



EDU 6553

# LEGAL STRUCTURES & LEGAL ISSUES PERTAINING TO SCHOOL OPERATIONS

## COURSE SYLLABUS



**Mississippi  
College**  
A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

## I. Course Title

EDU 6553 Legal Structures & Legal Issues Pertaining to School Operations

## II. Course Credit

Three semester hours

## III. Prerequisites

Admission to the Graduate School and membership in the Educational Leadership Program Cohort group and successful completion of the Mississippi College School Leadership Institute, EDU 6517 and EDU 6518.

## IV. Course Professor

Lead Professor

Name: Marvin H. Jeter, III, Ph.D.

Title: Adjunct

Phone: 601.953.3114

Email: mhjeter@mc.edu

## V. Course Description

This course is designed to facilitate a study of the interrelationships among federal, judicial, state, and governing structures that affect the decision and judgment parameters of operating a school district and the impact of emerging legal issues on future educational policies.

## VI. Course Rationale

Legal Structures & Legal Issues Pertaining to School Operations has the emphasis centered upon developing an in-depth knowledge and set of skills and values within the leader that enables the creation of school/district fiscal and legal operations which are sound and which provide the resources adequate for fulfilling the mission of the school/district. The primary goal of this course is to provide a basic understanding of the legal system as applied to education in order to assist school leaders in making informed, justified decisions pertaining to district operations. A school leader must be knowledgeable in legal concepts embodied in the Constitutional Amendments, procedural and substantive due process, personnel rights, student personnel rights, contract law, and tort liability.

The following program principles are addressed in this course:

- Effective organizations expect leaders to model the acceptable organizational behaviors expected of others by sharing their vision. (1.1) (1.2) (1.3)
- Effective organizations practice shared decision-making. (1.1) (2.1) (3.4) (5.4)

- Schools promote acceptance of cultural diversity as a natural state of being. (4.2) (5.3)
- Schools are responsive to the communities in which they exist. (4.1) (4.2) (4.3) (4.4)
- Schools provide a safe environment for students, teachers, and others to allow for effective teaching and learning. (3.1) (3.2) (3.3)
- Schools must appropriately interact with influential political and power structures within the community. (1.4) (4.2) (4.4) (6.2)
- Schools must be in compliance with federal, state, and governing agencies. (6.2)
- Technology will be used by the professors and students to enhance research, instruction, and presentations.

## VII. Course Objectives

Objectives are referenced to the ELLC Standards.

This course is designed to enable prospective school leaders to:

- Identify the federal, state, local, and judicial structures that establish the legal principles upon which policies, procedures, and regulations are constructed. In order to evidence this objective, students will be able to:
  - Explain the relationships that exist among the federal, state, local, and judicial structures that govern the legal aspects of school operations. (6.1) (6.2)
  - Describe First Amendment rights which regulate religious activities and practices. (6.1) (6.2)
  - Describe the equal protection rights (14th Amendment) afforded to parents, students, and employees as interpreted by the judicial system. (3.1) (3.2) (5.1) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
  - Analyze the major judicial decisions that have defined the legal parameters affecting education law at the state and local level. (3.1) (5.1) (5.2) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
  - Describe the effects of federal agency and state agency regulatory power on the operating policies and practices of local school boards. (3.2) (6.1) (6.2)
- Analyze the specific state statutes, policies, and program regulations that impact major local school district operating procedures. In order to evidence this objective, students will be able to:
  - Describe Mississippi laws and state regulations in areas such as residency requirements, compulsory attendance, accreditation, licensure, textbooks, transportation, curriculum and instruction, testing, etc. (3.1) (3.2) (6.1) (6.2)
  - Apply state legal regulations to specific local school issues of operation and concern. (3.1) (3.2) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
- Analyze the specific legal authority of the local school board of education for establishing policy, procedures, and regulations at the local district level. In order to evidence this objective, students will be able to:
  - Locate and interpret specific school board policies as needed to make operational decisions at the local school/district level. (3.1) (4.2) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
  - Apply local legal regulations relative to personnel issues such as employment, non-renewal, dismissal, contracts, duties, and discrimination. (3.2) (4.2) (5.1) (5.2) (5.3) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
  - Apply local legal regulations relative to student issues such as: discipline, corporal punishment, suspension, expulsion, transfers, searches, drugs, violence,

- weapons, dress code, extracurricular activities, etc. (3.2) (4.2) (5.1) (5.2) (5.3) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
- 4. Apply legal regulations as required to all personnel, student, and district records. (3.2) (5.2) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
- 5. Describe the applicable legal restrictions for school board meetings, minutes, and district information. (3.2) (5.3) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
- D. Analyze current legal issues of substance that impact governing decisions related to all aspects of school/district operations. In order to evidence this objective, students will be able to:
  - 1. Describe the rights and responsibilities of school personnel regarding tort liability and questions of negligence and defamation. (3.2) (5.1) (5.2) (5.3) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
  - 2. Describe the student personnel rights and requirements in cases on child abuse and neglect and sexual harassment. (3.2) (5.1) (5.2) (5.3) (6.1) (6.2)
  - 3. Describe the laws, policies, and regulations pertaining to alternative schooling (private/parochial schools, charter schools, magnet schools, home schooling, school choice, school vouchers, etc.) (3.2) (5.1) (5.2) (5.3) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
  - 4. Describe the federal and state laws as applied to special education programs (PL-94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). (3.2) (5.3) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)
  - 5. Identify the current legal issues by analyzing the professional resources and literature for impending laws, policies, and regulations that will impact school operating procedures. (5.1) (5.2) (5.3) (5.4) (6.1) (6.2)

## VIII. Materials

### Textbook

#### Education Law: Cases and Materials, Second Edition

Lawrence F. Rossow, & Jacqueline A. Stefkovich

Carolina Academic Press

ISBN: 978-1611631203

NOTE: While purchasing textbooks for this class is not a requirement, it is strongly recommended.

### Other Resources

American School Boards Journal

<http://www.edweek.org/topics/lawandcourts/>

Education Week

<http://www.edweek.org/topics/lawandcourts/>

Facebook – What’s Happening in School Law

<https://www.facebook.com/events/611624002351750/>

Find Law.com

<http://education.findlaw.com>

Lawyers.com

<http://education-law.lawyers.com/school-law/controversial-and-hot-issues-at-school.html>

National School Boards Association

<http://www.nsba.org/advocacy/school-law-issues>

Individual Supplementary Article Links are active in the assignment for each.

# IX. Course Outline and Expectations

- Module 1: Governance of Public Schools
- Module 2: Liability of Educators & School Districts
- Module 3: Teachers' Rights & Responsibilities
- Module 4: Students' Rights & Discipline
- Module 5: Special Education
- Module 6: Church/State/Education Relationships
- Module 7: Tenor of the Times & Putting It To Practice

Each Module includes Textbook Readings, Discussion Board Submissions & Peer Responses, Video & Article Reviews, Application to ELLC Standards, and Reflections. There is also an introductory Discussion on students introducing themselves, as well as a final summative written submission to bring it all together.

## Participation/Attendance

For online courses, non-participation means the failure to login for any group assignments (i.e., chats, etc.), tests, or weekly assignments.

<https://www.mc.edu/faculty-staff/files/6913/8999/6219/A - 2.10 - Academic Affairs - Policy - Class Attendance.pdf>

## Academic Honesty

Mississippi College students are expected to be honest. Dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, or furnishing false information, including forgery, alteration or misuse of University documents, records or identification, will be regarded as a serious offense subject to severe penalty, including, but not limited to, loss of credit and possible dismissal. Please read MC's University Policy 2.19 below for specific information regarding penalties associated with dishonest behavior at Mississippi College.

<https://www.mc.edu/faculty-staff/files/8313/8999/6222/A - 2.19 - Academic Affairs - Policy - Academic Honesty.pdf>

## Special Accommodations

In order for a student to receive disability accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, he or she must schedule an individual meeting with Student Counseling and Disability Services (SCDS) before each semester or upon immediate recognition of the disability. The student must provide written documentation from a medical physician and/or licensed clinician that verifies his or her disability with recommended accommodations. Documentation must be current (within 3 years). SCDS will assist the student in notifying his or her professors about the recommended

academic accommodations. Please contact Student Counseling and Disability Services to schedule an appointment with an available counselor: Phone - 601.925.7790; Fax - 601.925.7793 or email them at [scds@mc.edu](mailto:scds@mc.edu). For additional information, visit <http://www.mc.edu/offices/counseling/student-disabilities>

## Course Communication Policy

All communication with faculty should be done through your Canvas course site and/or your MC email. For general questions about course items and resources, you should use the “Ask the Instructor” Discussion, located at the top of Pinned Discussions under the Discussion link in your course site. For questions regarding late assignments, grades or other personal matters, you should email your instructor through the Canvas inbox or your MC email.

You may expect a response to any inquiries within twenty-four (24) hours. You may expect feedback on course assignments within seventy-two (72) hours.

One (1) hour per week, your instructor will offer an optional time when you can meet “live” online to discuss course content.

## Course Communication Guidelines (Netiquette)

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Much of our communication in this course will take place in the forums and through email. Here are some guidelines for online communication in this course:

- Be sensitive to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as different political and religious beliefs.
- Use good taste when composing your responses. Swearing and profanity should be avoided. Also consider that slang terms can be misunderstood or misinterpreted.
- Don't use all capital letters when composing your responses. This is considered “shouting” on the Internet and is regarded as impolite or aggressive. It can also be stressful on the eye when trying to read your message.
- Be respectful of others' views and opinions. Avoid “flaming” (publicly attacking or insulting) others.
- Be careful when using acronyms. If you use an acronym it is best to spell out its meaning first, then put the acronym in parentheses afterward, for example: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). After that you can use the acronym freely throughout your message.
- Use proper grammar and spelling, and avoid using text messaging shortcuts.
- In emails, always identify yourself and what class and section you are in. It is a good practice to put your course and section in the subject line. This helps your instructor identify course related emails.

## X. Technology Requirements

### Computer/Technology Requirements

Online students will need regular access to a personal computer that runs on a broadband Internet connection. Microsoft Word will be the expected format for submissions.

### Canvas Learning Management System

Canvas is the online learning management system used to host your course content. Students are provided with a [Student Guide](#) and an online ticketing service for course technical issues. To access the help desk and additional resources, access the **Help** option by clicking on the question mark icon in the navigation bar on the left side of your course page.

## XI. Grading and Evaluation

### Final Grade Calculation

Assessments	Percentages
8 Discussions	1% each = 8%
7 Case Summary Discussions	2.5% each = 17.5%
7 Application Case Project	5% each = 35%
7 Article Reviews	2.5% each = 17.5%
7 Reflections	1% each = 7%
Final Submission	15%
<b>Total Percentage For Course</b>	<b>100%</b>

***Discussion Submissions are due by Wednesday of each week with peer responses due by Friday of each week.***

***All Video, Article, Application, and Reflection submissions are due each Sunday.***

***The Final Submission Culminating Paper is due the last day of class at 11:59PM***

### Grading

In determining the final course grade, the following scale is used:

96%-100% = A

90% - 95% = B

80% - 89% = C

0% - 79% = F

Students may expect feedback usually within 48 hours and certainly before the similar type of assignment is due the following week.

## Rubrics

Rubrics are included throughout the course with each assignment and will provide an understanding of how assignments will be assessed.

## Late Work Policy

The only late work that will be considered are those instances where the student has communicated with their instructor regarding unavoidable circumstances, *such as reporting an illness and submitting a doctor's note to their instructor.*

## XII. Course Evaluation

At the end of this course, students are encouraged to complete a course evaluation that will be distributed to them via email and through a course link.

## XIII. Course Topics

<b>Module 0</b>	Introduce Yourself
<b>Module 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interrelationships among federal, state, local, and judicial structures with school districts</li><li>• Federal/State/ Local educational governance structures/laws/policies/regs</li></ul>
<b>Module 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State legal issues impacting school districts</li><li>• Judicial governance structures and case law impacting ed</li></ul>
<b>Module 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personnel legal issues impacting school districts</li></ul>
<b>Module 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student legal issues impacting school districts</li></ul>
<b>Module 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Special education law and state regulations</li></ul>
<b>Module 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Separation of Church &amp; State</li></ul>
<b>Module 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current legal issues in education</li></ul>

## XIV. Additional Course Information

### Syllabus Subject to Change

While information and assurances are provided in this course syllabus, it should be understood that content may change in keeping with new research and literature and that events beyond the control of the instructor could occur. Students will be informed of any substantive occurrences that will produce syllabus changes.