families at the secondary level.

Students will understand how school staff can build meaningful relationships with all stakeholders and how teachers can involve family in supporting classroom instruction.

Students will discover the evidence of impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement.

Course readings, presentations and discussions will provide students with a forum to generate and explore a series of essential questions in relation to school, family and community involvement that inform and develop their educational leadership practices.

Course Goals

Students will understand the benefits of family and community involvement and know how to:

- Create and sustain leadership capacity amongst all stakeholders in a professional learning community for lasting improvement

- Facilitate the strategies which foster, develop and implement a culture of collaboration
- Promote shared decision making, involving all school members, families and the community as partners in designing and accomplishing the professional learning community's goals
- Expand effective means of two-way school, family and community communication
- Unite stakeholder efforts by coordinating resources and services which contribute to the leadership capacity of their communities
- Support students in understanding that every student can learn and every student can lead
- Understand parental perspectives and foster parenting skills which create home conditions to support student success and achievement
- Involve families and partner organizations to support learning both within and outside the school
- Foster volunteer support and expand the use of school resources to further develop community involvement and opportunities for students
- Participate as reciprocal learners in the course through dialogue, reflection and engagement in a collaborative seminar class.

Learning Outcomes

Readings, assignments, class discussions, and presentations in this course are organized to support students in developing the knowledge, skills and disposition required for successful scholarship and leadership. Students will be expected to demonstrate how well they:

- analyze assigned readings and develop positions based upon new understandings;
- use direct observation, personal reflection, and case discussions to examine the relationship among theories and practice;
- reflect on, and are able to articulate, their own sense of mission, vision, and purpose as leaders; and
- communicate their ideas about topics and issues in clear, understandable ways;
- support their ideas with evidence and structured arguments.

Required Readings
The following texts are required for reading in this course this fall:

Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement, Lambert, Linda, Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, (2003)

New Ways to Engage Parents, Strategies and Tools for Teachers and Leaders, K-12, Edwards, Patricia A. Teachers College Press, (2016)

Optional Readings The following are **optional books** that you may choose to read. However, I will be making pertinent articles and/or chapters available as needed for the class.

School, Family and Community Partnerships: Your handbook for action (3rd Edition with CD),

Epstein, Joyce L. et.al. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press (2009)
School-Community Relations (4th Edition), Fiore, Douglas. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Building Community in Schools, Sergiovanni, Thomas, San Francisco: Jossey Bass (1999)
(This is a classic. We will read two chapters. I will post them to the Google Doc)

Grading

Students have been admitted to the educational leadership program on the basis of their qualifications to carry out graduate level work. Students are expected to maintain professional standards in their engagement with colleagues and the professor and to demonstrate an appropriate level of performance.

When possible, we will provide students with feedback in class. Students will be expected to revise and resubmit work that does not yet meet expectations. Similarly, students have the option of revising and resubmitting work if they are not satisfied with their performance.

The breakdown of grading will be as follows:

Class Participation and Attendance	40%
Class Assignments (written)	45%
Class Presentations/ Final Assignment	15%

Class Participation

This class is organized in the format of a seminar. Much of the time in each session will be spent in whole and small group dialogues around the reading assignments and experiences of students. Therefore, your individual growth and learning is inextricably linked to your engagement in class; similarly, your classmate's development is interdependent with your engagement. Students who must miss class are expected to speak with me prior to the absence and work with fellow students to obtain notes from any missed class. Expectations for class participation include the following:

1. Careful, attentive listening to colleagues;
2. Active participation in class, being in class on time with all work completed and assignments prepared;
3. Discussions, including your facilitation of the discussion process and the participation of others. Such facilitation includes actions such as asking clarifying questions, summarizing, synthesizing, showing relationships between the reading and the discussion, providing examples, helping include everyone in the conversation, staying focused and on task;
4. Willingness to explore controversial or dissenting ideas and theories.

All conversations in class relating to specific situations are to be held in strictest confidence by all class members.

Course Evaluation

Towards the end of the semester you will be asked to submit an evaluation of this course online. Please plan to submit that evaluation in a timely manner. However, please, do not save up feedback for the final evaluation. Your comments are welcome as this course unfolds. We are mutually responsible for the direction of this course and the way it meets individual needs. Please feel free to discuss any concerns with me in person or by email.

Written Assignments: Written assignments are explained below:

1. **Assignment 1**: An email that you will write and send to me at **amcdonald@mills.edu** where you respond to the following: **1)** *What has been your best experience with school community—that is with parents or other community or if you are not currently working in a school—how have you experienced the wider community in your work? Explain what you learned from this experience.* ***2)*** *How do you see examining school and community relations as helping in your career growth?* **Due September 15 (This is the Sunday before class next week)**

2. **Assignment 2:** - Newsletter or Website **Due October 7**
   Internal and external communications strategies - Write a school newsletter or develop a school webpage that covers the essential components we have discussed in class and incorporates important factors addressed in the reading. The newsletter or web page should include an article or column from you as an instructional leader in the professional learning community. If you are not in a school community, write a newsletter to the broader community as a leader to inform them of what matters about your organization.

3. **Assignment 3:** Public Relations and School Events. **Due October 28**

   What are the effects of school, family, or community involvement on the distinct student goals and outcomes held by <u>your</u> learning organization? **Attend** a school, family, or community partnership event offered by your organization or in which the organization participates. Through reflection, evaluate its effectiveness in supporting organizational goals and student outcomes. Identify the mission, vision, and goals of your organization. Review them from the standpoint of the types of involvement discussed in class.

4. **Assignment 4:** School Image and the Power of Perspectives. **Due November 11**.

   What makes up a school's image? In our class discussions, we will articulate the facets of a school's image. Interview at least one student, one staff member, and one parent of a school. If possible, choose students, staff members and/or parents who are from different backgrounds: races, ethnicities or language groups. Develop questions for these interviewees to draw out their perception or image of their school. (Resources from Lambert can be used.) Then, if possible, interview the principal or administrator at that same school or learning organization. Write a reflective paper that compares and contrasts the principal/administrator's view of their school's image with those of the other learning community members interviewed.

5. **Assignment 5**: Implementing school, family and community partnerships. **Due December 2 or December 9**

   Write a "One Year Action Plan for Partnerships" using Epstein's model that addresses aspects of school, family, and community involvement at your school. The plan could address those components required by related state and federal regulations, as well as those components covered in our coursework. We will discuss this in greater detail in class and review types of "One Year Action Plan for Partnership" models in class. The written portion of this project will be due when you present your plan—either on December 2 or December 9th.

Class Meetings: Guest speakers or expert panel discussions may be a part of one of our class meetings.

There is NO CLASS on LABOR DAY, September 2

September 9	***Session 1:*** *Overview of syllabus and course* *Email Alison your response to the two prompts by September 15.*
September 16	***Session 2****: Engaging Parents and the Community in Powerful Ways* Reading/Discussion: **Edwards**-Chapt. 1, pp 1-17. **Edwards** – Ch.2, 18-34 **In Google Drive**: "Understanding Our Need for Community" **Chapter 4, Sergiovanni**
September 23	***Session 3:*** *The Six Types of Parent Participation* Reading/Discussion: **In Google Drive**: *Empowering Parents and Building Communities*, **Shatkin & Gershberg** "Becoming a Purposeful Community" **Chapter 5, Sergiovanni**
September 30	***Session 4:*** *Building Leadership Capacity* Reading/Discussion: **Lambert**– Ch. 1- pp 1-10 and Ch. 3- 21-31 Review Appendix D **In Google Drive**: *Home School and Community Partnerships: Issues of Race, Culture and Social Class,* **Wright & Smith**
October 7	***Session 5:*** *Participation Patterns in Schools Developing Teachers as Leaders* Reading/Discussion **Lambert** – Ch. 2 and Ch. 4 **First Assignment Due: School Newsletter or School Webpage**

October 14	***Session 6****: Principals as Instructional Leaders* Reading/Discussion: **Lambert** – Ch. 5 and 6, Appendix B, C **In Google Drive:** *Leading for Diversity: How Leaders Can Improve Interethnic Relations,* **Henze, R.**
October 21	**The Law Class will begin at 5:30 pm**
October 28	***Session 8*****: Parent/Student Guest Panel** **Second Assignment Due:** Reflection on a school, family or community partnership event—Class will last until 8:45 pm (as the Law Class will not be held) Reading/Discussion: **Edwards**-Chapt. 3, pp 35-55 and Chap. 5, pp 64-79
November 4	***Session 8:*** *Facilitating Community* *Practicing Protocols and Reflection* Reading/Discussion: **Edwards**-Chapt. 6, pp 80-105 and Chap. 7, pp 106-117
November 11	***Session 10***: *Creating a Successful Action Team* Reading/Discussion: **Edwards**-Chapt. 8, pp 118-125
November 18	**Third Assignment Due**: Comparison study of a school's image ***Session 11***: *Communication in an Electronic Era* Reading/Discussion: *School-Community Relations*, **Fiore**, D. Pages 143-167 Reading/Discussion: **Edwards**-Chapt. 4, pp 51-63
November 25	**No Class—Thanksgiving Week**
December 2	**Session 12:** *Making our Own Connections* **Final Assignment Student Presentation**
December 9	**Session 13**: *Making Our Own Connections* **Final Assignment Student Presentations**