

EDSI 6380 – School Improvement Policy Residency**University of Texas at Tyler****Ed.D. in School Improvement – Summer 2025****Instructor:** Dr. Michael Odell**Cell:** 208.301.0542**E-Mail:** modell@uttyler.edu**Office Hours:** By Appointment via ZOOM**Format:** Hybrid (Online + 1 Week In-Person Residency in Austin)**Dates:** May 12 – August 9, 2025**Austin Residency:** June 9–13, 2025**Credit Hours:** 3**Course Description**

This course examines state and federal policies that have been implemented or considered to improve schools. These policies will be evaluated to determine effectiveness, and modifications will be explored to determine how local policy can move to greater school improvement.

Course Overview

This culminating course prepares Ed.D. candidates to lead within complex policy environments by analyzing and engaging with education policy across federal, state, and local levels. A central feature of the course is a one-week in-person residency in Austin where students participate in a structured conference experience. This includes presentations and discussions with Texas legislators, TEA officials, advocacy organizations, and education policy leaders.

Students will explore how education policy is created, advocated for, interpreted, and implemented, with special attention to Texas public education. The course also introduces powerful yet underutilized resources such as the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the Texas Education Research Center (ERC). Students will consider how these tools—and particularly access to ERC longitudinal data—could inform local decision-making through subscription models currently available to school districts.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- a. Analyze the philosophical and historical perspectives of school reform, diversity, and learning opportunities for all students.
- b. Engage in data-driven problem-solving and interdisciplinary collaboration to address challenges in education.
- c. Use policy analysis and engagement with stakeholders to drive disruptive change in school improvement.
- d. Conduct research of practice to support effective school leadership, teaching, learning, and educational structures.
- e. Utilize policy and data to guide school improvement and enhance learning outcomes for

students.

f. Develop a P-20 perspective on school improvement, considering educator preparation and systemic impacts.

Policy Objectives

1. Analyze how educational policy is created and enacted across governance levels.
2. Engage directly with education policy leaders and advocacy organizations in Texas.
3. Explore how district and campus leaders interpret and implement policy locally.
4. Apply reflective leadership skills to examine the influence of policy on school improvement.
5. Identify and evaluate data resources (ERC, WWC, ECS) to support policy decision-making and research.

Course Structure

This 3-credit hybrid course is structured into three modules aligned to a 12-week summer term, with instructional time divided across online preparation, an intensive in-person residency, and post-residency synthesis. Synchronous zoom sessions will augment the Canvas Assignments.

Module 1: Pre-Residency Preparation (Weeks 1–4)

Contact Hours: 3 Zoom plus Canvas

Overview: Introduces foundational concepts of educational policy in Texas and the national context. Students prepare for the Austin residency through targeted readings and online engagement. Two synchronous pre-sessions via Zoom (dates TBD) will be held to introduce education policy structures and prepare for the residency.

- **Topics:**
 - Texas educational governance (TEA, SBOE, ESCs, Legislature)
 - TASB policy framework (LEGAL/LOCAL)
 - Overview of policy evaluation tools (ERC, WWC, ECS)
- **Assignments:**
 - **Ongoing Policy Discussion Board:** Students will post their top current policy concern along with a relevant link, and engage with peers' posts through replies. This assignment will remain open until the Austin residency begins and is designed to build a shared foundation of current issues in Texas and U.S. education policy. **Contact Hours: 3**
Overview: Introduces foundational concepts of educational policy in Texas and the national context. Students prepare for the Austin residency through targeted readings and brief analytical writing.
- **Topics:**
 - Texas educational governance (TEA, SBOE, ESCs, Legislature)
 - TASB policy framework (LEGAL/LOCAL)
 - Overview of policy evaluation tools (ERC, WWC, ECS)

- **Assignments:**
 - **Policy Autobiography** (2 pages): Reflect on your personal and professional experience with education policy.
 - **Pre-Residency Brief** (2–3 pages): Identify one pressing education policy issue and pose three critical questions to guide your learning during the residency.

Module 2: Austin Residency Experience (June 9–13)

Contact Hours: 40

Overview: A full-time, immersive policy residency in Austin. Students attend a structured series of presentations, panels, and networking sessions with policymakers, agency officials, and advocacy leaders.

- **Engagements:**
 - Texas legislators (House and Senate Education Committees)
 - TEA staff and SBOE members
 - Representatives from Raise Your Hand Texas, Equity Center, TPPF, Educate Texas, and TCSA
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 - Practicing superintendents, attorneys, and lobbyists
- **Assignments:**
 - **Residency Journal:** Daily entries summarizing key takeaways and insights from each session.
 - **Participation in daily debrief discussions:** Facilitated group reflections and synthesis activities.

Module 3: Post-Residency Synthesis (Weeks 6–12)

Contact Hours: 2 Zoom plus Canvas

Overview: Students integrate knowledge gained during the residency through critical reflection and policy application.

- **Assignments:**
 - **Leadership Reflection** (2–3 pages): Describe how your philosophy of policy leadership has evolved and your role in policy implementation.
 - **Policy Connection Memo** (2–3 pages): Identify a policy issue from the residency and link it to evidence from WWC, ERC, or ECS with local implications for school improvement.

Required Resources

Curated Readings:

GAO Report on Segregation and Diversity in K–12 Education

U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), 2022 *"Student Population Has Significantly Diversified"* <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-104737>

Institute of Education Sciences (IES): Enhancing Data-Based Decision-Making in Schools
<https://ies.ed.gov/use-work/awards/enhancing-data-based-decision-making-schools>

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): Collaborative Problem Solving Report
https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/researchcenter/collaborative_problem_solving.pdf

GAO Report: School Improvement under ESSA – Oversight Could Be Enhanced
<https://www.gao.gov/assets/d24105648.pdf>

Safe and Supportive Schools TA Center: Stakeholder Engagement Guide
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/referencemanualsection2.pdf>

ERIC: Successful School Leadership (Research Review)
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614324.pdf>

National Academy of Education Report: Teacher Preparation, Retention, and Effectiveness
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED615304.pdf>

Texas-Specific:

- Texas Education Agency (TEA) – <https://tea.texas.gov>
- Texas Tribune – <https://www.texastribune.org/education/>
- TASB Policy Online – <https://pol.tasb.org/>
- Raise Your Hand Texas – <https://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org>
- Educate Texas – <https://www.edtx.org>
- Equity Center – <https://www.equitycenter.org>
- Texas Public Policy Foundation – <https://www.texaspolicy.com>
- Texas Charter School Association – <https://txcharterschools.org/policy-research/>

National:

- What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) – <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
- Learning Policy Institute (LPI) – <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org>
- Education Commission of the States (ECS) – <https://www.ecs.org>
- Brookings Institution – <https://www.brookings.edu/topic/education/>
- Education Week – <https://www.edweek.org>
- RAND Education – <https://www.rand.org/education-and-labor.html>
- National Education Association (NEA) – <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/governance-policies/nea-policy-statements>
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT) – <https://www.aft.org/about/resolutions>

Evidence Tools:

- Texas Education Research Center (ERC) – <https://www.texaserc.utexas.edu>
 - *Note: District-level leaders may explore ERC subscriptions (~\$15,000/year) to access P-20W longitudinal data for strategic planning.*



- WWC Practice Guides – <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguides>
- ERIC – <https://eric.ed.gov>
- NCES – <https://nces.ed.gov>
- THECB Data Tools – <http://www.txhighereddata.org>

Notes

- Students must complete all Module 1 assignments before traveling to Austin.
- Attendance for the entire residency week is required.
- Final submissions in Module 3 should demonstrate professional communication and integration of high-quality policy evidence.

This course will equip students with the networks, tools, and reflective practices to engage meaningfully in education policy and contribute to school improvement efforts through informed leadership.

University and SOE Policies: The most current policies are linked in Canvas.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

For a full list of university policies including information related to the topics listed below, click [here](#).

- Students Rights and Responsibilities
- Campus Carry
- Tobacco-Free University
- Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies
- State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
- Disability Services
- Student Absence due to Religious Observance
- Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
- Social Security and FERPA Statement
- Emergency Exits and Evacuation
- Student Standards of Academic Conduct

UT Tyler Resources for Students:

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu, <http://www.uttyler.edu/writingcenter/>
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu, <https://www.uttyler.edu/tutoring/>
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, This is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254) <https://www.uttyler.edu/counseling/>

[University Guidelines, Links and Policies](#)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY (CEP) VISION AND MISSION

Vision: The College of Education and Psychology is nationally recognized and respected for its academic programs and opportunities. It is a center of academic excellence, scholarly inquiry, and public service. The College prepares leaders to meet the critical challenges of the 21st Century through productive contributions to local and global communities and toward individual and cultural equity.

Mission: The mission of the College of Education and Psychology is to provide a positive environment that fosters the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The mission is individually and collectively realized through a community of scholars that contributes to knowledge through scholarly inquiry; organizes knowledge for application, understanding and communication; and provides leadership and service. We affirm and promote global perspectives that value individual and cultural diversity to enhance learning, service, and scholarship.

UT TYLER'S SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Texas Education Standards: The School of Education are committed to teaching and implementing the Texas Educator Standards at the highest level. The School of Education faculty use the Texas Education Standards, along with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards used by educator preparation programs throughout the United States.

The list of [Texas Education Standards](#) can be accessed [here](#).

Access the [Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators](#).

