



EDLE 5723 X20 Understanding P-12 School Law
West College of Education & Professional Studies
Spring 2026: Jan 20-May 8, 2026

Contact Information

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Instructor Response Policy

The best way to contact me is through text message or email. You can expect a response within 24 hours; however, it could be a little longer on weekends or holidays.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required:

Walsh, J., & Orman, S. (2022). *The educator's guide to Texas school law* (10th ed.). The University of Texas Press. ISBN: 9781477324721

Course Description

An examination of the rights and responsibilities of teachers, students, and laws related to P-12 special education, school governance, staff discipline, and dismissal. The course will also explore the major laws and court decisions which have shaped the operation of schools today. Course may not be used for students seeking principal certification.

Disclaimer

EDLE 5723 is a course assigned to the Master of Education in Educational Leadership without principal certification.

Student Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

1. Understand local, state, and federal laws.
2. Recognize key education-related provisions of the U.S. Constitution, federal statutes, Texas Constitution and statutes, including provisions of the Texas Education Code.
3. Learn key court rulings that establish school law parameters at the campus level.
4. Understand how Board policies and administrative regulations/directives translate the law into real work requirements and application.
5. Develop a rudimentary knowledge of basic legal terminology and the court system so administrators can decipher legal materials and effectively participate in basic school law-related discussions, workshops, and conferences.

Course Standards and Examination Domains/Competencies

All Midwestern State University Education Leadership courses are developed in accordance with the National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards. These standards frame the knowledge and skills required to develop the competencies of highly effective instructional leaders in today's schools.

National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards

NELP 2.2: Understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.

NELP 5.3: Understand and demonstrate the capacity to communicate through oral, written, and digital means within the larger organizational, community, and political contexts when advocating for the needs of their school and community.

NELP 6.3: Reflectively evaluate, communicate about, and implement laws, rights, policies, and regulations to promote student and adult success and well-being. NELP 7.1: Collaboratively develop the school's professional capacity through engagement in recruiting, selecting, and hiring staff.

NELP 7.2: Engage staff in a collaborative professional culture designed to promote school improvement, teacher retention, and the success and well-being of each student and adult in the school.

See Appendix A for a complete list of standards, competencies, and other expectations.

Expectations

Learning Effort

Regular online participation is required. Please check your email at least every 24 hours to stay in touch with your instructor. Please attend discussion posts in a timely manner. Professional dialogue opportunities and active participation are part of this class and will be included in the grade.

Reading and Presentation

This course requires a great deal of reading. The summary of case law in American Public School Law and The Educator's Guide are great resources. Students are encouraged to use a variety of presentation methods as part of the briefing, which will be shared via D2L.

Assignments

Assessment: Human Resources Hiring Plan and Case Studies

As you lead the people at your school, it is important that you understand the legal aspects of human resource management. You will develop a Human Resources Legal Plan to show your understanding of this area.

You will review the Texas Administrative Code related to the issues of Hiring, Teacher Induction, Teacher Discipline, and Teacher Dismissal. For each of these four topics, you will then outline the policies and procedures you plan to follow and implement to ensure compliance with the law. As you develop these policies and procedures, consult with your principal or district HR personnel to understand what is already in place. Do not simply list policies and procedures; instead, describe how you would put them into action.

Evaluating and Grading

- **Discussions:** Each of the five Discussion questions offers a forum to engage colleagues on a legal issue covered in each module.
- **Quizzes:** Each of the eight *Quizzes* consists of 10 true-false, fill-in-the-blank, multiple-answer, multiple-choice formatted questions to ensure prompt recall of basic school law facts and concepts.
- **TEExES Patterns Quizzes:** Each of the five TEExES Patterns Quizzes consists of between 1 and 3 multiple-choice questions covering legal patterns discussed in each module.
- **Key Assessment:** Develop a Human Resources Legal Plan for the hiring and retention of qualified teachers, along with two case studies/scenarios.

Assessment and Assignment Points

Assignments		
Quizzes	8 quizzes at 100 points each	(800)
Discussions	5 posts x 50 points each	(250)
TEExES Patterns Quizzes	5 quizzes x 50 points each	(250)
Key Assessment	300 points	
Total Points	1600 total points	

Final Grade Calculations Total Points= 1600

Point Range	Course Grade
1440-1600 points	A
1280-1439 points	B
1120-1279 points	C
960-1119 points	D

Point Range	Course Grade
Below 960 points	F

Additional Course and University Information

Attendance/Participation

Active participation in class is essential for your success in this course. The goal of the course is to gain knowledge. Read the assigned chapters, supplementary materials, court cases, watch the videos and presentations, and similar materials in preparation for class. Failing to submit all assignments may result in failing the course.

Candidates and students are required to complete assignments within the established timeframes. Attendance for this online course is based on *logins to D2L and timely completion of assignments.

Consistent online participation is necessary. Please respond to discussion posts promptly. Professional dialogue is part of this class, and timely participation will be considered in your grade.

Absence Policy for Online Courses

Since this is an online course, attendance will be tracked through your participation in discussions and submission of assignments. Failing to submit three (3) assignments on time and/or submitting incomplete assignments will be considered a sign of unreliability and will be taken seriously. Students will receive an F on their third missed or incomplete assignment at the discretion of Dr. Robles.

Instructor Drop

An instructor may drop a student at any time during the semester for excessive absences, consistent failure to meet class assignments, an indifferent attitude, or disruptive conduct. The instructor must provide the student with a verbal or written warning before dropping them from the class. The instructor's decision to drop a student overrides any later student-initiated course drop. During the first 8 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10-week summer term, or the 11th class day of a 4- or 5-week summer session consisting of 20 days, the instructor will assign a grade of either W or F. After these periods, the student will automatically receive a grade of F. The official drop date is the date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar.

Quality Requirements

Turning in all assignments is not enough to guarantee an "A" in the course. The quality of work completed on time is the most important factor for earning an "A."

Expectations for Written Work

- Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling are expected on all written assignments (although web discussions are not held to the high standard of a research project or other written assignment). APA style should be followed.

- All written work should be completed in a professional manner. Using correct spelling and grammar are essential writing skills to master because your students will learn from your example. Therefore, 10% to 20% of the grade for all written assignments will be based on spelling and grammar. The expectation is for high-quality work.
- Written assignments should be done in Microsoft Word and turned in as an attachment on D2L.
- Discussions should be completed within the D2L discussion space and not uploaded as an attachment (unless defined by specific directions).
- Due dates should be honored in order to receive the highest score.
- When referring to the ideas of others, works should be cited using the APA format.

Adhering to Professional Ethics

When using professional sources in your writing, please cite the sources you have used or ideas you have adapted when completing assignments. Use of copyrighted materials must follow legal and ethical guidelines. If part of an assignment is submitted for credit in more than one course, both professors must give prior approval for this dual credit, and the dual use should be clearly referenced on both assignments.

Mutual Respect

Remember to treat everyone with respect. Avoid posting anything you wouldn't be willing to share face-to-face. Since distance provides a level of anonymity, it's important to be mindful of what we post online. Familiarize yourself with the following guidelines for both online discussions and email messages.

- Use appropriate language. Excessive use of “chat” or “instant messaging” jargon is not acceptable for D2L discussions.
- Read existing follow-up posts and do not repeat what has already been shared.
- Use proper spelling, capitalization, grammar, usage, and punctuation. Utilize the Spell Check feature.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments must be submitted through the course's assignment page in D2L or the designated third-party software. A minimum of 5 points will be deducted if assignments are not submitted via D2L or the assigned third-party software.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support students' studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to use the library effectively.

AI / Chat GPT

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of this course's learning outcomes, students are expected to prepare all writing assignments. Building these skills will help you succeed in a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not allowed and will be considered plagiarism.

You can type a question into ChatGPT, but you cannot copy and paste its response to turn it in as your own. If you use ChatGPT, you must disclose this somewhere in your assignment. If you use ChatGPT or any AI, please do so ethically, accurately, and in a helpful way.

Extra Credit

No extra credit assignments will be given or accepted.

Late Work

Assignments should be submitted by the designated due date, especially discussion posts. If an emergency occurs and you need extra time on an assignment that doesn't involve your peers, contact Dr. Robles to arrange this. Be aware that points could be deducted.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: Jan 23, 2026
- Deadline to file for May graduation: Feb 16, 2026
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W": Mar 18, 2026
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately after

having computer trouble If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Inclement Weather

Fully online courses will continue as scheduled. Students may contact the professor to request assignment extensions if severe weather conditions affect their ability to meet deadlines.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University’s Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick
Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at [Online Reporting Form](#)

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit [Title IX Website](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Date Available	Assignment Due Date
Introduction Module	Jan 20	January 25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions Due • Must have textbooks by this date
Module 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Federal Government and Education • Overview of State Government and Education • Overview of Local Government and Education • Student Rights Part I & II • Use of School Facilities • Equal Access Act (EAA) 	Jan 26	February 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #1 • TExES Patterns Quiz #1 • Discussion #1
Module 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Instruction • Rights of Parents • Special Education • Documentation 	Feb 2	Feb 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #2 • Quiz #3 • TExES Patterns Quiz #2 • Discussion #2
Module 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Discipline • Curbing Violence in Schools • Desegregation • Family Educational Rights and Privacy Rights Acts (FERPA) • Texas Public Information Act (TPIA) • Personnel 	Feb 15	Feb 28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #4 • Quiz #5 • TExES Patterns Quiz #3 • Discussion #3
Module 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Harassment • First Amendment and Teacher Rights • Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) • Divorced Parents • Child Protective Services • Police • UIL Booster Club Guidelines • UIL and TEA Eligibility Guidelines 	Mar 1	Mar 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #6 • Quiz #7 • TExES Patterns Quiz #4 • Discussion #4
Module 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas School Finance • Special Issues • Nutrition • Drug Testing • Legal Liability 	Mar 16	Mar 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #8 • TExES Patterns Quiz #5 • Discussion #5
Key Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Legal Plan 	Jan 20	Mar 28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Plan

Appendix A: Standards/Competencies

Course Objectives or Student Learning Outcomes	Standard or Competency
1. Students will gain an understanding of how local, state, and federal laws impact education.	NELP 6.3: <i>Reflectively evaluate, communicate about, and implement laws, rights, policies, and regulations to promote student and adult success and well-being.</i>
2. Students will recognize key education-related provisions of the U.S. Constitution, federal statutes, Texas Constitution and statutes, including provisions of the Texas Education Code.	NELP 2.2: <i>Understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.</i>
3. Students will identify key court rulings that establish school law parameters at the campus level.	NELP 2.2: <i>Understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.</i>
4. Students will understand how Board policies and administrative regulations/directives translate the law into real work requirements and application.	<p>NELP 6.3: <i>Reflectively evaluate, communicate about, and implement laws, rights, policies, and regulations to promote student and adult success and well-being.</i></p> <p>NELP 7.1: <i>Collaboratively develop the school's professional capacity through engagement in recruiting, selecting, and hiring staff.</i></p> <p>NELP 7.2: <i>Engage staff in a collaborative professional culture designed to promote school improvement, teacher retention, and the success and well-being of each student and adult in the school.</i></p>

Course Objectives or Student Learning Outcomes	Standard or Competency
5. Students will develop a rudimentary knowledge of basic legal terminology and the court system to decipher legal materials and effectively participate in basic school law related discussions, workshops, and conferences.	<p>NELP 2.2: <i>Understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.</i></p> <p>NELP 5.3: <i>Understand and demonstrate the capacity to communicate through oral, written, and digital means within the larger organizational, community, and political contexts when advocating for the needs of their school and community.</i></p> <p>NELP 6.3: <i>Reflectively evaluate, communicate about, and implement laws, rights, policies, and regulations to promote student and adult success and well-being.</i></p>

Appendix B: Assignment Standard Alignment

Assignment/Module/ Course Activities	Course Objectives	Standard or Competency
Discussions	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	EDLE Competency 010, 011 NELP 2.2, 5.3, 6.3 Code of Ethics- §228.30 (1) Appropriate Boundaries- §228.30 (7)
Quizzes	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	EDLE Competency 010, 011, 011, 011 NELP 6.3
TExES Patterns Quizzes	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	EDLE Competency 010, 011, 011, 011 NELP 6.3
Human Resources Legal Plan	1, 2, 4	EDLE Competency 006, 006, 006, 011 NELP 2.2, 7.1, 7.2