

**EOL 543
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
FALL, 2008**

INSTRUCTOR:

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REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Mooney, Nancy J. & Mausbach, Ann T. (2008). *Align the design: A blueprint for school improvement*, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), ISBN: 13:978-1-4166-0625-3, Paperback, First Edition.

Schmoker, Mike (2006). *Results now: How we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning*, Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, ISBN: 10-1-4166-0358-1, Paperback, First Edition.

Marzano, Robert J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action?* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, ISBN: 0-87120-717-6, Paperback, First Edition.

DuFour, Richard & Eaker, Robert E. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*, Bloomington, IN: National Educational Services, ISBN: 13-978-1-8796-3960-7, Paperback, First Edition.

You should check the University bookstore or Amazon.com for used textbooks.

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is a study of major ideas on school improvement and of the role school principals play in this very important undertaking. School principals are the instructional leaders of their buildings and must ensure the academic needs of their students are met. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor is required to sign-up for the one unit credit course.

ASSIGNMENTS

A variety of approaches will be used to develop the student competencies associated with this course. **First**, students will be required to attend class meetings, complete reading assignments, and participate in class discussions. **Second**, they must develop, submit, and make (3) group developed research presentations on best practices for school and district improvement. **Third**, students must submit a research paper on a selected topic in school

improvement. **Fourth**, students are required, as a member of a group, to develop an electronic school improvement plan, which will be presented during the final class meeting. The school improvement framework and the brief reflective statement are required, as part of the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership's instructions for preparation of Common Assessment Portfolios for the General Administrative Endorsement for candidates beginning with those who were admitted after the summer of 2003. These course requirements are presented in the following statements:

Component #4 – Assigned in EOL 543 School Improvement- Reflections on Professional School Leader Standards #1 Facilitating a Vision of Learning and #2 School Culture and Instructional Program.

Each student as a member of a group will construct an initial school improvement framework, school improvement plan, based on conceptions of what school leaders should do to improve teaching and learning in a public school. This assignment will be an electronic developed group developed school improvement plan and will create a baseline upon on which a second paper will be prepared at the end of the course to reflect on the areas of professional growth achieved through the study of school improvement approaches and issues. **Fifth**, the second paper mentioned in these requirements is the Common Assessment Portfolio paper, which is the reflective statement on how the course assignments, especially the development of the group electronic school improvement framework, improved your understanding of an administrator's role in facilitating a vision of learning and #2 school culture and instructional program.

Individual class members must come to the first class meeting having prepared an inventory of programmatic strategies their schools or other schools have implemented that have resulted in school improvement. To obtain this information you should speak with your principal or others about what specifically has been implemented that has improved the school. Also, you can conduct research on the Internet or from books and journal articles on best practices in school improvement to identify other successful strategies. This inventory will be used to develop a group presentation on best practices in school improvement for your student group. Your group will make a presentation summarizing these successful strategies, during the second day of the second class meeting. Each individual must complete this work before the first class meeting; otherwise your group will be at a disadvantage, regarding planning for their presentation of best practices for the second weekend of classes.

All presentations should be made in PowerPoint and copies of the slides should be sent electronically to the instructor. Also, copies of the slides should be given to the students and the instructor during or immediately after each presentation.

TOPIC OUTLINE, READING, AND STUDY ASSIGNMENT LISTING

Class Mtgs.	Topics	Assignments
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9/19-20/08-First weekend of class meetings-Oak Brook Center

Discuss the:

Course requirements.

Illinois Standards for School Leaders.

Conditions of public education in the United States.

Reading assignment: Mooney, N.J. & Mausbach, A.T. (2008). *Align the design: A blueprint for school improvement*.

Formulate student groups for research projects.

Groups will begin work on development of school improvement plans.

Groups work on the development of their first group presentation.

10/3-4/08-Second weekend of class meetings-Oak Brook.

Discuss the:

Reading assignment: Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*.

The achievement gap.

The accountability movement in public education in the United States.

Importance of data and systems for analysis.

Groups will present their first research on school best practices for school improvement.

Groups work on the development of their second group presentation.

Groups continue work on development of school improvement plans.

11/7-8/08-Third weekend of class meetings-Oak Brook

Discuss the:

School reform and change movements.

Reading assignment: DuFour, R. and Eaker, R.E. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement.*

Best practices, emphasis on data.

Professional learning communities.

Groups will present their second research on school best practices for school improvement.

Groups work on the development of their third group presentation.

Groups continue work on development of school improvement plans.

Research papers are due.

12/5-6/08-Fourth weekend of class meetings-Oak Brook.

Discuss the following:

Reading assignment: Schmoker, Mike (2006). *Results now: How we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning.*

NCLB requirements for schools.

Groups will present their third research on school district best practices for school improvement.

Groups work to finalize presentations on SIPs.

Groups present their SIPs.

Course evaluation.

Reflective statements for the Portfolio are due.

EVALUATION

Student's performance in the course will be evaluated by:

1. Attendance and participation in class discussions, which will constitute ten percent of the final course grade.

2. Presentations of (3) group developed research compilations of best practices in school improvement. Two of the presentations will be on best practices used in schools and one will be on best practices by school districts. These presentations will be made during each second, third, and final class meetings and must utilize Power Point and take (30) minutes. Also, a brief summary of each group's research should be presented to members of the class and instructor. Also, copies of the electronic slides used in each presentation must be sent, via email, to the instructor. This requirement will constitute thirty percent of the final course grade.
3. Submission of a 15-18 page research paper on a topic suitable for school improvement. This assignment must be prepared using the APA format and will constitute thirty percent of the final course grade. Hard copies of the research papers must be submitted to the instructor, according to the due date.
4. Presentations of a group developed school improvement plan, during the final class meeting. These presentations must utilize Power Point and follow the ISBE School Improvement Rubric. Each presentation will take (45) minutes, including time for class discussion. Copies of the final school improvement plan should be distributed to the instructor. Also, a brief summary of each school improvement plan should be submitted to members of the class during the presentations. Also, copies of the electronic slides used in each presentation must be sent, via email, to the instructor. This requirement will constitute thirty percent of the final course grade.
5. Submission of an individually developed 4-6 page separate reflective statement identifying how this course improved the student's understanding of the role of a school principal in facilitating a vision of learning, improving school culture, and leading instructional program development must be submitted. The reflective paper will be given a grade of pass or fail and will not be averaged into the final course grade. However, students will receive an incomplete grade, if the reflective statement is not turned in as scheduled. Hard copies of the research papers must be submitted to the instructor, according to the due date.

GRADES

Final grades for the course are as follows: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F (fail). Additional information about student grading can be found on page 6 of the Graduate Program Handbook. Students will have their grades reduced by one whole level, i.e., an A+ become a B+, if assignments are turned in late. Students will be given an incomplete and the final course grade will be reduced by one whole point, if all required work is not submitted to the instructor by the final course meeting.

HONOR CODE

The principles of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship govern the performance of all academic work and student conduct in this course. Your acceptance of

enrollment presupposes your commitment to the principles of an honor code. Therefore, cheating on examinations or the failure to properly cite the work of others will not be allowed.

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