

**Education 654**  
**Policy Issues in Educational Administration**  
**Spring, 2007**

**Meets:** Tuesdays, 4:00-6:30 PM, Hills South Rm. 373  
**Instructor:** Kathryn A. McDermott, Associate Professor, Education & Public Policy  
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And by appointment.

This course provides an overview of K-12 educational policy in the United States, emphasizing the policies and institutions that affect educational administrators most directly. All of the reading in the course is U.S.-based, but students whose experience and interests are in other countries are welcome.

**Course Objectives**

- 1) To introduce students to the federal, state, and local institutions and processes for policy making in K-12 education in the United States;
- 2) To introduce students to the ways in which various interests in local communities exercise (or attempt to exercise) power over education;
- 3) To examine the roles of educational administrators as advocates, makers, and implementers of policy;
- 4) To get students into the habit of reading actively (in other words, paying attention to how an author's argument works and how it is like or not like other authors' arguments);
- 5) To improve students' writing skills;
- 6) To improve students' critical thinking skills.

This is a required course for students pursuing educational administrator licensure through the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. If you are working on an administrator license, you must complete Written Assignment Group 1. Written Assignment Group 2 is a general set of assignments, appropriate for students in a variety of programs. Written Assignment Group 3 emphasizes research, and is primarily intended for doctoral students, although doctoral students who are also licensure candidates must choose Written Assignment Group 1. More information about the written assignment groups is included in this syllabus, after the schedule of classes and reading assignments.

### Accommodations:

I will be happy to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please contact me before the second class meeting if we will need to arrange accommodations.

**Please read the note at the end of the syllabus (after the descriptions of the 3 sets of writing assignments) for policies on absences, class cancellations, and academic honesty.**

### Course Readings

There are no textbooks to purchase for this course. The reading for February 6 will be handed out at the first class meeting on January 30. Subsequent readings will be available to download from the course website on WebCT. If this system doesn't work for some people, I can probably arrange to have readings available as a photocopied packet for purchase.

### Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

#### PART I: Educational Problems and Their Context

<b>Date</b>	<b>Discussion Topic &amp; Required Reading</b>	<b>Written Assignment Due?</b>
<b>January 30</b>	<b>Introduction, Basics, Overview</b>	
<b>February 6</b>	<b>Inequality in Public Education, Past &amp; Present</b>  <i>J. Kozol, Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools</i> , chs. 16-18 J. Kozol, "Still Separate, Still Unequal" P. Tough, "What it Takes to Make a Student" J. Mathews, <i>Class Struggle: What's Wrong (and Right) With America's Best Public High Schools</i> , chs. 4 & 6	Due in class: Thoughts and questions on this reading  Select your written assignment group

<b>February 13</b>	<b>The Context of Education Policy</b>  K. Jackson, <i>Crabgrass Frontier</i> , pp. 190-230 R. Rothstein, <i>Class and Schools</i> , ch. 5 E. Bardach, <i>The Eight-Step Path of Policy Analysis</i> , Appendices A & B	Weekly Papers begin; make sure you know how many your assignment group requires in February and March. Papers due by <b>2 PM on Feb. 12 (the Monday before class)</b>
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## **PART II: State and Federal Education Policy**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Discussion Topic &amp; Required Reading</b>	<b>Written Assignment Due?</b>
<b>February 20</b>	<b>The State Role &amp; Education Finance</b>  D. A. Verstegan & T. Whitney, "From Courthouses to Schoolhouses: Emerging Judicial Theories of Adequacy and Equity," <i>Educational Policy</i> , vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 330-352 (1997) D. S. Reed, <i>On Equal Terms</i> , ch. 2	Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM Feb. 19  Literature Review topic due by 2 PM Feb. 19 (Group 3)
<b>February 27</b>	<b>States &amp; Standards-Based Reform</b>  A. Nelson, <i>The Elusive Ideal: Equal Educational Opportunity and the Federal Role in Boston's Public Schools, 1950-1985</i> , ch. 8. K. A. McDermott, "A National Movement Comes Home" K. A. McDermott, "Systemic Reform in Massachusetts"	Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM Feb. 26
<b>March 6</b>	<b>The Federal Role in Education Policy</b>  C. Cross, <i>Political Education: National Policy Comes of Age</i> , chs. 3, 4 (55 pp)  A. Nelson, <i>The Elusive Ideal: Equal Educational Opportunity and the Federal Role in Boston's Public Schools, 1950-1985</i> , pp. 175-190.	Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM March 5  List of Sources due by 2 PM March 5 (Group 3)

<b>March 13</b>	<b>The No Child Left Behind Act</b>  E. H. DeBray, <i>Politics, Ideology, and Education: Federal Policy During the Clinton and Bush Administrations</i> , chs. 3, 8, & 9	Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM March 12
<b>March 20</b>	<b>NO CLASS- UMASS SPRING BREAK</b>	

**PART III: The Local Policy Environment**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Discussion Topic &amp; Required Reading</b>	<b>Written Assignment Due?</b>
<b>March 27</b>	<b>Participation in Local School Politics</b>  C. Marshall & C. Gerstl-Pepin, <i>Reframing Educational Politics for Social Justice</i> , ch. 5  S. G. Freedman, "'Innovative' Math, but Can You Count?," <i>New York Times</i> , November 9, 2005  Also, please spend some time consulting web sites relevant to the math-teaching controversy described in the <i>New York Times</i> article. I will post a list of suggested places to look on WebCT.	Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM March 26

<b>April 3</b>	<p><b>What Needs to Change?</b></p> <p>NO READING ASSIGNMENT. Class discussion of “What Needs to Change” papers.</p>	<p>“What Needs to Change” paper Due by 2 PM April 2 (Groups 1 and 2)</p> <p>Outline and Annotated Bibliography Due by 2 PM April 2 (Group 3)</p> <p>No Weekly Papers</p>
<b>April 10</b>	<p><b>School Boards: Balancing Professional and Democratic Authority</b></p> <p>J. Carver &amp; M. M. Carver, <i>Reinventing Your Board</i>, ch. 2</p> <p>E. R. Smoley Jr., <i>Effective School Boards</i>, ch. 7</p> <p>R. Heifetz, <i>Leadership Without Easy Answers</i>, ch. 6</p>	<p>Weekly Papers resume, due by 2 PM April 9; make sure you know how many your assignment set requires in April and May</p>
<b>April 17</b>	<p><b>NO CLASS—Monday classes meet on Tuesday this week.</b></p>	
<b>April 24</b>	<p><b>School-Level Politics and Policy</b></p> <p>C. Marshall &amp; C. Gerstl-Pepin, <i>Reframing Educational Politics for Social Justice</i>, ch. 4</p> <p>D. Muncey &amp; P. McQuillan, <i>Reform and Resistance in Schools and Classrooms</i>, pp. 4-5 and chs 4-5</p>	<p>Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM April 23</p>
<b>May 1</b>	<p><b>1) Implementation and ‘Going to Scale’ 2) Presentations of Implementation Plans</b></p> <p>K. A. McDermott, “Trust and Capacity in Policy Implementation: Evidence from Massachusetts Education Reform”</p> <p>M. Honig, ed., <i>New Directions in Education Policy Implementation</i>, chs. TBA</p>	<p>Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM April 30</p> <p>Implementation Plan (Group 1) Due by 2 PM April 30</p>
<b>May 8</b>	<p><b>Floating Topic</b></p> <p>Topic and reading TBA.</p>	<p>Weekly Papers Due by 2 PM May 7</p> <p>“Letter to a Policy Maker” (Group 1) Due by 2 PM May 7</p> <p>Literature Review Draft due by 2 PM May 7 (Group 3)</p>

<b>May 15</b>	<b>Conclusion and Review</b>  No reading assignment.  Group work on “correcting” Take-Home Final part 1 Reflection on major course themes	Take-Home Final Part I (all 3 groups) Due in class
<b>May 22</b>	<b>No class, but--</b> Group 1: Corrected Take-Home Final Part I, plus Part II, due at 9 AM Group 2: Corrected Take-Home Final Part I, plus Part II, due at 9 AM Group 3: Literature Review due at 9 AM	

### Written Assignments

There are three different sets of written assignments for this course, for students pursuing different kinds of programs. This chart indicates which you should do.

<b>If you are a student in...</b>	<b>You should complete the written assignments listed in...</b>
...the administrator licensure program (regardless of degree program or non-degree status)	Assignment Group 1
...any Ed.D. program, <b>with</b> administrator license	Assignment Group 1
...any Ed.D. (or Ph.D.) program, <b>without</b> administrator license	Assignment Group 3
...any C.A.G.S. program, without administrator licensure	Any of the Assignment Groups, although Group 2 is recommended
...the M.P.P.A. or M.P.A. program	Any of the Assignment Groups, although Group 2 is recommended
...any M.Ed. program, without administrator license	Any of the Assignment Groups, although Group 2 is recommended
...neither a degree program, nor the administrator licensure program	Any of the Assignment Groups, although Group 2 is recommended

### WebCT

We will be using WebCT both for delivery of documents and for online discussions. After February 6, you will be turning in all of your written work via WebCT, and I will be using it to distribute course readings and web links. Make sure you get a UMass OIT “NetID” as soon as you can, because you’ll need one to get into WebCT.

Your OIT username will be your Login ID for WebCT; your OIT password will be your password. To get to the WebCT entry page, go to the U Mass Amherst home page and click the “WebCT” link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. Then click the red button marked “LOG IN to WebCT Campus Edition.” Then click on “Educ 654,” and you’re in. If you try these steps and they don’t work, please let me know.

To turn in papers via WebCT: Follow the directions above to get access to the course website. Then click on “Discussions” on the course homepage. You will see a list labeled “Topic.” One is “Main,” one is “Notes,” and one of the ones you can see will have the title “[Your Name] Papers.” Click there. Then click “Compose Message” and you’ll get a box that looks like an e-mail program. Post a message, and attach your paper to it. Attaching a file requires two steps. First, click “Browse” and select the file you want to attach. Then, after the name of the file comes up in the “Attachments” window, click “Attach.” Then click “Post,” and you’re done. I will also post grades and comments here. No other student except you can access the discussion topic with your name on it.

## Written Assignment Group 1

**Preparation for Feb. 6:** See the handout from Jan. 30 class.

**Weekly Papers:** These are very brief (1-2 pp, double-spaced) papers that require you to think analytically about the week's reading. I will hand out questions each week for the next week. These are due at **2 PM the day before the class meets**, on WebCT. For Writing Assignment Group 1, you must write 3 of these: 2 in February and/or March, and 1 in April or May.

**What Needs To Change?:** Choose a single policy component of a comprehensive state or federal law (like No Child Left Behind, the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, or IDEA) or an entire smaller-scale state or federal law or regulation. Write a paper no more than 10 double-spaced pages in which you:

- 1) Identify the policy you are writing about; for example, the accountability provisions of No Child Left Behind, which are in Section 1116 of the law.
- 2) Identify what this policy is supposed to do (its intended goal or goals).
- 3) Identify how this policy is supposed to do it (see Appendix B of Bardach's *The Eight-Step Path* for ways of characterizing policy instruments).
- 4) Using some sort of evidence (published sources, interviews, quantitative data, etc.), evaluate how successful this use of a policy instrument seems to have been.
  - a) Has it met its intended goal(s)?
  - b) Does it have the right goal(s)?
- 5) On the basis of this evidence, propose a change that will either make the policy more successful in attaining its goals or move the policy in a direction of a new and better goal.

This paper is due **April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2 PM**.

**Implementation Plan:** From the perspective of either a principal or a district-level administrator, write a plan for implementing either an actual policy enacted recently in your district or school, or one of the hypothetical examples that will be handed out in class.

Your implementation plan must address:

- 1) What resources (people, money, other) you will need and where they might be found;
- 2) Who is likely to support this change and how they might be expected to help with implementation;
- 3) Who is likely to oppose this change and what might be done about their opposition;
- 4) Who in the community you should reach out to, particularly members of groups who participate less in politics;
- 5) What parts of the change are most vulnerable to misinterpretation, and how you or others can constructively respond.

The articles on the syllabus for May 1 are likely to be helpful in guiding your thinking. Make sure you read them before you start writing.



This paper is due **April 30<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM.**

**Letter To A Policy Maker:** Taking your “What Needs to Change” paper as a starting point, write a letter (no more than 2 pages long, formatted like a business letter) to a policy maker who is in a position to make the change(s) you recommend, in which you make the case for your proposed change to him/her. Due **May 7<sup>th</sup>, at 2 PM.**

**Take-Home Final, Part I:** This is an exercise intended to get students to review what they have learned about the basic institutions of education policy making. Questions are largely factual. Due **in class May 15<sup>th</sup>.** In that class meeting, students will compare answers to see what they got right and what they got wrong.

**Take-Home Final, Part II:** This will consist of a brief essay (about 5 pages) on a topic you’ll choose from a list I will provide. Due **May 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 9 AM.** Corrected Part I is also due at this time.

**Grade Point Distribution for Assignment Group 1:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
February 6 preparation	5
3 Weekly Papers	3 X 10 = 30
What Needs To Change?	25
Implementation Plan	20
Letter To A Policy Maker	10
Take-Home Final, Part I	15
Take-Home Final, Part II	15
Attendance & Participation	10
<b>Course Total</b>	<b>130</b>

**Writing Assignment Group 2: May be chosen by any student who is neither seeking administrator licensure nor in a doctoral program.**

**Preparation for Feb. 6:** See the handout from Jan. 30 class.

**Weekly Papers:** These are very brief (1-2 pp, double-spaced) papers that require you to think analytically about the week's reading. I will hand out questions each week for the next week. These are due at 2 PM the day before the class meets, via WebCT. For Writing Assignment Group 2, you must write 5 of these: 3 in February and/or March, and 2 in April and/or May.

**What Needs To Change?:** Choose a single policy component of a comprehensive state or federal law (like No Child Left Behind, the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, or IDEA) or an entire smaller-scale state or federal law or regulation. Write a paper no more than 10 double-spaced pages in which you:

- 6) Identify the policy you are writing about; for example, the accountability provisions of No Child Left Behind, which are in Section 1116 of the law.
- 7) Identify what this policy is supposed to do (its intended goal or goals).
- 8) Identify how this policy is supposed to do it (see Appendix B of Bardach's *The Eight-Step Path* for ways of characterizing policy instruments).
- 9) Using some sort of evidence (published sources, interviews, quantitative data, etc.), evaluate how successful this use of a policy instrument seems to have been.
  - a) Has it met its intended goal(s)?
  - b) Does it have the right goal(s)?
- 10) On the basis of this evidence, propose a change that will either make the policy more successful in attaining its goals or move the policy in a direction of a new and better goal.

This paper is due **April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2 PM.**

**Take-Home Final, Part I:** This is an exercise intended to get students to review what they have learned about the basic institutions of education policy making. Questions are largely factual. **Due in class May 15<sup>th</sup>.** In that class meeting, students will compare answers to see what they got right and what they got wrong.

**Take-Home Final, Part II:** This will consist of a brief essay (about 5 pages) on a topic you'll choose from a list I will provide. **Due May 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 9 AM.** Corrected Part I is also due at this time.

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**Grade Point Distribution for Assignment Group 2:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Preparation for Feb. 6 <sup>th</sup>	5
5 Weekly Papers	5 X 10 = 50
What Needs To Change?	25
Take-Home Final, Part I	15
Take-Home Final, Part II	15
Attendance & Participation	10
<b>Course Total</b>	<b>120</b>

**Writing Assignment Group 3: May be chosen by any student who is not seeking administrator licensure. Must be completed by students in doctoral programs, unless they are also seeking administrator licensure.**

**Preparation for Feb. 6:** See the handout from Jan. 30 class.

**Weekly Papers:** These are very brief (1-2 pp, double-spaced) papers that require you to think analytically about the week’s reading. I will hand out questions each week for the next week. These are due at **2 PM the day before the class meets**, via WebCT. For Writing Assignment Group 3, you must write 3 of these: 2 in February and/or March, and 1 in April or May.

**Literature Review:** Write a review of the scholarly literature on a policy issue of your choice. This review should be between 10 and 20 pages long and should cover at least 15 academic journal articles and/or books. You can either use one of the subjects covered in class, or choose a different issue. I will provide more information about this assignment early in the semester. Final paper is due **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Intermediate assignments are a topic statement due **February 19<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM**, a list of sources due **March 5<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM**, an outline and annotated bibliography due **April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2 PM**, and a draft due **May 7<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM**.

**Take-Home Final, Part I:** This is an exercise intended to get students to review what they have learned about the basic institutions of education policy making. Questions are largely factual. Due **in class May 15<sup>th</sup>**. In that class meeting, students will compare answers to see what they got right and what they got wrong. Corrected version is due on **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**, although students in this group need not write Part II of the final.

**Grade Point Distribution for Assignment Set 3:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Preparation for Feb. 6 <sup>th</sup>	5
3 Weekly Papers	3 X 10 = 30
Topic Statement	5
Source List	10
Outline/Annotated Bibliography	20
Literature Review	25
Take-Home Final, Part I	15
Attendance & Participation	10
<b>Course Total</b>	<b>120</b>

## **Course Policies**

### *Academic Honesty*

In your memos and final assignments, I am mostly interested in finding out what you think, not in a summary of what the authors you read think. But, it is often necessary to cite the course reading in order to back up a claim you are making. For example, if you say that you find the arguments for charter schools more compelling than the arguments against them, you should include specific citations to the passages in the reading that led you to this conclusion. Whenever you quote from or paraphrase other people's writing, you should cite it appropriately. I don't have a strong preference for one kind of citation over another (footnotes, endnotes, and parentheses in the text are all fine) so long as the citation is there.

If you have questions about what does or doesn't require citation, please ask me!

Representing the words or ideas of another without citation or as one's own work in any academic exercise is plagiarism. If I detect plagiarism, I will first give you an opportunity to rewrite the assignment in question. Further plagiarism will result in lowered grades and may be reported to University authorities.

Students should be aware that suspect assignments (e.g., those without reference pages, or those with large departures in style, reference pages that do not match the works cited in the actual paper, or chunks of text that I think I recognize) will be submitted to the online database Turnitin.com for the purpose of detecting possible plagiarism. Submitted assignments will be included in the UMass Amherst dedicated databases of assignments at Turnitin. These databases of assignments will be used solely for the purpose of detecting possible plagiarism during the grading process during this term and in the future.

### *Class Cancellations*

If the campus is officially closed due to bad weather or other emergency, class will not meet. If the campus is officially open, class will meet. You can find out whether or not the campus is open by checking the University of Massachusetts Amherst home page (<http://www.umass.edu>) or by tuning into many local TV and radio stations. If class does not meet, I will contact you by e-mail to clarify what reading and assignments should be done before the next class.

### *Absences*

If you will need to miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible. Missing more than two classes will probably have a negative affect on your grade. If you know at the beginning of the semester that you will need to miss two class meetings, even for excellent reasons like parent conferences or job-related travel, please consider enrolling during a different semester.