

# Democratic Schooling: Issues of Laws and Ethics Performance-Based Assessment

Initial/Professional Teacher Education  
University of Colorado at Denver

Developer:

Sue Giullian, University of Colorado at Denver

With assistance from:

John Stanek, Douglas County Schools

Resources:

Colorado Teacher Education Standards

Education Law Association

Colorado Model Content Standards

## **What is the purpose and importance of Democratic Schooling: Issues of Law and Ethics?**

Teachers enter into the classroom espousing that every child has an ability and right to learn. It is through our actions that we truly exemplify commitment to this ideal. At a time when the viability of public schools is being questioned by many, we are reminded that public schools play an important role in laying a firm foundation for our future as a democratic society.

As living models of democratic principles, schools help young people comprehend the meaning of active citizenship and teach them the knowledge and skills they need to sustain and enrich our democracy. It is our responsibility to act as role models, and help create citizens who function in and contribute to this community.

As John Dewey (1916) states in *Democracy and Education*, "Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life." He also quite aptly describes the rationale for the discussion of ethics: "The business of reflection in determining the true good cannot be done once and for all, as, for instance, making out a table of values arranged in a hierarchical order of higher and lower. It needs to be done, and done over and over and over again, in terms of the conditions of concrete situations as they arise. In short, the need for reflection and insight is perpetually recurring (Dewey, 1932)."

The third component of this course relates to educational laws, the means by which we achieve responsible citizenship in schools. This course promotes interest in, and understanding of, the legal framework of education with emphasis on the rights of students, parents, school boards, and school employees.

Through this course you will learn much about the principles of educational democracy, the legal issues, and the ethical disputes. However, these topics will expand in meaning as you experience them firsthand during your internships.

## **What is the nature of the Democratic Schooling PBA?**

The Democratic Schooling PBA has three parts. The first part is a multiple choice test, designed to ensure that you are knowledgeable about pertinent educational law. It also includes Federal and State constitutional provisions, legislative influences and the roles of state and local school boards.

The second component involves an evaluation of your commitment toward developing productive citizens while perpetuating the principles of a democratic republic. For the final aspect of this PBA, the instructor appraises your demonstration and commitment to the profession as well as to professional and ethical ideals. The second and third components are evaluated by the instructor through observation of your interactions and discussion and in your written work.

**Where does the Democratic Schooling: Issues of Law and Ethics PBA fit into my studies to become a teacher?**

The class takes place in the summer prior to your first school internship or during a summer following some or all school internships. It is during your internships that you will have the experiences that require application of the knowledge and understanding of issues that you gain in this course.

### **What standards are addressed by the Democratic Schooling: Issues of Law and Ethics PBA?**

#### **Standard Five: Knowledge of Classroom and Instructional Management:**

**The teacher will demonstrate the legal, democratic and ethical ability to:**

- 5.2 Apply sound disciplinary practices in the classroom.
- 5.7 Accurately document and report ongoing student achievement.
- 5.8 Communicate with parents and guardians effectively in order to involve them as participants and partners in student learning.
- 5.9 Communicate a variety of assessment results, and their implications to students, parents, guardians, professionals, administrators, and the community.

#### **Six: Knowledge of Individualization of Instruction:**

**The teacher will demonstrate the ability to:**

- 6.4 Teach students within the scope of a teacher's legal responsibilities and students' educational rights, and follow procedures as specified in state, federal and local statutes.
- 6.5 Develop and apply individualized education plans.
- 6.7 Use specific knowledge of student medical conditions and medications and their possible effects on student learning and behavior.

#### **Standard Seven: Knowledge of Technology:**

**The teacher will demonstrate the ability to:**

- 7.2 Use technology to increase student achievement
- 7.3 Use technology to manage and communicate information
- 7.5 Instruct students in basic technology skills

#### **Standard Eight: Democracy, Educational Governance and Careers in Teaching:**

In this course, the teacher will learn to recognize the school's role in teaching and perpetuating our democratic system. The teacher will demonstrate that he/she knows the relationships among the various governmental entities that create laws, rules, regulations, and policies that determine educational practices.

**The teacher will demonstrate the ability to:**

- 8.1 Model and articulate the democratic ideal to students, including:
  - The school's role in developing productive citizens.
  - The school's role in teaching and perpetuating the principles of a democratic republic.
- 8.2 Model, and develop on the part of the students, positive behavior and respect for the rights of others, and those moral standards necessary for personal, family and community well-being.
- 8.3 Understand and respond to influences on educational practice including:
  - Federal and state constitutional provisions.
  - Federal executive, legislative and legal influences.
  - State roles of the governor, legislature and State Board of Education

- Local school districts, boards of education and boards of cooperative educational services.
- Non-traditional and non-public schools, including: charter schools, religious schools and home schooling.
- Public sector input from business, advocacy groups, and the public.

8.4 Promote teaching as a worthy career and describe various career paths in education, including local, state, national, and international options, higher education, public and private education.

### **How does the Democratic Schooling PBA help me learn the teaching roles that are the foundation of the IPTE program?**

This course addresses each of the five essential teaching roles identified in the IPTE program with specific focus on the following components.

#### **Teacher as Scholar**

The teacher candidate will develop and demonstrate knowledge of legal issues to facilitate the equitable and just treatment of students, their families and the classroom community.

- Analyzes, knowledge and understanding of learning and development

#### **Teacher as Instructor**

Teachers will gain and enhance their understanding of democratic schooling and special education laws that support their attempts to differentiate, facilitate, and assess the development and learning of each student in an environment that affirms equity and diversity.

- Demonstrates respect and integration of diversity in instructional planning and implementation
- Uses a variety of resources within and outside the school building to meet the needs of all learners
- Manages behavioral, social, and academic transactions in the classroom
- Reflects on and evaluates professional choices and actions

Students will gain and enhance their understanding of democratic schooling and special education laws that support their attempts to differentiate, facilitate, and assess the development and learning of each student in an environment that affirms equity and diversity

#### **Teacher as Learner Advocate**

Through knowledge of the “system” the teacher will learn how to foster learners’ self-advocacy and ensure equal access to and benefit from quality education.

- Offers students appropriate social, emotional, physical and academic challenges
- Respects students as individuals
- Encourages students to develop personal responsibility and a sense of self efficacy

Through knowledge of the “system” the teacher will learn how to foster learners’ self-advocacy and ensure equal access to and benefit from quality education?

### Teacher as Professional

In both discussion and in written work, teacher candidates will demonstrate reflection of ethical, moral, and legal teaching practice. It is through this inquiry that they will draw from and contribute to the profession and to the democratic ideal. Specifically, teacher candidates will:

- Communicate effectively with colleagues, students and families
- Understand and apply knowledge of legal aspects of education
- Collaborate effectively
- Conduct themselves morally and ethically in their professional role in accordance with institutional and professional standards

### Teacher as Leader

Teacher candidates will engage in or lead school change and renewal processes grounded in the ethics of inquiry, knowledge, competence, caring, and social justice. Specifically, teacher candidates will:

- Engage in school government, reform and renewal
- Attend to democratic practices in working with students and adults

### What do I need to do?

During this course you will participate in a number of large and small group discussions pertaining to democracy, law and ethics. You will plan for and prepare a written response to a "question" posed prior to each class session. You will also be asked to reflect on a number of ethical dilemmas.

You will be expected to challenge yourself, your classmates, the instructor, and guests to present ideas clearly and concisely and to be able to defend your ideas in a reasoned and reasonable manner based on previous knowledge, course content, and self-initiated learning. Every attempt will be made throughout this course to relate the material to the questions that you might have as you prepare to embark upon your teaching career, but this will depend on your willingness to ask your questions and participate in discussions.

In addition to the above, you will need to pass a multiple choice test at the end of the course which measures your knowledge and understanding of the legal framework which guides much of our educational practice.

### How will others help me?

Since this class takes place in the summer, you will most likely not have access to your site coordinator and/or site professor. However, much of the emphasis in this class is placed on learning from reading, discussing and listening. In essence, there is lots of opportunity for peer sharing and coaching. In addition, the instructor is more than willing to provide additional support when needed and will recommend ways that you can initiate additional learning outside of class.

### **How will my performance be evaluated and scored?**

Your commitment toward developing productive citizens while perpetuating the principles of a democratic republic and your commitment to the profession as well as to professional and ethical ideals will be evaluated by the instructor through observation of your interactions and discussion and in your written work. This is a total of 60% of your grade and the rubric used to evaluate these two components in oral and written work is attached. (The rubric will be jointly created by the instructors who are teaching this course)

. The final 40% of your grade is from the Democratic Schooling exam. Your first score is the basis for your grade. However, you must score a minimum of 80% on the exam in order to demonstrate that you have developed a knowledge base at the proficient level. If you do not achieve this score, you may study the areas that the instructor indicates were points of weakness and retake the exam as many times as necessary to pass it at the proficient level. However, your original score will be the basis of your grade.