



**School Law for Teachers
Understanding Rights and Responsibilities
Online Participant Syllabus**

Course Description

This course is designed to help teachers understand school law as it pertains to the rights of students, the rights of teachers, and the legal expectations of today's public schools, thereby improving their effectiveness. Participants in this course will develop an overall sense of the spirit of school law so that they may not only teach students to become good citizens, but also to ensure that their rights are protected in the educational process. In addition, participants will learn about their rights as government employees regarding Freedom of Speech and employment issues.

Course Prerequisites

Educators enrolled in the course are required to hold a baccalaureate degree. No prerequisites for this course are required.

NOTE: This course does not meet licensure requirements to become a principal in Illinois.

System Requirements

- Computer with word processing software
- Internet access connection
- Online video viewing capabilities/Adobe flash player
- Software capable of reading PDF files

Text Books/Supplemental Reading

There is not a required textbook for this class. However, refer to weekly reading assignments and additional materials within each milestone.

Teachers are encouraged to consult the website for the National School Boards Association website - www.nsba.org for additional information about current law cases involving schools and the Supreme Court. Click on the "School Law" tab at the top of the page for more information.

This site contains a link to *Recent Court Decisions* which are categorized by:

- District Organization and Operation
- No Child Left Behind
- Religion
- First Amendment

- Personal
- School Board Members and Meetings
- Liability for Injuries
- Recently Added Decisions
- Students

In addition an *Archive of Recent Court Decisions* is available. The summaries are accessible for up to a year.

Global Goals of the Course

To deepen and/or apply the content and skills of the teacher's existing professional knowledge base by meeting the following global goals of this course:

1. To understand the relationship between the Constitution and school law
2. To comprehend First Amendment Rights as they differ from students to faculty in public school settings (InTASC 2)
3. To analyze case studies and case law as they pertain to the role of a teacher (NBPTS 3)
4. To enhance teachers' understanding of the "spirit of the law" as it is applied to schools (InTASC 9)
5. To examine the implications of federal laws and acts (Civil Rights Act, Title IX, IDEA, etc.) on classroom practices (NBPTS 4)
6. To learn employee and employer rights and responsibilities as defined by law

Instructional Objectives

By the conclusion of the course, each participant should be able to do the following:

1. Understand the basic foundation upon which school law is built.
 - 1.1 Discern the role of the legislature in making laws and the judiciary in ensuring that the laws support the Constitution.
 - 1.2 Examine the transmittal of authority and responsibility from the federal Constitution to the respective state constitutions.
 - 1.3 Follow the process of filing a lawsuit including the roles of the plaintiff, defendant, and court.
 - 1.4 Analyze the delegation of power from the legislature to the local boards of education.
2. Utilize classroom practices that ensure student rights.
 - 2.1 Examine the various aspects related to First Amendment rights of students.
 - 2.2 Explore the concept of negligence and how it applies to the classroom.
 - 2.3 Understand the concepts of *reasonableness*, *scope of authority*, and *agents of the government* regarding legal rights and responsibilities.

- 2.4 Explore the due process rights of students and employees in schools.
3. Adhere to the Establishment Clause in school policies and practices.
 - 3.1 Apply the Lemon Test to ensure compliance with the Establishment Clause.
 - 3.2 Recognize the current interpretation of the separation of Church and State.
 - 3.3 Ensure student rights related to the Establishment Clause.
 - 3.4 Discern the role of *agents of the government* (teachers) in practices protected by the Establishment Clause.
4. Recognize the rights of employees and employers in school settings.
 - 4.1 Understand the fundamental rights related to collective bargaining.
 - 4.2 Explore the property interests related to contracts.
 - 4.3 Review cases related to employees' due process rights.
5. Develop an understanding of federal laws as they ensure civil rights.
 - 5.1 Recognize the rights of students with special needs (ADA, IDEA, 94-142).
 - 5.2 Ensure fair practices as per Title IX.
 - 5.3 Understand the appropriate use of demographics when ensuring racial and cultural balance in schools.
 - 5.4 Promote the rights of students who are learning English as a second language.

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Teaching methodologies used in this course are specifically designed to maximize learning in a guided, graduate-level, online distance-learning model. Each course facilitator is trained and/or experienced in facilitating graduate-level online courses as well as the specific content and skills of this course.

1. Online methodologies include instructor/expert presentations, directed skill practice, asynchronous class and group discussions using threaded discussion questions, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, portfolio development, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills in designing grade-specific lesson plans or other educational applications of knowledge and skills.
2. The course is taught in a supportive learning environment with teacher-participant interaction and feedback. Class participants interact with other professionals via the Forum area by replying to existing posts as well as creating new threads on topics of their choice.
3. Content focuses on the presentation of advanced concepts linked to instructional strategies which accommodate learning needs of a diverse student population.
4. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into "milestones" that participants complete during the span of the course. Course content is intended to cover material equal to 45 seat hours of instructional time.

5. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills to their own teaching situation.

Learning Assessment

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the course via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, instructor feedback, small-group sharing and activities requiring participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment.

Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards) which cover five aspects of professional educational practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community.

Compliance with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. All teachers should meet the following standards: (1) learner development, (2) learning differences, (3) learning environments, (4) content knowledge, (5) application of content, (6) assessment, (7) planning for instruction, (8) instructional strategies, (9) professional learning and ethical practices, and (10) leadership and collaboration.

Final Projects

In keeping with best instructional and assessment practices, this course requires participants to demonstrate synthesis and application of course knowledge in an applied final project linked to the instructional objectives of this course. Assessment of the project should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due and will be submitted to the instructor within the allotted class time. Unless the instructor states otherwise, all papers are expected to be properly formatted electronically.

Participants taking courses for professional development unit (not-for-credit) must follow the same Participation Expectations as posted in the course syllabus. Participants will complete readings and tasks as outlined in the Task List. Forum Postings are also required. However, participants will be exempt from completing the Formative and Summative assignments unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing the state required course evaluation located on the student portal.

Assessments and Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

Distinguished: The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one's own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual's personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Distinguished" on the course rubric.

Proficient: The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Proficient" on the course rubric.

Basic: This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Basic" on the course rubric.

Unsatisfactory: The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	40%

Academic Honesty and Integrity

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, are encouraged to inform the Director of Academic Affairs prior to the first class session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Attendance

Participants will have specific dates to start the course and complete the required assignments. They will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 should they not be able to complete the online class in the time given.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with assignments and expectations. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

University Compliance

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.