



UT Tyler SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

EDLR 5313.060 Strategic School Improvement

Term: Fall 2026

Office Hours: By Appointment

Professor: Dr. Kathy Ray

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Course Dates: August 24, 2026 –
December 11, 2026

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Course Times: Online

Census Date: September 8, 2026

Last Day to Withdraw: October 30, 2026

Classroom: Canvas

Course Catalog Description:

EDLR 5313 is an inquiry into critical issues in educational leadership. This course engages students in a systematic exploration of critical issues in educational leadership through a formal inquiry- based approach.

Student Learning Outcomes & Assessments:

Upon completing this course, students will be able to demonstrate mastery in the following areas, based on the Texas Principal Standards, Competencies and the Educators' Code of Ethics:

Objective	Texas Principal Standard	
Shape campus culture by developing a shared vision.	4(A)(i)(I-II)(ii), 4(B)(i-v),	
Communicate and collaborate with all members of the school community, responds to diverse interests and needs, and mobilizes resources to promote student success.	4(A)(i)(III-V)	
Act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical and legal manner.	3(A)(i, iii), 3(B)(i)	
Design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment; and • promote the use of varied assessments to measure student performance and facilitate the use of sound, research-based practice • facilitate the use of technology, telecommunications, and information systems • promote the use of creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving	1(A)(i-ii), 1(B)(i-ii), 3(A)(i-ii), 3(B)(i-iii)	

Advocate and sustain instructional program conducive to student learning, staff evaluation and professional development.	2(A)(i)(I-VII), 2(A)(ii), 2(B)(i-iv), 5(A)(i)(I-V)(ii)(B)(i)(iii)
Apply effective principles of both leadership and management. • implement procedures for gathering, analyzing, and using data • frame, analyze, and resolve problems using appropriate problem-solving • techniques and decision-making skills.	2(A)(ii) (I, II, IV-VII)(ii), 2(B)(ii-iii), 3(A)(i)(ii), 3(B)(i-ii)
Understand strategic operations and systems for goal attainment, including finance, budgeting and resource allocation.	5(A)(i)(I-II, IV,V)(ii)(B)(i)(iii)
Recognize the importance of action research for school improvement.	3(A)(i-ii), 3(B) (i-ii), 5(A)(i)(I-II)(ii), 5(B)(i)(iii)

Dispositions and Requirements

Graduate Professional Dispositions & Requirements

Building upon the professional standards for undergraduate candidates, this graduate level disposition form elevates expectations to focus on advanced leadership, research integration, and systemic impact. Graduate students are expected not only to follow policies but to serve as exemplars and mentors within the educational community. Failure to meet these advanced standards or a display of unprofessional behavior may result in a Graduate Instructional Notification & [PIP Initiation Form](#) to remain in the graduate program.

Course Expectations

Students will be encouraged to take ownership in their own learning through critical and reflective thinking regarding the roles and responsibilities of effective principals. Students will explore educational issues, solve problems, and apply knowledge learned through a systematic examination of critical issues in educational leadership and a formal inquiry-based approach.

EDLR 5313 is an integral component of the Educational Leadership Program. Student Learning Outcomes for 5313 are derived from the Student Learning Outcomes for the Educational Leadership Program. These outcomes are infused into the internship experience and assessed on the TExES 268 PIL Exam and TExES 368 PASL required for all certification candidates who are awarded a Texas Principal's Certificate. For assistance with preparing for your certification exams, check out Dr. Woody's free test prep videos by visiting [Dr. Cindy Woody on YouTube](#).

Evaluation and Grading:

A =	90% - 100% of points available
B =	80% - 89% of points available
C =	70% - 79% of points available

D =	60% - 69% of points available
F =	0% - 59% of points available

Required Text and Related Readings Textbooks:

In this course, textbooks are provided for free.

To e-access your textbooks, visit <https://libguides.uttyler.edu/textbooks>.

American Psychological Association, (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN-10: 1-4338-0561-8

Desravines, J., Aquino, J., & Fenton, B. (2016) *Breakthrough principals: A step-by-step guide to building stronger schools*. CA: Jossey-Bass - A Wiley Brand ISBN: 9781

Assignments:

- **Leadership Assignments** - Students will participate in assignments that are designed to study their campus to diagnosis and analyze their campus in critical areas of school improvement to determine root causes, complete an equity audit, and develop principal and school actions to improve areas of need as determined by the root cause analysis for their campus. Each assignment will include a detailed grading rubric to assist you with understanding expectations.
- **Discussion Boards** – Students will participate in discussion board topics. You will be provided with a grading rubric to ensure that you can earn the maximum number of points possible for the assignment.
- **Major Projects** – Students will participate in developing an Equity Audit, a Transformational Leadership Action Plan, and the early stages of an Action Research Project (which will be completed during their practicum work). A grading rubric will be provided to assist you with creating a robust and useful final project that will help you meet course expectations while developing tools that you can use to help you reach current and future career goals.

Course Policies:

- **Due Dates:** A schedule of assignments and due dates will be available in your Canvas course on the first day of class. All assignments should be completed by midnight of the due date.
- **Late work:** Contact Dr. Ray as soon as possible if you are experiencing issues with submitting assignments on time. Reasonable exceptions will be made for emergencies and unexpected schedule conflicts as you maintain timely communication and gain written instructor approval. My goal is for you to be SUCCESSFUL in this course and as a school leader.
- **Quality of Assignments:** All assignments are expected to demonstrate graduate level quality work and adhere to the stated assignment criteria. Assignments not meeting graduate level quality and require the student to redo and resubmit will be adjusted by 10% unless otherwise noted by the instructor.
- **Related Field Experiences:** This course provides background context to support a successful internship experience. Students are expected to work cooperatively with their site supervisor to complete coursework.

Artificial Intelligence Statement:

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware

that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. In this course, all of your assignments should be your own, original work.

Please refrain from using AI tools in place of your own thoughts, ideas, data, plans, and/or written content. Doing so can result in a failing grade.

Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage deeply, ask questions, and talk about the course content with your learning community. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers, as you all have different perspectives you bring to the table through your educator experiences.
2. **Manage your time.** I get it! Students usually juggle a lot, and I know you have got commitments beyond this class: work, life, family, personal time, etc. Still, doing your best in graduate school means carving out enough dedicated time for coursework.
3. **Login regularly.** I recommend that you log in to Canvas weekly to stay active with the course even if you have gotten ahead. I use Canvas class emails to ensure you do not overlook or miss anything. I encourage you to forward your UT Tyler emails to your most frequently checked email account if you are not in the habit of checking it often.
4. **Do not fall behind.** We will have a course assignment calendar that will help you plan ahead for due dates and prep work required for completing assignments and projects. If you feel you are starting to fall behind, check in with me as soon as possible so we can troubleshoot together.
5. **Use Canvas notification settings.** Pro tip! Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable notifications to be sent instantly or daily. ([Canvas Notification Guide](#))
6. **Ask for help if needed.** If you are struggling with a concept, reach out to me for support. We can jump on Zoom, talk by email, talk on the phone, or text. I will provide my cell phone number in the Canvas course. If it seems like I have missed an email from you, please feel free to call or text. Your success is my priority. I am available and happy to help.
7. **Seize this opportunity!** You only have one opportunity to be an intern and hopefully need only one opportunity to take this course. Seize this opportunity to really get out there in terms of asking questions, shadowing leaders, volunteering and leading boldly on your campus, and turning what you are learning into actionable steps for real life instead of just one more completed assignment. You will be in the hot seat as a leader very soon, and you will want to look and feel as if you know what you are doing. Make this semester count!

University Policies & Student Resources

University policies and student resources are available on the University website and in Canvas under “Syllabus”.

- [University Policy](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

School of Education Mission, Vision and Core Purpose

Mission

The School of Education prepares educators and leaders who transform lives through learning. Through excellence in teaching, scholarship, innovation, and partnership, we strengthen the educator workforce, advance educational opportunity, and improve outcomes for learners, schools, and communities across East Texas and beyond.

Vision

The SOE will be a global leader in responding to needs in the fields of education, psychology, and counseling, with a focus on the East Texas region, by creating innovative academic and scholarly pathways and partnerships.

Core Purpose:

To prepare competent, caring, and qualified professionals in the fields of education, psychology and counseling, to foster discovery and to advance the knowledge base in our respective disciplines.

UT Tyler School of Education

The School of Education is committed to teaching and implementing the Texas Educator Standards at the highest level. The School of Education faculty uses the Texas Education Standards, along with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (In TASC) standards used by educator preparation programs throughout the United States. The following resources are linked to external sites.

Texas Education Standards:

The Texas Education Standards (TAC 241.55) can be accessed [here](#).

Standards for Educators' Preparation Program:

The TExES 268 Domains and Competencies (TAC 241.15) can be accessed [here](#).

Effective Schools Framework:

The TEA Effective Schools Framework can be accessed [here](#).

Educator Code of Ethics:

The Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators (TAC 247) can be accessed [here](#).