

Course Syllabus
ED6389 Special Populations and Programs
Summer 2026 / 2nd 5-Weeks

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Welcome to EDUA 6389 Special Populations and Programs Performance Standards, Goals, and Learning Objectives

This course prepares school leaders to oversee federally and state-mandated programs through an equity-centered lens. Students examine the legal, financial, accountability, and compliance frameworks governing Special Education, ESL/English Learner, Gifted/Talented, and other state and federal programs in Texas. Emphasis is placed on culturally responsive leadership, equity audits, and the analysis of campus and district data to identify root causes of achievement gaps and systemic inequities.

Building on this analysis, students predict and calibrate a Problem of Practice and develop a Theory of Action grounded in findings from equity and program audits. Using Improvement Science methodologies, students design a mock leadership PDSA cycle to test strategic actions aimed at strengthening program implementation and improving student outcomes. Throughout the course, students synthesize policy, data, and practitioner insights to create actionable, evidence-based leadership plans that promote equity and continuous improvement.

ED 6389 contributes to the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)/Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) or TExES Competencies:

DOMAIN I-SCHOOL CULTURE (School and Community Leadership)

- **Competency 1-The beginning principal knows how to establish and implement a shared vision and culture of high expectations for all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, and community).**
- **Competency 2-The beginning principal knows how to work with stakeholders as key partners to support student learning.**
- Students will know how to share campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Students will examine their leadership style and leadership theories.
- Students will analyze their school culture and climate and will learn the meanings and applications of these concepts on their campus.
- Students will create a vision for their campus and learn its importance and application to

school improvement.

DOMAIN II-LEADING LEARNING (Instructional Leadership/Teaching and Learning)

- **Competency 3-The beginning principal knows how to collaboratively develop and implement high-quality instruction.**
- **Competency 4-The beginning principal knows how to monitor and assess classroom instruction to promote teacher effectiveness and student achievement.**
- Students will know how to facilitate the design and implementation of curriculum and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning.
- Students will know how to advocate, nurture, and sustain an instructional program and campus culture that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

DOMAIN III-HUMAN CAPITAL (Human Resource Management)

- **Competency 5-The beginning principal knows how to provide feedback, coaching, and professional development to staff through evaluation and supervision, knows how to reflect on his/her own practice, and strives to grow professionally.**
- **Competency 6-The beginning principal knows how to promote high-quality teaching by using selection, placement, and retention practices to promote teacher excellence and growth.**
- Students will learn that professional development is a continuous, ongoing process.
- Students will learn how to implement and monitor professional development and how to measure its impact on student achievement.
- Students will know how to implement a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members and apply the legal requirements for personnel management.

DOMAIN IV-EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP (Communication and Organizational Management)

- **Competency 7-The beginning principal knows how to develop relationships with internal and external stakeholders including selecting appropriate communication strategies for audiences.**
- **Competency 8-The beginning principal knows how to focus on improving student outcomes through organizational collaboration, resiliency, and change management.**
- Students will learn the steps to creating an action plan for school improvement and will gain practical knowledge and application by creating an action plan.
- Students will learn theories relating to the organizational structures of schools and the school culture that defines them.
- Students will know how to apply organizational, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to ensure an effective learning environment.
- Students will examine instructional theories in practice that increase student achievement and turn schools around.

DOMAIN V-STRATEGIC OPERATIONS (Alignment and Resource Allocation)

- **Competency 9-The beginning principal knows how to collaboratively determine goals and implement strategies aligned with the school vision that support teacher effectiveness and positive student outcomes.**

- **Competency 10-The beginning principal knows how to provide administrative leadership through resource management, policy implementation, and coordination of school operations and programs to ensure a safe learning environment.**
- Students will learn how to mobilize resources to promote student success.
- Students will learn the difference between being a “leader” and a “manager.”
- Students will examine, analyze, and reflect on all the principal managerial functions that sustain the campus.
- Students will examine the functions of human resources, food services, transportation, budget, class scheduling, and safety, and how these managerial functions affect student learning.
- Students will know how to apply principles of effective leadership and management.
- Students will know how to apply principals of leadership and management to the campus physical plant and support systems to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.

DOMAIN VI-ETHICS, EQUITY, AND DIVERSITY

- **Competency 11-The beginning principal knows how to provide ethical leadership by advocating for children and ensuring students access to effective educators, programs, and services.**
- Students will know how to communicate and collaborate with all members of the school community, respond to diverse interests and needs.
- Students will learn the importance of diversity and meeting the needs of all learners.
- Students will know how to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical and legal manner.

ED 6389 will address the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Explain the legal, funding, accountability, and compliance requirements for federal and state education programs in Texas.
- Analyze campus and district data to identify equity gaps and determine root causes.
- Apply culturally responsive leadership principles to program evaluation and decision-making.
- Evaluate Special Education, ESL, and Gifted/Talented program implementation using policy and best practices.
- Predict and calibrate a Problem of Practice and a Theory of Action based on analysis from the equity audit and other program audits.
- Create a Mock Leadership PDSA Cycle based on Improvement Science methodologies.
- Conduct equity audits to assess identification, referral, and service delivery systems.
- Synthesize findings into professional dashboards and evidence-based leadership action plans.

ED 6389 will address the following Marketable Skills:

- Students will be able to manage and lead diverse groups of people.
- Students will be able to communicate professionally through diverse written and in-person formats, including e-mail, memos, facilitating meetings, etc. to an array of audiences, including internal and external stakeholders.

- Students will be able to gather information and analyze data to define campus needs, set goals, and solve a diverse set of problems.
- Students will be able to exercise administrative leadership to ensure resource management, policy implementation, and coordination of organizational operations in ethical manner.
- Produce evidence-based written reports on curriculum quality, alignment, and instructional coherence.
- Create visual representations (infographics, frameworks, alignment charts) to communicate complex ideas clearly.
- Engage stakeholders with clear, concise, and professional communication, both in writing and presentations.

Required Texts

1. Beyer, B. M., & Johnson, E. S. (2014). *Special programs & services in schools : Creating options, meeting needs* (Revised 2nd Ed.). ProActive Publications. ISBN: 9781605951751.
2. Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press. ISBN: 9780807758762.
3. American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* . (7 ed.) Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 9781433805615. (Same as ED5332).

Assignments and Grades

The Assignments are listed below. Descriptions are found in the Educational Leadership Practicum Handbook which is incorporated into this Syllabus. Students should read the Handbook carefully. The grading policy for this course is as follows: Students must complete all Practicum required hours, meetings, and paperwork.

Grading Policy

Students must complete all Practicum required hours, meetings, and paperwork.

1. No late assignment will be accepted after its due date without prior instructor consent.
2. All citations should be formatted using the American Psychological Association (APA) manual. Papers with APA citation errors will receive a reduction in points or no credit.
3. Extra credit points are not available.
4. There are no I's (incomplete) for this class unless you have a serious illness or a family emergency.
5. After 11:59 pm on the date for any assignment due is considered late.
6. There are no optional assignments in this course. All assignments must be completed to pass this class. Even if an assignment is so late that it will receive a "0", the student must turn in the assignment to pass the course (regardless of number of points accrued in the course.)
7. Students who fail to participate in the Discussion Board or complete any assignment may not pass this course.

Grading Scale

100-90% equate to an A
89-80% equate to a B
79-70% equate to a C
69-60% equate to a D
59-50% or less receive an F.

“Cs” are not accepted in this program. Students scoring below a “B” in this course will be required to repeat the course to remain in the Educational Leadership Program. Changing the rotation by repeating this course will delay completion of the program as the program is sequential and the rotation must be followed.

Blackboard and Online Access

This class is taught online. Students will need an active Sul Ross account to access the course website through Blackboard. This site will have announcements, calendars, and learning modules, among other things. Students will meet for class via Microsoft TEAMS. Students must have a microphone and camera.

Learning Environment & Grading Policy

Successful completion of an online course requires dedication and constant effort. Do not fall behind in your work! Begin your assignments as soon as possible and get at least one module ahead. This will help you avoid the penalty for late work because there are always unforeseen events that arise. Submit professional quality work. Have someone proofread your submittals and always use the grammar and spell check functions on your computer before submission. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, please read APA pp. 15-16 and 170, or ask during office hours. But remember, the ultimate responsibility is your own. When in doubt, err on the side of caution.

Internet Web Resources

The sources below are only convenient starting points for your Internet based research. You are expected to locate professional, peer-reviewed publications as reference material on papers submitted in this class. Sul Ross Library recommended databases include the following: Academic Search Premier, Dissertation Abstracts, Education Abstracts, Educator’s Reference Desk, eLibrary Curriculum, Emerald Management Xtra, ERIC (from EBSCO), Professional Educational Development Collection, WorldCat, WorldCat Dissertation & Theses.

Format Requirements for Submittals

All submittals must be professional papers. Do not submit your assignments in a “homework” or “school assignment” format. Each submittal should be written as if it were an actual professional paper ready for publication or for transmission to the addressed recipient using APA.

A title page is required. Please follow APA cover page formatting for all papers. When the assignment states how many pages, the cover page and reference pages should be included in the total.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to

- Turning in work as original that was used in whole or another course and/or professor
- Turning in another's work as one's own
- Copying from professional works or Internet sites without citation

Any of the above offenses will result in a zero for the assignment with no option to redo credit.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI)

The University does not recommend or endorse any specific AI tools or resources. Students should be aware that many generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot) store user input and may use this data to train future models. For this reason, students should never upload or share personal, confidential, or identifiable information—such as names, ID numbers, health data, or assignment submissions containing such details—into any generative AI platform. When using AI tools, students should verify whether the tool complies with student privacy standards as indicated by the University. Faculty may recommend specific tools that better align with institutional data privacy policies, but ultimate responsibility for data protection rests with users. Students are encouraged to use faculty-recommended platforms when engaging in coursework involving generative AI. The University is not liable for any adverse experience or impact when students interact with these tools.

Generative AI tools, especially large language model chatbots like ChatGPT, are widely used today in many contexts. Learning to use AI responsibly and ethically is thus an important concept to engage with thoughtfully in your work as a student and beyond. Students should, however, be aware of the limits of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT:

- The quality of the prompt fed to the chatbot directly correlates to the quality of the generated text you will receive. Making the most of ChatGPT requires being thoughtful about how you write your prompts.
- Fact-check all AI outputs. Assume it is wrong unless you cross-check the claims with reliable sources. The current AI models will confidently reassert factual errors. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions.
- Full disclosure: Like any other tool, the use of AI should be acknowledged. At the end of your assignment, write a short paragraph to explain which AI tool and how you used it, if applicable. Include the prompts you used to get the results. Failure to do so is violation of academic integrity policies.
- Caution: Using an AI-content generator such as ChatGPT to complete an assignment without proper attribution violates academic integrity. By submitting assignments in this class, you pledge to affirm that they are your own work, and you attribute the use of any tools and sources.

The following examples demonstrate approved uses of AI in this course. You can take advantage of a generative AI to:

- Brainstorm ideas, draft an outline, clarify thoughts, and/or generate keywords.
- Fine-tune, expand, or clarify your research questions.
- Check grammar, writing conversions, and style; help you find an expression.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Using the AI tool to compose a response to a discussion board prompt or to enter content into a chat in a classroom context (e.g., Teams, Zoom, Google Meets).
- Completing your specific task for the assigned group work.
- Copying and pasting entire paragraphs from the AI tool to complete narrative/essay assignments and/or papers.

Course Withdrawal

The Last day to drop a course with a 'W' is Monday, July 20. Drops must be processed and in the University Registrar's office by 4 p.m. A "W" on your transcript has no negative effect on your overall GPA. Please understand that dropping a course means you must re-register and pay tuition to take the course for credit. Additionally, dropping a course may affect your financial aid eligibility or probationary status.

Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website.

Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are in the student handbook.

Distance Ed (Web-based course) Non-Participation Statement

Policies in effect for on-campus, traditional classroom instruction courses also apply to students enrolled in distance education courses, including Web-base and ITV courses. The university allows a maximum of 20% absences in a course before an instructor may drop a student for excessive absences with a grade of "F". In distance education courses, this policy is interpreted as non-participation; once a student has been documented as non-participating. Non-participation and inactivity may include not logging on to the course, not submitting assignments or participating in other assigned activities as scheduled, or communicating with the instructor by phone, email, and/or not following the instructor's participation guidelines stated in the syllabus. Non-participation is equivalent to a student being absent in a regular classroom. Given this equivalency, *non-participation can be defined as a student not submitting assignments and not communicating with the professor.* Attendance for fully online classes is determined by the last participation in course assignment or activity. Students will be notified if they are falling behind, not submitting work, not attending class or failing assignments. Attendance policy information may also be found in the Student Handbook and Information concerning SRSU [Online Distance Education Guidelines](#). In the Educational Leadership Program, the 20% absence threshold will be determined by the following timeframes for non-participation.

- 16-week course: 3 weeks (21 consecutive days) of non-participation

- 8-week course: 1.5 weeks (11 consecutive days) of non-participation
- 4-week course: 1 week (7 consecutive days) of non-participation

Diversity Statement

My goal as instructor is to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please do not hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

Libraries

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LobolD and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

Students With Special Needs

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class.

Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz Grisham, M.Ed., LPC (Licensed Professional Counselors), SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email mschwartz@sulross.edu

Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Course Assignments and Points

Discussion Boards	Discussion boards provide an opportunity to practice critical thinking and communication skills based on course texts and materials.	50 pts
Equity Audit, Gap Analysis, & ESL Program Audit	Project Based/Performance Based Assignments	200 pts
Analysis / Reflections / Diagnostics/Presentations	Written formal papers/Evaluation Diagnostics of Programs	100 pts.
Structured Debate DB	ESL Debate in Discussion Board format	100 pts

Course Schedule

Modules & Assignments	Items to Submit	Due Date/Time
Mod 1: Equity Audit Part 1	Assn 1: Define, Collect, and Analyze Data Assn 2: Equity Gap Analysis Assn 3: PoP Discussion Board	Assn 1: Due July 9 (100 pt) Assn 2: Due July 11 (200 pt) Assn 3: Due July 13 (50 pts) Before 11:59pm
Mod 2: Equity Audit Part 2	Assn 1: Required Readings Assn 2: Mock PDSA Leadership Action Template Assn 3: Discussion Board Reflections	Assn 1: (n/g) Assn 2: Due July 16 (200 pts) Assn 3: Due July 20 (50 pts) Before 11:59pm
Mod 3: MTSS	Assn 1: 3-2-1-Q Reading Summary Assn 2: MTSS System Campus Diagnostic Assn 3: Discussion Board Diagnostic Reflections	Assn 1: Due July 22 (100 pts) Assn 2: Due July 25 (100 pts) Assn 3: Due July 27 (50 pts) Before 11:59pm
Mod 4: Special Education	Assn 1: Required Readings Assn 2: Special Education Interview Assn 3: Comparative Digital Dashboard	Assn 1: (n/g) Assn 2: Due August 1 (100 pts) Assn 3: Due August 3 (100 pts) Before 11:59pm
Mod 5: Bilingual and ELL Programs	Assn 1: Required Readings Assn 2: Campus EB Snapshot & ESL Prog Audit Assn 3: Discussion Board Structured Debate	Assn 1: (n/g) Assn 2: Due August 6 (200 pts) Assn 3: Due August 9 (100 pts) Before 11:59pm