

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**  
**Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis**

**Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis 830:**  
**Financing Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Course Objective, Organization and Outline**

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II Class Schedule: Wednesday, January 25, 2006 - Wednesday, May 10, 2006  
7:15 p.m.- 9:45 p.m.  
University of Wisconsin - Whitewater, Winther Hall, Room 3006

III Course Objectives:

1. To understand equity and adequacy issues related to education finance and how to design school finance policies to improve equity and adequacy.
2. To examine alternative state school finance structures, their costs, impacts on different types of local school districts and relationship to education reform.
3. To understand current resource use patterns in education and how to reallocate resources to better uses – resource needs in schools that produce higher levels of student achievement.
4. To understand how to begin improving the productivity of the education dollar.
5. To become familiar with the school finance system in Wisconsin.
6. To become familiar with the research literature on school finance, and further develop conceptualization, data acquisition and data analysis skills for education policy analysis.

IV. Organization

The organization of the course content and emphasis on special topics will be varied according to the background and scholarly interests of students in the course. Class activity will consist of lectures, group projects and class discussions. Members of the class are encouraged to raise questions at any time with the understanding that common courtesy is to be observed. Your instructor wholeheartedly encourages class discussion and invites any and all questions related to the course.

Written critiques on three published articles dealing with public finance will be assigned during the spring session. The critique should include a brief statement of the issues

discussed by the author, the adequacy of the treatment given each issue by the author with particular attention to strengths and weaknesses of his/her presentation, the reviewer's evaluation of the significance of the article and its implications for school finance. A guideline for doing the critique assignments will be given to each student.

#### V. Course Projects

The final project will consist of an analysis of a school district's current 2005-2006 district and/or school budget. Each student will write a detailed analysis of what they have learned about their school district from a thorough examination of the district's and/or school's budget. These findings will be shared with the class. An alternative final project for the class will deal with the examination and review of alternative methods of funding for public education in the State of Wisconsin. The project will require students to critique the pros and cons of various alternative funding methods and then describe the funding method that he/she feels should be implemented within the State of Wisconsin.

The presentation of projects will start during the last week of the April. A handout will be provided regarding this project.

#### VI. Grading and Point Distribution

Two written exams: a midterm and a final will be given. Final grade determination will be based on a distribution with approximately the following breakdown:

In-Class Assignments and Participation	15%
Article Critiques	20%
Mid-Term Examination	20%
Final Project and Presentation	20%
Final Examination	25%

#### VII. Course Outline of Potential Topics

1. Introduction to School Finance Issues
  - A. Scope of Public Education
  - B. Current Problems of School Finance
2. School Finance Equity
  - A. Measurement of School Finance Equity
  - B. School Finance Formulas
  - C. Adjusting for Student Needs
3. Legal Implications of School Finance Equity
  - A. Litigation
  - B. The Court Case dealing with Wisconsin School Finance
4. School Finance Reform
  - A. Why is there a need for Change?
  - B. Alternative Funding Proposals
  - C. School Finance Reform in Wisconsin
5. Budgeting
  - A. How Education Dollars are Spent
  - B. Reallocating Resources
  - C. Sources of Education Revenues

6. Four Approaches to School Finance Equity
  - A. Successful School Approach
  - B. Professional Consensus Approach
  - C. Cost Function Approach
  - D. Comprehensive School Design Approach
  
7. Leadership and Management in School Finance

Required Textbooks:

Allan Odden and Lawrence O. Piccus. (2000). School Finance: A Policy Perspective, Third Edition, New York: McGraw Hill.

Allan Odden and Sarah Archibald. (2001). Reallocating Resources: How to Boost Student Achievement Without Asking For More. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Other articles and materials will be copied and distributed to students