CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY  
H. John Heinz III School of  
Public Policy and Management  

COURSE SYLLABI  

Course: 91-882, Legal Issues in Education  

Instructor: Joseph C. Dimperio, Ph. D & J.D.  

I. Scope of Course  

This course is designed to familiarize students with the law governing public schools in general and specifically with an emphasis on Pennsylvania Public Schools. The course examines a variety of current cases that have been litigated on issues involving public schools, including public school litigation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.  

II. Instructional Materials  

Required Text:  
& Day, Reed B.; Public Guide To Pennsylvania Law, 1991  

Supplemental Readings:  
Pennsylvania School Code  
Pennsylvania Basic Education Circular’s (BECS)  
School District Manual  
School District Collective Bargaining Agreement (Administrative and Professional and Support Staff)  
Court and Arbitration cases involving public school controversies  

III. Course Objectives:  

The student will be able to describe and apply the essential legal element of:  

- Origins of School Law
• Pupil Personnel and Student Management

• Special Education – With a focus on IDEA legislation and compliance

• Personnel – Including Professional and Support Staff with a focus on Section 1122 of the Pennsylvania Code and the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct For Educators

• Due Process Rights and Responsibilities – as they apply to the entire school community, ranging from students to staff

• Sexual and Unlawful Harassment – including Ethnic and Unlawful Intimidation

• Contract Negotiations- including the provisions under Acts 195, 88, and 93

• Pennsylvania Torts Claim Act – Including limited Tort Immunity and the concepts of ‘State Created Danger’

• Sunshine Laws – Right to Know – FERPA

IV. General Conduct Of The Course

• If a Student requires special assistance or arrangements in class due to a disability, he/she must notify the instructor before the end of the first week of the semester

• Class attendance, participation and professionalism is expected of each student for all classes

• As for attendance – it is required for every class and roll will be taken in every class (if special circumstances arise, contact the instructor to explain) One Class will be allowed – Two classes – the student will not receive the benefit of the doubt and three or more classes will affect your grade

• Students are expected to comply with the Heinz School Ethics and Discipline Policy

• Assigned readings, documents and handouts are to be completed and reviewed for class discussion and will be included on the final examination
• Active participation and note taking by the student is required for each class

• Class assignments include: Chapter outlines and oral presentations in class – Case Studies and Analysis with oral presentations in class – One group project report followed by a oral presentation in class – Interviews of school district personnel – Guest Panel presentation and discussion – Journals and a Final Examination

• Journals – Each student is required to keep a journal for this course. The journal will be an important part of the student’s final grade. A completed journal should include all of the material and notes from each class to comprise a complete written record of the entire course. The journal should include:

  > Course syllabi
  > Course outline by class
  > Handouts
  > A weekly REFLECTION piece on what you believe was the most important concept you learned from the last class or what made an impression on you as significant
  > Your journal must demonstrate exemplary skill of student organization (The ideal Journal will be done on Word)

• Active participation with guest speakers/lecturers

• Active participation in collective bargaining simulation (if class time permits)

• PLEASE NOTE: Because of the amount of active participation required in class, skills of common courtesy are appreciated, especially good listening skills

• Final examination includes:

  Objective Questions and Essay Questions

• Final Grade consists of:

  > Attendance – Class Participation
  > Individual/Group Oral – Written Assignments
  > Journal
  > Final Examination