

**PA 8173: Education Governance, Finance and Policy**  
**Fall 2009**  
**SYLLABUS**



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Meeting time: Tuesdays, 3:00 to 5:30 pm  
Arts & Science 309

Office hours: Mondays, 2:00-4:00 pm  
Other times by appointment

Course website: <http://blackboard.missouri.edu>

Course Overview

In modern discussion of social problems, education has come to be seen as something of a silver bullet. Want to address growing concerns about crime? You just need more education. Worried about the numbers of families living in poverty? More education. Think that we need to do something about levels of chronic disease in the U.S.? Education! While the claims that providing more or better education can cure all that ails society no doubt are overblown, there is little question that schooling plays a key role in a variety of social outcomes. What's more, the public schools are among the largest and most important functions of government and the average citizen's first and most comprehensive interactions with the public sector. We each benefit individually—and American society benefits as a whole—by having public schools that operate effectively, efficiently and equitably.

Unfortunately, it takes little more than a cursory glance at the public education system to determine that it leaves much to be desired on each of these dimensions. We spend more in real dollars on public education now than at any point in history, yet performance on national achievement tests have remained essentially flat since the 1970s. Moreover, the system provides widely variable schooling experiences to students depending on factors such as geography and demography, raising important questions about justice and fairness. There is a real sense in public discourse that the public schools are broken and in need of substantial reform—but how? Who will do it? What should be done? Who should be the winners and losers? And how will we pay for it?

This class is a step towards gaining some traction on these and related questions. The issues are complex, but they are also accessible: we all have been to school, we all understand the importance of schooling, we all have experienced good teachers and bad ones, and we all are cognizant that the schooling experiences of different kinds of students in different locations—or even very similar students in the same location—can be very, very different. As we will see, few policy areas have featured a greater diversity of policy alternatives explored, a larger number of conflicts over problem definitions and goals, or a more considerable menu of failed policy

implementations. The opportunities to explore the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of public policy via K-12 education are endless.

Each week we will tackle a major issue of education policy design and implementation. Our focus will be on evaluating these issues with respect to the current evidence base; thus, the course assumes familiarity with basic empirical methods, microeconomic theory and models of the policy process. First-year or non-Truman School students who have not had the opportunity to take these courses should recognize that more effort may be required on their part to work through the readings each week.

### Required Materials

1. Ladd, H.F., & Fiske, E.B. (2008). *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy*.
2. Epstein, N. (2004). *Who's in Charge Here? The Tangled Web of School Governance and Policy*.

Additional required readings will be posted on course Blackboard (BB) site.

### Course Requirements and Grading

**Students are expected to do all class readings in advance of class meetings.** Either come to class having read and made notes on the material and prepared yourself to participate in class discussion or don't show up. This is an advanced concentration course, and I will have little patience for a lack of preparation.

Grades will be computed as the weighted average of four components:

1. **Leading Class Discussion (20%).** Twice during the semester, you will work with a partner to prepare for and lead class discussion. By Thursday (5 pm) the week before class, you will post a discussion question or note to the Discussion Board on the course Blackboard site that you want everyone to think about for class discussion on Tuesday (I am likely to post some of my own). On Tuesday, you will come prepared to push your classmates on their understanding of the readings and issues those readings bring up. You do not have to prepare a PowerPoint presentation, though if a few slides are helpful for illustrating ideas from the readings (tables or figures, for example), you may feel free to bring them to class on a jump drive or email them to me ahead of time. You will be graded on your preparation, your creativity in getting your classmates to push into the relevant issues, and the quality and focus of the discussion you generate. Sign-ups for dates will take place during the second class meeting.
2. **Class preparation and participation (20%).** That said, on the weeks when you are *not* leading class discussion, you should still come with the mindset that you are going to do your best to help the discussion leaders out. You may assume that it will be my goal in each class period to try to figure out who has prepared well and who has not. Do not give me a reason to put you in the latter category.
3. **Annotated Bibliography (30%).** You will choose an education governance, finance or policy topic that is of special interest to you and compile an annotated bibliography on the issue. Further instructions will be distributed in class. A 1- or 2-paragraph topic proposal is due to me on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Feel free to discuss with me ahead of time. Bibliographies due on October 6<sup>th</sup>.
4. **Final Paper (30%).** Final papers will build directly on your annotated bibliography. Further instructions will be distributed in class. Due during the final class meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### Late Assignments

Late assignments are not accepted.

### Effective Participation

The key to effective classroom participation is *engagement*. I expect you to engage the material, your classmates, me and your abilities *with vigor*. The quality of your participation is more important than the quantity, but frankly, both have a significant role. I have little patience for passivity and even less for disengagement. Come to class ready to be called on.

You are expected to attend and to be well prepared for every class session. That means that you should have both reviewed the previous session's material *and* thoroughly read and thought about the current session's material. If you must miss a class, as a courtesy I would appreciate being notified in advance.

### Academic Honesty

I take academic honesty very seriously, as do my colleagues in the Truman School and the rest of the University. The Provost puts it this way:

*Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.*

I put it like this: Your work should be your own. Most of human life is defined by subtlety, nuance and shades of gray. This is not one of those areas. **Any** cases of plagiarism, presenting another's work as your own, or cheating on any assignment will be pursued vigorously via both grade penalties and the University's disciplinary process.

### Electronic Devices

Every student has the right to listen to the lecture undistracted by others' use of electronic devices. I love my cell phone and iPod as much as the next guy, but I won't be using them during lecture and neither will you. Please turn off these devices and others like them before entering class.

### Email

I encourage you to email me with questions, suggestions and points of clarification. I will respond promptly but not necessarily instantaneously, so be prepared for there to be the occasional delay. I also encourage you to come by my office with questions, many of which are much easier to answer in person than electronically.

### Disability Accommodations

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office. To request academic accommodations (for example, a note-taker), students must also register with the

Office of Disability Services (S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696). For MU resources for students with disabilities, click on *Disability Resources* on the MU homepage.

Course Plan and Calendar

<u>Mtg</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics and Assignments</u>
1	8/25	<p><b>Topic:</b> <i>Overview</i></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> <i>Short Introduction.</i> Write a brief (2 pages) description of your background, especially any that is directly related to education or policy. Also describe one very positive and one very negative schooling experience you've had, and highlight which areas of education policy you find most interesting or intriguing. Due to me by email on Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>.</p>

***PART I: THE EDUCATION GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND POLICY SYSTEMS***

2	9/1	<p><b>Topic:</b> <i>Education Policy in its Historical, Economic and Political Context</i></p> <p><b>Reading:</b> "The Role of Government in Education" by Milton Friedman (BB)</p> <p>"Turning Points: A History of American School Governance" by Michael Kirst (Epstein, Chapter 2)</p> <p>"Educational Goals: A Public Perspective" by Richard Rothstein and Rebecca Jacobsen (Ladd &amp; Fiske, 78–86)</p> <p>"Education Finance from the Perspective of Politics, Political Cultures and Government" by James W. Guthrie and Kenneth K. Wong (Ladd &amp; Fiske, 61–77)</p> <p>"The Role of Economics in Education Policy Research" by Dominic J. Brewer, Guilbert C. Hentschke, and Eric R. Eide (Ladd &amp; Fiske, 23–41)</p>
3	9/8	<p><b>Topics:</b> <i>Federalism, Decentralization and Local Control</i></p> <p><b>Reading:</b> "The Changing Federal Role in Education Finance and Governance" by Nora Gordon (Ladd &amp; Fiske, 295–313)</p> <p>"A Solution That Lost Its Problem: Centralized Policymaking and Classroom Gains" by Larry Cuban (Epstein, Chapter 5)</p> <p>"Autonomous Schools: Theory, Evidence and Policy" by David N. Plank and BetsAnn Smith (Ladd &amp; Fiske, 402–424)</p> <p>"Understanding Local Control in the Wake of State Education Reform" by Susan H. Fuhrman and Richard F.</p>

Elmore (*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*) (BB)

“Accountability and Local Control: Incentive Response With and Without Authority Over Resource Generation and Allocation” by Susanna Loeb and Katharine Strunk (*Education Finance and Policy*) (BB)

4 9/8

**Topics:** ***Resources, Funding and Education Production***

**Reading:** “History and Scholarship Regarding United States Education Finance and Policy” by Matthew G. Springer, Eric A. Houck, and James W. Guthrie (Ladd & Fiske, 3–22)  
“Toward and Understanding of Productivity in Education” by Jennifer King Rice and Amy Ellen Schwartz (Ladd & Fiske, 131–145)  
“The Effects of School Resources on Student Performance: An Update” by Eric A. Hanushek (*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*) (BB)  
“Conclusions and Controversies about the Effectiveness of School Resources” by Eric A. Hanushek (*Federal Reserve Bank of New York Economic Policy Review*) (BB)  
“Local Funding of Schools: The Property Tax and Its Alternatives” by Therese J. McGuire and Leslie E. Papke (Ladd & Fiske, 357–372)

**Assignment:** Annotated bibliography proposal due

## ***PART II: ENSURING EQUITY***

5 9/22

**Topics:** ***Equity, Adequacy and School Finance Reform***

**Reading:** “The Past, Present and Possible Futures of Educational Finance Reform Litigation” by William Koski and Jesse Hahnel (Ladd & Fiske, 42–60)  
“Conceptions of Equity and Adequacy in School Finance” by Bruce Baker & Preston Green (Ladd & Fiske, 203–221)  
“Equity, Adequacy and the Evolving State Role in Education Finance” by Sean P. Corcoran and William N. Evans (Ladd & Fiske, 332–356)  
“School Finance Reform, the Distribution of School Spending, and the Distribution of Student Test Scores” by David Cardand Abigail Payne (*Journal of Public Economics*) (BB)  
“All School Finance Equalizations are Not Created Equal” by Caroline Hoxby (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*) (BB)  
“Education Finance Reform and the Distribution of Education Resources” by Sheila Murray, William Evans and Robert Schwab (*American Economic Review*) (BB)

- 6      9/29      **Topic:**      ***The Achievement Gap***  
**Reading:**      “Patterns and Trends in Racial/Ethnic and Socioeconomic Academic Achievement Gaps” by Sean Reardon and Joseph Robinson (Ladd & Fiske, 497–516)  
                          “Understanding the Black-White Test Score Gap in the First Two Years of School” by Roland Fryer and Steven Levitt (*Review of Economics and Statistics*) (BB)  
                          “Closing the Student Achievement Gap by Increasing the Effectiveness of Teachers in Low-Performing Schools” by Don Boyd, Hamilton Lankford & James Wyckoff (Ladd & Fiske, 535–550)
- 7      10/6      **Topic:**      ***Race, Desegregation and Representation***  
**Reading:**      “A Teacher Like Me: Does Race, Ethnicity, or Gender Matter?” by Thomas Dee (*American Economic Association Papers & Proceedings*) (BB)  
                          “Representative Bureaucracy, Ethnicity, and Public Schools: Examining the Link Between Representation and Performance” by David Pitts (*Administration & Society*) (BB)  
                          “Educational Outcomes of Disadvantaged Students: From Desegregation to Accountability” by Douglas N. Harris (Ladd & Fiske, 551–570)  
                          “Desegregation and Black Dropout Rates” by Jonathan Guryan (*American Economic Review*) (BB)  
                          “Does Segregation Still Matter? The Impact of Student Composition on Academic Achievement in High School” by Russell W. Rumberger and Gregory J. Palardy (*Teachers College Record*) (BB)
- Assignment:** Annotated bibliography due
- 8      10/13      **Topic:**      ***The New Focus on Early Childhood***  
**Reading:**      “Early Childhood Education Programs” by Janet Currie (*Journal of Economic Perspectives*) (BB)  
                          “Early Childhood and the Achievement Gap” by Susanna Loeb and Daphna Bassok (Ladd & Fiske, 517–534)  
                          “The Economics of Investing in Early Childhood” by James Heckman (Presentation notes) (BB)  
                          “Does Head Start Help Hispanic Children?” by Janet Currie and Duncan Thomas (*Journal of Public Economics*) (BB)  
                          “How Much is Too Much? The Influence of Preschool Centers on Children’s Social and Cognitive Development” by Susanna Loeb et al. (*Economics of Education Review*) (BB)

### **PART III: TEACHERS AND TEACHER POLICY**

- 9      10/20      **Topic:**      ***Education Production and Teacher Quality***  
**Reading:**      “Teacher Quality” by Eric A. Hanushek and Steven Rivkin (*Handbook of the Economics of Education, Vol. 2*) (BB)  
“A Teacher Supply Policy for Education: How to Meet the ‘Highly Qualified Teacher’ Challenge” by Linda Darling-Hammond & Gary Sykes (Epstein, Chapter 7)  
  
“Teachers Matter, But Effective Teacher Quality Policies are Elusive” by Dan Goldhaber (Ladd & Fiske, 146–165)  
“How Large Are Teacher Effects?” by Barbara Nye, Spyros Konstantopoulos & Larry Hedges (*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*) (BB)  
“Can Teacher Quality Be Effectively Assessed? National Board Certification as a Signal of Effective Teaching” by Dan Goldhaber & Emily Anthony (*Review of Economics and Statistics*) (BB)  
“In Need of Improvement: Ten Ways the U.S. Department of Education Has Failed to Live Up to Its Teacher Quality Commitments” by the Education Trust (BB)
- 10      10/27      **Topic:**      ***Teacher Labor Markets: Recruitment, Retention & the Challenges of Building a Quality Workforce***  
**Reading:**      “The Challenges of Staffing Urban Schools with Effective Teachers” by Brian Jacob (*Future of Children*) (BB)  
“Why Public Schools Lose Teachers” by Eric Hanushek, John Kain & Steven Rivkin (*Journal of Human Resources*) (BB)  
“Teacher Sorting and the Plight of Urban Schools: A Descriptive Analysis” by Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb & James Wyckoff (*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*) (BB)  
“Women, the Labor Market, and the Declining Relative Quality of Teachers” by Sean Corcoran, William Evans & Robert Schwab (*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*) (BB)  
“How Changes in Entry Requirements Alter the Teacher Workforce and Affect Student Achievement” by Boyd et al. (*Education Finance and Policy*) (BB)  
“Photo Finish: Certification Doesn’t Guarantee a Winner” by Thomas Kane, Jonah Rockoff & Douglas Staiger (*Education Next*) (BB)

- 11      11/3      **Topic:**      ***Hot Topics in Teacher Policy: Compensation, Merit Pay & Unionism***
- Reading:**      “Scrap the Sacrosanct Salary Schedule” by Jacob Vigdor (*Education Next*) (BB)
- “Does Merit Pay Reward Good Teachers? Evidence from a Randomized Experiment” by Thomas Dee & Benjamin Keys (*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*) (BB)
- “Teacher Performance Pay: A Survey” by Michael Podgursky & Matthew Springer (*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*) (BB)
- “Are Teacher Unions Good for Students?” by Dan Goldhaber (from *Collective Bargaining in Education* by Hannaway & Rotherham) (BB)
- “How Teachers’ Unions Affect Education Production” by Caroline Hoxby (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*) (BB)

***PART IV: APPROACHES TO SCHOOL REFORM***

- 12      11/10      **Topic:**      ***Accountability, the Standards Movement and No Child Left Behind***
- Reading:**      “Most Likely to Succeed” by Malcolm Gladwell (*The New Yorker*, 15 December 2008) (BB)
- “Less than Meets the Eye: Standards, Testing, and Fear of Federal Control” by Susan H. Fuhrman (Epstein, Chapter 6)
- “School Accountability and Student Achievement” by David Figlio and Helen Ladd (Ladd & Fiske, 166–182)
- “Does School Accountability Lead to Improved Student Performance?” by Eric Hanushek and Margaret Raymond (*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*) (BB)
- “No Child Left Behind: How to Give It a Passing Grade” by Martin West (BB)
- “The Achievement Consequences of the No Child Left Behind Act” by Thomas S. Dee and Brian A. Jacob (working paper) (BB)
- “Rotten Apples: An Investigation of the Prevalence and Predictors of Teacher Cheating” by Brian Jacob and Steven Levitt (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*) (BB)
- 13      11/17      **Topic:**      ***The Market Ideology and School Choice***
- Reading:**      “Politics, Markets, and the Organization of Schools” by John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe (*American Political Science Review*) (BB)
- “Multiple ‘Choice’ Questions: The Road Ahead” by Henry M. Levin (Epstein, Chapter 8)

“School Competition and Student Outcomes” by Brian Gill & Kevin Booker (Ladd & Fiske, 183–202)

“School Choice and School Productivity (Or Could School Choice by a Tide that Lifts All Boats?)” by Caroline M. Hoxby (NBER working paper) (BB)

14 12/1

**Topic:** ***Choice Continued: Charter Schools and Vouchers***

**Reading:** “Charter Schools” by Robert Bifulco & Katrina Bulkley (Ladd & Fiske, 425–446)

“The Impacts of Charter Schools on Student Achievement: Evidence from North Carolina” by Robert Bifulco & Helen Ladd (*Education Finance and Policy*) (BB)

“The Effect of Charter Schools on Charter Students and Public Schools” by Eric Bettinger (*Economics of Education Review*) (BB)

“School Choice, Charter Schools, and White Flight” by Linda A. Renzulli and Lorraine Evans (*Social Problems*) (BB)

“Do Charter Schools Skim Students or Drain Resources?” by Thomas S. Dee (*Economics of Education Review*) (BB)

“Beyond the Rhetoric: Surveying the Evidence of Vouchers and Tax Credits” by Ron Zimmer & Eric Bettinger (Ladd & Fiske, 447–466)

“School Vouchers: A Critical View” by Helen Ladd (*Journal of Economic Perspectives*) (BB)

15 12/8

**Topic:** ***TBD: Students’ Choice, Plus Conclusions*** (we’ll revisit a topic you want to cover again or we can move on to something we didn’t cover, such as Special Education or Issues in Higher Ed—we’ll choose the topic later in the semester)

**Reading:** “Recovering from an Accident: Repairing Governance with Comparative Advantage” by Paul T. Hill (Epstein, Chapter 4)

**Assignment:** Final papers due