**Educational Leadership:
School and Community Relations
Site-based Participant Syllabus**

Course Description

This course provides a survey of the principal aspects of school community relations for aspiring or current educational leaders. Topics covered include an overview of the importance of school community communications, the role of the leader, communications with families, partnerships with the community, crisis communications, and evaluation of school community relations programs. This course will provide tools and resources for building a positive relationship with staff, parents, and the community at large.

Course Prerequisites

No prerequisites for this course are required.

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 (provided online within class)

Moore, E. H., Bagin, D., & Gallagher, D. (2012). *The school and community relations* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780137072538

Global Goals of the Course

Upon completion of the course, the learner will be able to:

1. Analyze the role of the leader in effective school community relations
2. Examine the legal and ethical aspects of a school community relations program
3. Assess the elements of effective internal, external, published, and electronic communication policies and plans of an educational institution
4. Evaluate the school population and community as part of a comprehensive school community relations program, according to the determined criteria
5. Develop press, media relations, and school community partnership plans that connect schools to families
6. Analyze a crisis communication plan for a school or school district

Instructional Objectives

The learner will deepen existing knowledge of content and apply professional expertise to the skills and strategies contained in this course by meeting the following instructional objectives:

Lesson 1: Introduction to School Community Relations
- 1.1 Explain the role of schools in a democratic society
- 1.2 Describe contemporary issues that have made school and community relations a critical component of education leadership
- 1.3 Identify the role of the leader in the development and implementation of a communications plan
- 1.4 Describe the relationship between school community relations and school culture
- 1.5 Explain how the school leaders' values and beliefs

Lesson 2: Understanding the Community
- 2.1 Select instruments to collect data from a diverse community
- 2.2 Apply the concept of community power structure to special interests affecting school and school district decisions
- 2.3 List the elements of a diverse community

Lesson 3: Communication Policies and Plans
- 3.1 List the elements of an effective communications process
- 3.2 List effective communication strategies for school meetings
- 3.3 Explain the importance of framing an inclusive communications policy
- 3.4 Determine the key components of a communications policy
- 3.5 Analyze a school or school district communications policy
- 3.6 Describe the importance of the strategic planning process to the development of a school and community relations program
- 3.7 Explain the roles of the stakeholders in the communication planning process

Lesson 4: The Internal Communications Plan
- 4.1 Explain the value of an internal communications plan for an educational institution
- 4.2 Describe the impact of internal communications on the relationships among staff, teachers, administrators, and the community
- 4.3 Identify strategies for effective internal communications during times of institutional change, negotiations, and strikes
- 4.4 Create an implementation checklist for internal communications
- 4.5 List the uses of different types of internal communications

Lesson 5: The External Communications Plan
- 5.1 Explain the value of an external communications plan for an educational institution
- 5.2 Analyze the uses of different types of external communications
- 5.3 Describe the impact of external communications on the relationships among staff, teachers, administrators, and the community

5.4   Identify strategies for effective external communications during times of institutional change
5.5   Describe effective ways to handle criticism within various contexts
5.6   Explain how different communication opportunities require different types of media and messages
5.7   Outline considerations for working with the media
5.8   Describe the value of special issue campaigns to a school and community relations program
5.9   Create an implementation checklist for external communications
5.10   Explain the steps to effective communication during a crisis

Lesson 6: Preparing Published and Electronic Communications
6.1   List the different types and uses of publications for a school or school district
6.2   Develop a publication for a school or school district
6.3   List the different types and uses of electronic communications
6.4   Determine the appropriate electronic communication avenue for specific school issues
6.5   Analyze the impact of modern technology on school community relations

Lesson 7: Legal and Ethical Aspects of School Community Relations Programs
7.1   Identify the potential liability issues within a school community relations program
7.2   Identify potential copyright issues involved in school community relations
7.3   Identify ethical issues involved in school community relations
7.4   Describe the impact of the school leaders' beliefs and values on ethical decision making

Lesson 8: Working with the Press and Media Outlets
8.1   Describe the steps to working with a print media reporter
8.2   Develop an appropriate press release for a print media reporter
8.3   Describe situations in which a news conference or press release is necessary
8.4   Explain the role of the school leader in a news conference
8.5   List advantages and disadvantages of using broadcast media in school community relations programs

Lesson 9: School Family Communications
9.1   Analyze communication methods between schools and families
9.2   Describe methods for building positive relationships with families of all students
9.3   Develop specific communications plans for families with children with special needs
9.4   Describe how a community relations plan promotes understanding of the diversity in the community
9.5   Describe the school financial information that is publically available to the community

    9.6   Distinguish necessary communication of school financial issues from required public reporting

Lesson 10: Building Partnerships with the Community
    10.1   Describe methods of developing active partnerships with parents and families
    10.2   Identify successful school community partnerships
    10.3   Describe practices that build school community partnerships
    10.4   Analyze practices to sustain school community partnerships
    10.5   Analyze a school or district's community partnerships

Lesson 11: Communication in a Crisis
    11.1   Describe scenarios that require a crisis communication plan
    11.2   Defend the inclusion of a crisis communications policy as part of a school and community relations program
    11.3   Evaluate the role of leadership in a crisis situation
    11.4   Summarize the responsibilities of school personnel for a crisis communication plan
    11.5   List the elements of a crisis communications response plan
    11.6   Explain the strategies for working with the mass media during a crisis

Lesson 12: Evaluation of School Community Relations Programs
    12.1   Explain the importance of an assessment strategy for a school and community relations program
    12.2   Describe strategies for documenting outcomes of a school and community relations program
    12.3   Describe strategies for communicating outcomes of a school and community relations program
    12.4   Clarify legal and ethical issues associated with a school community relations program
    12.5   Explain how research informs the accountability efforts of a school and community relations program

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model
Teaching methodologies of this course are designed to support intensive, graduate-level course work in an interactive setting. Instructional plans support the content of this course, which focuses on the improvement of professional teaching expertise in any or all of the following categories: assessment, collaboration, communication, diverse learners, educational reform, instructional strategies, planning instruction, productivity, reflection of practice, student learning, subject matter, and/or technology.

- Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.

- The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback.

Course content, activities, and assessments are organized into 6 day modules totaling 45 seat hours. Assessments are due two-weeks following the end of the course.

- Research-based content, presentations, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, references, and assessments are supported by content designed specifically for educators.

- Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class and small group discussions and activities, assigned readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for educators and other school-related personnel to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

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.

Topics Agenda

Day One:
- *Introduction to School Community Relations*

Discuss school community relations in a democratic society, the roles of leaders, and the impact of a school community relations program. Participants will be able to analyze the role of the leader in effective school community relations.

Day Two:
- *Understanding the Community*

Review data collection, community organizations, and power structures. Participants will learn to analyze the school population and community as part of a comprehensive school community relations program.
- *Communication Policies and Plans*

Review communication processes, policies, and planning. Participants will evaluate the elements of an effective communication policy and plan.

Day Three:
- *The Internal Communications Plan*

Focus on the influence of internal communications and their different uses, using internal communication for difficult issues, the value of plans and planning, and the implementation checklist. Participants will be able to evaluate the internal communications plan of an educational institution.

- *The External Communications Plan*

Assess the value of plans and planning, the implementation checklist, the importance of external communications and their different uses, and using external communications for difficult issues. Participants will be able to evaluate the external communications plan of an educational institution.

Day Four:
- *Preparing Published and Electronic Communications*

Review publications, electronic communications, and the impact of technology. After completion of this milestone, participants will be able to analyze published and electronic communications for a school or school district.

- *Legal and Ethical Aspects of School Community Relations Programs*

Explore liability, copyright, and ethics. Participants will be able to analyze the legal and ethical aspects of a school community relations program.

- *Working with the Press and Media Outlets*

Discuss working with print media reporters, news conferences, press releases, and electronic media. Participants will be able to develop a press and media relations plan.

Day Five:
- *School Family Communications*

Identify needs for building of positive relationships, communication methods, the communications plan, and communicating school financial issues. Participants will be able to develop a communications plan that connects schools to families.

- *Building Partnerships with the Community*

Explore developing active partnerships, school community partnerships, and sustaining school community partnerships. Participants will be able to develop a plan for school community partnerships in a school or district.

Day 6:
- *Communication in a Crisis*

Explore the importance of a crisis plan and ways to develop a crisis plan. Participants will be able to analyze a crisis communication plan for a school or school district.

- *Evaluation of School Community Relations Programs*

Focus on assessment strategies, documenting outcomes, communicating outcomes, and legal and ethical considerations. Participants will be able to determine the criteria necessary to evaluate school community relations programs.

Projects

Assignments/ assessments should reflect that each participant is accountable for a high degree of learning appropriate for graduate level credit. Therefore, instructors will assign 3 formative assignments which can be completed throughout the course. These assignments will correlate to the instructional learning objectives. All courses will also include a final summative project which requires critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation or application. Assessment of the assignments 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 within two weeks of the end of class. Projects submitted during the third week "grace period" will have their grade reduced one full letter grade. No papers will be accepted past the grace period, and participants will, consequently, forfeit credit for the course. Papers are expected to be properly formatted and submitted to the instructor either in person or via mail or an email attachment.

Participants taking professional development unit (not-for-credit) courses must attend all scheduled class sessions and complete all in-class readings and assignments as directed by the instructor. However, they will be exempt from completing the final summative project unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing state required course reflection via the student portal and all hours are met.

Assessment 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 Assessment	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 session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Attendance
Participants are required to attend all classes as well as participate in class discussions, small group activities, and projects. Absence from any part of the class will require that you withdraw from the class. You will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 in the event this occurs.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy
Participants are expected to keep pace with in-class assignments and evening at-home assignments. 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. All work is due not later than two weeks after the class ends. 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 polices 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.

Compliance with National Standards
Upon successful completion of the course, the participant will demonstrate competence in the standards developed by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in alignment with guidelines for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Course References

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Internet Resources

none