I. OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

This three semester (9 credit hour) course serves as the Capstone experience in the Educational Leadership program for aspiring special education directors. The internship is designed to immerse the student in the everyday tasks of the special education director, providing an opportunity for the student to actually apply the skills and knowledge gained throughout the Educational Leadership program. The early focus of the course is on the internship in a district setting designed jointly by the student, the internship supervisor and a district special education director. Out of the internship activities students complete a journal, develop a leadership platform (portfolio), conduct an investigation on an aspect of financial management related to special education, complete a study of community demographics and formulate a leadership project based on an issue of importance in special education at the school or district level. Each student is required to produce a written report on the leadership project and to present it at the conclusion of the course.

After an organizational meeting in the spring, students will begin their internship experiences in the summer semester and will continue to participate in internship activities, through the year. Students will meet as a group to share experiences, problem solve specific issues members of the group encounter, and participate in special activities designed by the instructors. We will also establish technology procedures to stay in touch.

II. GOALS/OUTCOMES

During this year-long course, students will work toward demonstration of having met the ISLLC Standards:
**Standard 1**
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

**Functions:**
A. Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission
B. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning
C. Create and implement plans to achieve goals
D. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement
E. Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans

**Standard 2**
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

**Functions:**
A. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations
B. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program
C. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students
D. Supervise instruction
E. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress
F. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff
G. Maximize time spent on quality instruction
H. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning
I. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program

**Standard 3**
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

**Functions:**
A. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems
B. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources
C. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff
D. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership
E. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning

**Standard 4**
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
Functions:
A. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment
B. Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community’s diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources
C. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers
D. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners

Standard 5
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Functions:
A. Ensure a system of accountability for every student’s academic and social success
B. Model principals of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior
C. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity
D. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making
E. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling

Standard 6
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Functions:
A. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers
B. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning
C. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies

III. ACTIVITIES

There will be five major projects during the three semesters:

1. Internship Journal

Students will be expected to keep daily/weekly reflective writings of the internship activities covering at least 240 hours of administrative experiences. Forty of the hours must be at a level other than the one of the intern is completing their internship. Journal entries are to primarily be recorded around specific standards.

The journal serves several purposes. One is simply to record the activities of your internship. As you attend meetings, engage in discussions or participate in activities, it provides a way for you to document your experiences and to reflect on them with regard to the ISLLC standards. Another purpose is to provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your
observations of principals or to reflect on your activities when serving in a leadership capacity. What have you learned from these experiences? Another purpose in keeping a journal is to develop a database. This database will assist in writing the mid-term and final assessment. The instructors will make two field visits to each internship site and be available to interns and mentors during the course of the internship experience.

The instructors will make two or three summer field visits/consultations to each internship site and be available to interns and mentors during the course of the internship experience.

2. **School Board Meeting Review** (See Appendix)

3. **Community Monograph** (See Appendix)

Each student is expected to develop a statistical and narrative profile of a town and school system of her/his choice (see appendix for specific guidelines). It is recommended that you select the town/system where you will be interning. The town and school district should overlap.

3. **Finance Project** (See Appendix)

4. **Leadership Platform**

Each student will be expected to develop a leadership platform consisting of:

a. A current resume
b. A statement of philosophy of education ("What are the major tenets of my educational philosophy?") 1000 words
c. A statement of leadership philosophy ("What is my concept of an effective educational leader?") An explanation of ways in which the student will actualize her/his concept of educational leadership once s/he is in a leadership role ("What will I need to do to be this kind of educational leader?") 1000 words
d. A “best practices” topics response, in which the student catalogs practices, procedures and concepts that s/he considers the best way to handle the management tasks of the Principal. Students are expected to write a response (minimum 500 words) to each of the topics below, utilizing knowledge gained from graduate classes, interviews with administrators, readings from the field and personal experiences. Students may attach documents to support their positions.

**Special Education**

Describe your general philosophy regarding the delivery of services to students with special needs in a school setting. Discuss
the roles of the building principal and special education director in this process.

**Hiring Staff**
Describe the process you would utilize to hire staff. Describe the procedures and guidelines you would utilize from the beginning of the process to the recommendation of a candidate.

**Student Discipline**
Describe your general philosophy for maintaining a safe and orderly environment in the school. Discuss the role of the student, staff, administration and parents in this process. Describe a successful disciplinary sequence.

**Building Security**
Discuss specific measures you would take to insure the safety and security of students and staff in the building and campus. Be sure to include key components of any plan in your response.

**Mobilizing Community Resources**
Describe how you would use community resources to support student achievement, solve school problems and achieve school goals. Discuss what resources are available in your community and their potential role in school improvement.

**Technology**
Describe how the use of technology can enhance teaching and learning in your setting. Also, discuss the application of administrative software for student scheduling, attendance, grade reporting and communication with parents and the community.

**Professional Development Practices**
Describe the components of a well conceived, context appropriate professional development plan for staff. Include the process you would utilize to develop and implement this plan.

**Educational Policy Development**
Describe the role of the Building Administrator (Special Education Director) in influencing educational policy at the local, state, and national levels. Discuss any specific venues or groups or associations you would utilize.

**New Staff Orientation/Mentoring Programs**
Describe the key components of successful orientation and mentoring programs for new staff. Be sure to discuss delivery models and implementation.

e. A letter of application in which you introduce yourself as a candidate for a Principal.
5. **Leadership Project**

Each student will be expected to consult with his/her mentoring administrator and together identify an educational issue of importance in the school/district. The process in which each intern will engage includes:

1. Identification of an issue (2-3 pp)
2. Historical context of the issue (2-3 pp)
3. Resource review (3-5 pp)
4. Formulation of a strategy and plan to address the issue (3-5 pp)
5. Presentation of the project to the building and/or district administrative/leadership team.
6. Explanation of what you learned (2-3 pp)

Students will present their final projects at the annual Symposium in the spring.

IV. **PREREQUISITE**

Students must have completed most of the required courses in the Educational Administration program and have permission of the instructor.

V. **THE MENTORING ADMINISTRATOR**

The mentoring administrator will be the administrator with whom the intern will work during the year. In negotiating the internship it is imperative that the intern gain a commitment from the mentoring administrator to design an array of field experiences and, at minimum, to supervise the intern’s work throughout the course. Ideally, the supervisor will agree not only to supervise the internship, but also to work with the intern throughout the year to assist her/him in the projects that are part of the course. The mentor must be currently certified and practicing in the position the student is interning. The mentor will assist in certifying that the intern has met the ISLLC standards.

VI. **SITE VISITS**

The university instructors will schedule two or three site visits/consultations with the intern and the mentoring administrator. In most cases, one of the instructors will arrange to meet with both parties separately and together. Specific concerns about the internship experience can be dealt with at this time. At the final meeting in the spring, the mentor and University instructor will certify that the intern has met the ISLLC standards.

VII. **EVALUATION**

Grading will be on a pass-fail basis. In order to receive a grade of “pass,” students must complete all projects assigned at a level which meets the expectations of the Educational Leadership faculty.
VIII. **CLASS MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE**

It is assumed students will attend the scheduled classes. Frequent or unexplained absences by a student may become a grading issue.

IX. **STORM CANCELLATION**

The instructor will explain the storm policy as it is different from the regular USM policy.

X. **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with Jody or Tom as soon as possible.

At any point in the semester, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel you could be performing at a higher level, consult with Jody or Tom. Students experience difficulty in courses for a variety of reasons. For problems with writing skills or time management, make an appointment to see a student tutor at the Learning Center, Luther Bonney, 2nd floor (780-4228). Help is also available through the Counseling Center, 106 Payson Smith (780-4050) and the Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities, Luther Bonney, 2nd floor (780-4706). The USM TTY number is: 780-4395.

XI. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

The University of Southern Maine shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, or veteran’s status in employment, education, and all other areas of the University System. Questions and complaints about discrimination in any areas of the university should be directed to Special Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity, 728 Law Building, Portland Campus, 780-4186, TTY 780-5646.