

Spring, 2018
UEP 214

Practicum in Public Education Issues and Policies

Instructor: Steve Zimmer
Location: Johnson 105
Date/Time: Wednesday Evenings 7:15-9:15 p.m.

Office Hours: Immediately before or after class and by appointment

Contact Info: szimmer@lausd.net
zimmers@oxy.edu
323-979-1320

Course Objectives

- **Students will research, study, analyze, write and propose a resolution, policy, strategy or position paper to the Los Angeles Unified Board of Education or the City of Los Angeles relating to an issue that significantly affects the lives of students, their families, their schools and/or their communities.**
- **Students will complete a group project and individual analysis paper on a significant issue facing public education. Students will work with Board staff, District staff, community members, scholars, activists and school communities to develop a position/resolution and/or strategy.**
- Understand and analyze the role of activism, advocacy and organizing as stakeholders attempt to engage in the public education policy process.
- Engage high level policy makers and learn about the policy process relating to three significant policy issues facing the Los Angeles
- Interact with leading public education experts in Los Angeles to gain insight from their expertise and experience in our efforts to understand and respond to the perceived crisis in public education
- Study and reflect upon important texts (both contemporary and historical) that inform equity, social justice and critical race perspectives on public education
- Understand the impact of poverty, systemic racism and conditions on classroom instruction and student achievement.
- Understand the impact of state and federal funding as well as the persistent budget crisis on LAUSD students, teachers and families.
- Understand the legislative process through a project in which students actually analyze an issue, develop a strategy to address the issue and write policy based on that strategy. Students will have the opportunity to learn first-hand how ideas become proposals, proposals become resolutions and resolutions become policies.
- Offer the opportunity for internships, externships or other placements in public education offices and schools aligned with students' research and career interest.

- Create a unique opportunity for individual and small group feedback, guidance and engagement around research, field work and internship possibilities that will improve Comp project quality and clarify graduate/summer placement planning

Reading Materials

The reading materials will be determined by the group projects. Groups will be expected to read at least one book-length treatment of the issue for background, at least one current, critical journal piece and a constant stream of current media on the issue throughout the semester. The texts listed below are not exhaustive by any means.

Strongly Recommended Texts:

Carter, Prudence and Welner, Kevin. 2013	<u>Closing the Opportunity Gap</u>
Risen, Clay. 2014	<u>The Bill of the Century</u>
Linda Darling-Hammond. 2010	<u>The Flat World and Education</u>
Paulo Freire. 1993.	<u>The Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u>
Charles Kerchner (et al) 2008.	<u>Learning from Los Angeles: Institutional Change in American Public Education</u>

Important Public Education Texts

Jonathan Kozol. 1989.	<u>Savage Inequalities</u>
Theodore Sizer 1992.	<u>Horace's Compromise</u>
Pedro Noguera. 2003	<u>City Schools and the American Dream</u>
Noguera, Pedro. 2008.	<u>The Trouble with Black Boys: Race Equity and the Future of Public Education.</u>

*Additional articles and texts will be required. **It is absolutely essential for you to follow certain education blogs on a daily basis. Here are a few you should be checking religiously:***

- The Los Angeles Times Education Blogs
- The L.A. School Report
- KPCC Education Reporting on the website(NPR)
- Politico Pro Education
- Diane Ravitch, Anthony Cody or Valerie Strauss (anti-reform)

- Speak Up Parents or California Charter School Association(pro-reform)
- Broad Foundation Web Site, AFT Web Site

Class Structure

Our class is structured as a practicum in the truest sense of the word. I realized four years ago that we have an opportunity to access critical and impactful education policy debates in a rare way. We experimented with this for the last three years and it was mostly a success. It does, however, require you to work in a very different way: both with each other and collaboratively.

We are going to choose three major policy initiatives and our class groups are going to help inform the direction of this policy through research, community outreach, policy analysis and potentially, organizing. Each group will meet with Board staff, district staff, constituents, stakeholders and local experts on the subject.

Below I present six potential ideas for policy initiatives. I am not wed to a particular initiative and I am open to additional ideas. Last year, only one of the suggested initiatives was actually used in the projects. While I no longer have a vote on the Board of Education, I remain directly connected to several of the voting members and their staff. So at the very least, your work has the potential to significantly influence their positions as the policy debate moves forward. If your work is good enough it has the potential to significantly impact a major issue for the largest unified school district in the nation that is governed by a Board of Education. Your work could directly change the lives of over 600,000 students and their families. I expect you to take it seriously.

The following are proposed options for the policy projects

- A resolution that would establish more expansive guidelines for the Board of Education to evaluate new Charter School Proposals including the effects that the new charter school would have on enrollment in the neighboring LAUSD schools and would require charter schools to pay a fee to the district when they do not serve an equitable number of students with Special Needs
- A resolution that would expand the LAUSD definition of schools as sanctuary schools and/or safe zones for all students and families and further delineate LAUSD's non-cooperation with ICE and collaboration with the City of Los Angeles for the purpose of establishing LAUSD schools as DACA registration centers and family legal centers providing assistance for TPS and other immigration issues
- A resolution to implement a wide ranging social justice procurement policy that expands food procurement guidelines to all areas of procurement to address labor, environmental and other health and welfare standards in all of LAUSD's purchasing.
- A resolution that would designate five LAUSD owned parcels or portions of LAUSD school property per year for five years for the purpose of providing permanent supportive housing for LAUSD families currently experiencing homelessness or experiencing housing insecurity that could result in homelessness. The goal of the housing program would be provide at least 1,000 units of family and/or work force housing within five years on LAUSD property

- A bill in the State Legislature that would establish the right of 16 year old students who are both students in and residents of a school district to vote in the elections for the Board of Education who govern that district.
- A Board Resolution that would revise the LAUSD policies and discipline systems to eliminate the use of random searches and ban the use of metal detectors in the random search practices.

The project will have three significant components. The first component will be a presentation to the class (this presentation may include additional members of the Oxy and LAUSD community). Student teams will have wide latitude in how to present their report, but my guess is that some type of power point and some narrative research summary. The second group component will a community action component. Here, group members will either present the project findings or recommendations to either LAUSD Board staff, LAUSD Board Members, a Board or Committee Meeting or a Community Meeting. While the presentation may contain similar information to the in-class presentation (incorporating feedback from myself and your colleagues), I expect the group to employ lobbying and presentation strategies that we will go over in class during the semester.

The final component to the project will be an individual analysis paper that will cover both the issue and a detailed reflection about the group process you participated in throughout the semester. I will expect you to incorporate new research and sources into your paper, but you should use the group's primary research as well. I will distribute a much more detailed description of the paper, but you can anticipate that it will be between 12-15 pages in length and will be due at the end of Finals.

I expect you to be active and engaged in critical public education policy throughout the semester. I expect you to attend or watch each of the monthly public school board meetings and watch the critical committee meetings that affect your group's topic. In addition, students will be required to attend at least two public lectures, panels, community meetings or conferences over the course of the semester. These should be meetings that relate directly to your group's project. Information from these sessions is expected to be included in the final research project.

Assignments and Grading

Class Attendance, Meetings, Participation	30%
Group Project and Presentations	40%
Individual Analysis Paper	30%

Note: More than any other semester, attendance and participation is absolutely critical. We may not hold regular class session every single Wednesday (especially when there are lectures, panels and other events that relate directly to our process), but I am expecting you to be in regular communication with myself and your colleagues. Each of the issues you are addressing is critical to the future of LAUSD's students and their families, I expect you to demonstrate a level of professional responsibility and that is why this comprises 30% of your grade.

Tentative Class Schedule for February and March

January 24th	Introduction to Class: Introduction Exercise
January 31 st	Introduction to Education Policy and the Process of Policy Making on the Board of Education
February 7th	Policy from Idea to Debate to Reality with guest speakers
February 14	Policy Making Exercise with guests (selection of groups and policy topics)
February 21 st	<u>Initial Policy Proposals Due</u>
February 28th	Education Policy in Washington and Sacramento
March 7th	Analysis of Board Resolutions and/or Education Bills in Sacramento and Group Work Exercise (rough draft due)
March 14 th	<u>SPRING BREAK</u>
March 21 st	Group Work Session on Policy Initiatives
March 29 th	<u>Class Presentations on Policy Initiatives</u>

UEP 214 Introduction Activity
Spring Semester, 2018

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is the new funding design created by Governor Jerry Brown to distribute base funding and supplemental funding the School Districts following the passage of Proposition 55. The LCFF is designed to fund schools proportionate to the needs of their students. It is also designed to switch the power to determine priorities for funding from Sacramento to local school districts. The LCFF will deliver the first significant increase in school funding to California Public Schools in almost a decade. Local School Boards will need to determine their priorities for distributing the funds. Here are the choices we have in LAUSD.

1. Lower Class Size in Middle School and Core High School Subjects
2. Provide funding to implement reforms in school climate and restorative justice
3. Fund the effort to make sure all students have access to courses to pass the A-G requirements
4. Fully fund Summer School and After School Programs on every campus
5. Provide Funding to re-open libraries at schools
6. Provide Funding to have a nurse and a social worker at least three days a week
7. Fully fund Arts Programs at every school throughout the district
8. Lower Counselor and Administrator Ratio from 850 to 1 to 400 to 1

With a partner put these options in order of priority in terms of their importance for LCFF funding in LAUSD for the 2018 school year.

Write down five bullet points explaining and defending your rankings.

Write down three bullet points explaining why you chose your top priority.