

*Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program  
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
University of Northern Colorado*

**ELPS 670 The Principalship: Developing Leadership at the Site Level**  
3 semester hours – Summer 2011

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**Course Description**

This course is an introductory experience in a sequenced program designed to prepare individuals to assume formal and informal leadership roles in schools. Students examine problems and issues inherent in the role of principal as well as strategies for managing and leading a school organization. Six themes are addressed in the course: Principal as visionary, principal as ethical leader, principal as community leader, principal as culture builder, principal as instructional leader, and principal as manager.

**Relationship of this course to the program knowledge base**

Students who enter study in educational leadership at UNC are exposed to five domains in which they (1) develop a personal vision for educational leadership; (2) examine and use modes of inquiry to frame problems and gather information; (3) understand organizational culture, communication, and change; (4) explore educational leaders' roles in supervising professionals and developing human potential; and (5) examine influences from the external environment that shape educational policies, structures, and operations. Learning experiences from this course contributes to students' understanding of the underlying beliefs of our leadership development program; particular emphasis is given to the underlined statements below:

Human growth and development are lifelong pursuits;

Organizations are artifacts of a larger society;

Learning, teaching, and collegiality are fundamental activities of educational organizations:

Validated knowledge and active inquiry form the basis of practice;

Moral and ethical imperatives drive leadership behavior;

Leadership encompasses a learned set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and

Leaders effect positive change in individuals and organizations;  
Leaders' behaviors and actions model their beliefs;  
Effective leadership in educational organizations depends on individual and team efforts.

### **Standards from professional organizations**

In general, the courses of this Program are designed to prepare individuals to serve as leaders of educational organizations. The learning experiences are designed to address the skills, competencies, and performance expectations identified by numerous professional organizations and learned societies with an interest in the preparation of educational leaders. Among the organizations consulted are the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Middle School Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, and the University Council for Educational Administration.

### **Colorado's principal's license standards**

Learning activities of this course address selected standards for the licensure of principals. Be advised that these standards are going to be revised shortly. As a result, we will discuss current standards, the proposed new standards, and national standards.

#### **Standard One: Foundations of Leadership**

The principal shall behave ethically and be knowledgeable about how to create an environment that encourages and develops responsibility, ethics, and citizenship in self and others, and sets the direction for a school community committed to and focused on learning. The principal shall be able to:

- 1.1 Endorse the role of the school within the community and in upholding the fundamental principles and perpetuation of our democratic republic.
- 1.3 Accept personal and professional accountability for the educational processes of the school.
- 1.4 Consistently identify student achievement as the primary objective of the school.
- 1.5 Set high standards for the instruction of all students and their academic achievement.
- 1.7 Exemplify a personal and professional commitment to ethical conduct and respect for others and their rights.

#### **Standard Two: Contextual Understanding**

The principal shall acknowledge, and address in planning, the internal and external factors affecting the school and the learning process. The principal shall be able to:

- 2.1 Implement the requirements established for education by federal and state law, state rules and regulations, and local policy.
- 2.4 Recognize and address the challenges and strengths, including but not limited to those brought by students from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, communities, ethnicities, economic levels, current life situations and conditions, and varying degrees of

linguistic skills.

**Standard Three: Planning and Organization**

The principal is knowledgeable about the elements of planning; plan implementation; organizational change; and time management. The principal shall be able to:

3.1 Develop a plan for the school, with stakeholder involvement, which establishes a unifying statement of purpose with regard to meeting required standards for students, and which identifies:

- Instructional objectives
- Assignments of responsibility
- Timelines
- Methods of evaluation
- Allocation of resources

3.2 Implement, monitor, and assess progress of the plan, at regular intervals, and provide modification, as necessary.

3.3 Establish and adhere to timely, efficient, effective, and ethical administrative practices.

**Standard Five: Individualization of Instruction**

The principal is knowledgeable about instruction, especially as related to the Colorado Model Content Standards and closing the achievement gap. The principal shall be able to:

5.1 Exhibit vigilance with regard to the school's legal obligations and students' educational rights, including but not limited to, those requirements which affect special needs students.

5.6 Maintain adequate and appropriate data regarding each student's academic progress; analyze and evaluate that data; and communicate the results to instructional staff for use in planning for individualized student instruction.

**Standard Ten: School Site Safety and Maintenance**

The principal is knowledgeable about how to ensure a safe learning environment in a secure, well-maintained facility. The principal shall be able to:

10.6 Understand the contribution of an attractive, inviting, and engaging school environment to an effective instructional program and implement supporting policies and actions.

**Standard Eleven: Parent and Community Involvement**

The principal shall be able to:

11.1 Speak, write, and communicate successfully in a variety of settings.

11.2 To communicate about school policies, data on student achievement, and other pertinent information to parents and other interested members of the school community.

## **Course Objectives**

Based on individual readings, “in-class” individual and group activities, “class” discussion, and reflective activities, students will:

- \*Acquire an understanding of the range of principal responsibilities and roles and the changing role of the principal,
- \*Acquire strategies for vision development and develop a vision statement for a school,
- \*Comprehend the principal's role in developing a school culture that fosters the development of a community of learners,
- \*Identify the major issues faced by first-year principals,
- \*Enhance understanding of the political nature of the principal's role and dilemmas therein,
- \*Develop managerial skills in areas such as resource use, delegating, planning and decision-making,
- \*Develop skills in organization, prioritizing, judgment, sensitivity, and oral and written communication,
- \*Recognize, understand, and analyze ethical dilemmas faced by principals,
- \*Establish a problem-solving approach to the issues facing the school principal,
- \*Understand the role of the principal in special education, and
- \*Use data to improve student achievement and communicate data to parents, community, staff, and district personnel.

## **COURSE THEMES:**

Principal as Visionary  
Principal as Instructional Leader  
Principal as Community Leader  
Principal as Culture Builder  
Principal as Ethical Leader  
Principal as Manager

**STUDENT EVALUATION:**

Student performance is evaluated by various written and/or oral assessments in class and outside of class. Class participation is also evaluated. One goal of this course is to develop clarity in written and oral communication.

Each assignment will be assessed according to a rubric (1-4, with 4 being the top score). Final grades will be assigned according to the A-F format. Class participants will also have several required assignments.

Class participants will be expected to:

Participate and contribute to class. Much of what will occur in class will be student centered. Students are expected to read all assigned readings and complete assignments. Written assignments should be concisely written, well organized, and address parameters of assignment. Active and relevant participation for this online course includes:

- \*Posing insightful questions
- \*Remaining focused on the topic of discussion
- \*Clarifying others' ideas
- \*Challenging ideas in a constructive & professional manner
- \*Providing leadership/followership in group work
- \*Displaying a professional demeanor at all times
- \*Accepting responsibility of completing make up work
- \*Reading all outside assignments

**Assessment**

Participation and preparation for class	10%
Vision (oral and written)	30%
Entry plan for a new principal	20%
Answers to the Questions of the Day	20%
Case Study	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Vision statement:

Students will develop a written statement of their vision for an elementary, middle, or high school. The visions will be shared with the rest of the cohort electronically. Each vision statement should be centered on issues facing Native American schools or schools serving large Native American populations.

Entry plan for a new principal:

Students will come to class the first day with a proposed entry plan for a new principal of a school. The plan should identify the needs of the school and the action plan for the new principal to address those needs. This initial plan will be shared in class the first day. Students will then revise this plan (if necessary) based on the course conversations, readings, and assignments. The revised entry plan will be due the last day of class.

Answer the questions of the day:

Each day there will be a question related to the topic discussed. Students will select three of the six and write a two-page paper answering the selected questions. This assignment is due the last day of class.

Final exam:

Students will read and analyze two case studies to understand the roles and responsibilities associated with the principalship. The professor and teaching assistant will provide the two case studies on the last day of class and students will turn in their final exam on **June 20, 2011**.

### **Required texts**

Ackerman, R.H., Donaldson, G., Van Der Bogert, R. (1996). *Making sense as a school leader: Persisting questions, creative opportunities*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (2008). *Revisiting professional learning communities at work: New insights for improving schools*. Bloomington, IN: Solution-Tree.

### **Individual Learning Needs**

The University of Northern Colorado is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity institution. Students with disabilities or other special needs should feel free to contact the course instructor if there are services or adaptations that can be made to accommodate special needs. Staff of the Disability Access Center (970- 351-2209) can also be helpful in this effort.

### **Email Attachments**

Students must have an email address so communication among the instructor and students can be conducted electronically. In addition, students will be required to submit assignments electronically. Instructions for electronic submissions are as follows:

- All assignments submitted for review via email are sent as an attachment to an email message. The email itself should include the student's name and what is

being sent. All attachments should be sent in MS Word (however, if you are using Office 2007 you will have to use an earlier version of Word so I can read it). The attachment should be labeled (on the paper) with the student's name, date, and the title of the assignment.

- If there are any problems with sending the materials via email then the assignment should be submitted by the due date in print form.
- The instructor will reply to every electronic submission confirming receipt of the document. If a student does not receive confirmation it is his or her responsibility to determine why the email was not received.
- Assignments via email will be graded and returned to students at the same time as those submitted by the due date during a class session.

### Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism or other academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. The penalty for such action will result in an "F" letter grade for the course and/or additional sanctions as permitted under University policy. If you are unsure of how to properly paraphrase or cite a source in APA style, we encourage you to seek assistance. Problems should be discussed with one of the instructors at your earliest convenience. Situations warranting consequences will be reported to the CEBS Dean. For a complete explanation of University academic student conduct policy, see <http://catalog.unco.edu/200809/wwhelp/wwhimpl/js/html/wwhelp.htm?&accessible=true>

### Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments Due</u>
June 6	Course Introduction Syllabus Review Course Requirements Ackerman discussion DuFour discussion Standards comparison <i>Principal as a manager</i> QOTD (see pages 12-13) PLACE Exam questions (2)	Ackerman, Chapters 1, 5, and 10  DuFour, Introduction (optional) and Chapter 1
June 7	Ackerman discussion DuFour discussion <i>Principal as an ethical leader</i> QOTD (see pages 12-13) PLACE Exam questions (2)	Ackerman, Chapter 2  DuFour, Chapter 2
June 8	Student work day (no formal class)	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments Due</u>
June 9	Ackerman discussion DuFour discussion <i>Principal as an instructional leader</i> QOTD (see pages 12-13) PLACE Exam questions (2)	Ackerman, Chapter 3  DuFour, Chapter 7
June 13	Ackerman discussion DuFour discussion <i>Principal as a culture builder</i> QOTD (see pages 12-13) PLACE Exam questions (2)	Ackerman, Chapter 4  DuFour, Chapter 4
June 14	Ackerman discussion DuFour discussion <i>Principal as a visionary leader</i> QOTD (see pages 12-13) PLACE Exam questions (2)	Barth, <i>Improving Relationships Within the Schoolhouse</i>  Ackerman, Chapter 6 DuFour, Chapters 5 & 6
June 15	Student work day (no formal class)	
June 16	Ackerman discussion DuFour discussion <i>Principal as a community leader</i> QOTD (see pages 12-13) Vision statement presentations Entry plan discussions Course Evaluation Overview of Course	Ackerman, Chapters 7, 8, & 9  DuFour, Chapter 14  <b>Entry Plan Due</b> <b>QOTD Write up Due</b> <b>Vision Statement Due</b> <b>Final Exam (due June 20)</b>

## Vision Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to develop and present your vision for an ideal school. While it is important to develop a shared vision with staff, oftentimes you will have an opportunity to share your vision in an interview or other venue. In addition, a developed vision from the leader constitutes a starting point for discussions on a shared vision with the faculty and staff of a building. For this assignment students will present their vision to the rest of the class and turn in a written document. Both are detailed below.

### Oral Portion:

Each person will present his/her vision for an ideal elementary, middle, or high school orally to class members in a 10 minute presentation.

Please consider the following:

- The audience will be whoever you wish us to be. For example, the audience can be people on an interview committee, a new staff, a new parent/community group. Please set the context at the beginning of the presentation.
- Please do not read your vision. This exercise is to simulate a real situation where as principal, you have to use oral communication skills effectively.
- Try to make the presentation engaging and creative. Use eye contact, try to be genuine. You may use any visual materials you choose.
- The audience will provide you with feedback about your presentation.

### Written portion:

Each student will prepare a 5-7 page vision paper that describes the ideal school.

You will likely, in some context, have to share your vision of an ideal elementary, middle, or high school upon interviewing and/or accepting a principalship.

- Address the various constituencies in your school, students, parents, staff.
- The format is up to you and your style. You should not simply use bullets and lists, but describe your vision in narrative (see Barth article).
- The written version should be compelling to read. For example, you might choose to use metaphors or stories for creativity. What will the school look like, feel like, how will people treat each other?
- The vision is due **June 16, 2011**. Adhere to the rubric on the next page



### Entry Plan for a New Principal

Students are expected to come to class the first day with an entry plan for a new principal to a school. The school can be the one that the student works in or another school (this is preferable since identifying the needs of a school you are familiar with will be easier) but it should be a real entity. The entry plan should identify the needs of the school (based on data sources) and a **plan for addressing those needs**. The entry plan must identify at least **four measureable needs**. Each entry plan will be discussed during the first class session. The initial entry plan will not be a document that will be turned in. However, the more effort students put into the document prior to the start of class the easier it will be to complete the final version.

Students will then take the concepts discussed throughout the class and revise the entry plan (if necessary). The final entry plan should incorporate the concepts discussed in class to ensure that the principal has a sound course of action for addressing the needs of the school effectively.

The final document can present the needs of the school in one section and the action plans for those needs in a second section or each need could be followed by the specific action the new principal would take. Students should not use the actual name of the school (protect its confidentiality). The final entry plan is due **June 16, 2011**. This assignment will be graded according to the following rubric:

Score	Characteristics
4	The entry plan identifies four measurable needs, offers sound action plans to address those needs, the action plans align with the concepts of the course, void of grammar issues, adheres to APA writing style.
3	A paper receiving a three addresses most of the points above or fails to adequately address all the points listed above.
2	A paper receiving a two clearly omits one point listed above and/or lacks the required quality to receive a higher score.
1	A paper receiving a one clearly omits two or more points listed above and lacks the required quality to receive a higher score.

### Answer the Question of the Day

Each day there will be a question of the day (they are listed below). Students will select three of the six questions of the day and write a two-page paper on each of questions. The write-up will offer the student's approach to addressing the selected question of the day.

This paper is due **June 16, 2011**.

The following rubric will be used to assess this assignment:

Score	Characteristics
4	Answers receiving a four offer clear and focused answers to the selected questions, demonstrate an understanding and application of the concepts discussed in the class, are well written, and adhere to APA guidelines.
3	A paper receiving a three addresses most of the points above or fails to adequately address all the points listed above.
2	A paper receiving a two clearly omits one point listed above and/or lacks the required quality to receive a higher score.
1	A paper receiving a one clearly omits two or more points listed above and lacks the required quality to receive a higher score.

#### Questions for Each Day

##### **June 6: Principal as manager**

As is common, you lead a school that has more needs than the budget can possibly accommodate. The furniture in the classrooms is more than 20 years old, plastic chairs are starting to crack, and classroom libraries are outdated and limited. These are just a few of the needs brought to your attention as a first-year principal.

*With your limited budget, how do you prioritize what is absolutely necessary and who do you involve in the discussion?*

##### **June 7: Principal as ethical leader**

All schools in the district you work in are required to give three "interim" tests. On the third interim test for one particular class, you notice that the scores have increased from 47% to 96% from the second to the third administering of the test. You have observed in the classroom several times and have given the teacher specific feedback on what needs to be improved instructionally. In addition, other outside coaches have remarked on the need for instructional improvement with this specific teacher.

*How do you react to this 49% increase in the scores?*

**June 9: Principal as instructional leader**

One of the first-year teachers graduated with a very high GPA last year and now is implementing her own curriculum, which is quite different from that required by the district. You are not necessarily opposed to the instruction you have observed and you are seeing good achievement growth in this particular classroom.

*What would your response to this particular teacher be on the curriculum she is using?*

**June 13: Principal as culture builder**

The newest first grade teacher comes to you complaining that the first grade team cannot work together and she would like you to solve the lack of collegiality and collaboration among the team members.

*What steps would you take in this situation?*

**June 14: Principal as visionary leader**

You have read all of the great DuFour, Elmore, Fullan, and Schmoker, research on vision building and you are ready to tackle this adventure with your new staff. After setting the stage for building this common vision, one of the teacher leaders states, “We have done this with at least six of the seven past building leaders and it made no difference whatsoever.”

*How do you react?*

**June 16: Principal as a community leader**

Parental and community involvement are not only important to you as the leader of your building, but it is an expectation of your supervisor. Despite sending out several invitations to parents and community members, you never have more than six parents at any of your meetings.

*What steps would you take to improve community involvement in your school?*

### Final Exam

Students will receive two case studies on the last day of class and will be asked to read them and present solutions that demonstrate their understanding of the concepts covered in the class. The case study write up is intended to provide students with the opportunity to bring all the information related to leading schools together to answer difficult scenarios. Each case study write up will be **three pages long** and students will write on both case studies.

For the write up of the case study, students will do the following:

1. Briefly summarize the case study core issue and relevant facts,
2. Identify three possible courses of action that could address the situation (the possible courses of action must be realistic. For example, to claim that one option is to yell at the parent and remove the child from the school would be disingenuous. All three possible courses of action must be reasonable--that a "normal" administrator would consider doing),
3. Identify the pitfalls, or problems, with each solution, and
4. Choose the one solution you would follow if you found yourself in this situation.

This assignment is due **June 20, 2011**.

The following rubric will be used to assess the case study submissions:

Score	Descriptor
4	The final exam papers are well written, follow APA format, and clearly address the four points listed above in a scholarly fashion.
3	The final exam papers are well written for the most part, mostly follow APA format, and/or address the four points listed above sufficiently well.
2	The final exam papers have writing errors, fail to adequately follow APA format, and/or fails to address one of the points listed above.
1	The final exam papers are poorly written, do not follow APA or any other writing style format, and/or fail to address two or more of the points listed above.