

ED 410 Legal Issues in Special Education (2 Credits)

Course Description:

This two-credit course is required for all special education majors before completing the Practicum and student teaching. Students will focus on the federal and state statutes and related guidelines which govern/support the provision of educational services for students with special needs. Current updates and interpretations regarding the implementation of IDEA 2004 will also be a major area of study. The intent of this study will be focused on the implementation of these statutes/interpretations for the classroom teacher. To further gain perspectives of such implementation, some guest presenters who are fully responsible for implementing the legal elements of the special education process will be invited to provide additional insights into the daily details/practices of responding to the statutes. In addition, all class members will be expected to attend the U.P. Special Education Conference held on the NMU campus on February 28-29, 2008.

Goals of the Course:

Given the opportunity for introduction/immersion in the above legal statutes as noted above, this class will focus on the special education teacher's role in the implementation of these legal expectations on a daily basis through these goals:

- Analyze the statutes/interpretations from an "implementation basis" through a systems perspective within the educational profession— federal, state, regional, local, building, classroom levels.
- Review the elements of the "total system" involved in the actual implementation of the statutes/interpretations as related to each child's services— school board, school administration, classroom teacher/educational consultants, paraprofessional staff, parent, parent advisory committee, other community agencies, college/university, community resources.
- Interrelate the implementation of the legal system (noted above) with elements of the total system (noted above) and analyze the "daily process" of routinely integrating these systems within an effective teaching/learning environment at the classroom level .
- Assess the impact of such interrelationship on a daily basis for the classroom teacher and focus on planning strategies which will result in the most effective learning opportunities for all students.

Required Content/Reading:

Legal reference material along with powerpoint information on IDEA 2004-Final Implementing Regulations will all be available on the Class Web Site—access /timeframes for covering this information will be reviewed with the class at the first class session. In addition, OSERS (Office of Special Education/Rehabilitation Services, U. S. Department of Education) January 2007 Updates will be included in the following areas: Response to Intervention and Early Intervening Services; Highly Qualified Teachers Serving Children with Disabilities; IEP's/Evaluations/Re-Evaluations; Monitoring, Technical Assistance/Enforcement; National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards; Discipline Procedures; Serving children with Disabilities Placed by their Parents in Private Schools; Procedural Safeguards/Due Process Procedures for Parents & Children with Disabilities. Additional material pertinent to specific discussions will be added in correlation with those specific timeframes.

Course Requirements:

Class Discussion (50 points)— Active participation in class discussions required for each session. A framework for participation will be distributed/discussed at the first session (which will reflect a range/variety of thinking strategies to be practiced/expanded upon throughout the semester).

Written Requirements (50 points)— a) Written “briefings” will be expected at various times throughout the semester in response to specific concepts or cause/effect relationships introduced through the reference material provided for all class members (25 points); b) a formal report will be required based on the triangulation of concepts/practices developed from the required readings and class discussions/data introduced in class—this will be directly related to a tentative plan of how a classroom teacher would implement the elements of the legal system with elements of the total system (studied earlier) within a “daily plan” which would reflect the integration of these systems every day to promote an effective teaching/learning environment at the classroom level for all students.

ADA Statement:

If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Disability Service Office at 2001 Hedgcock (227-1700; TTY 227-1543). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state and University guidelines.