



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Mission and Guiding Principles

Consistent with the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's mission as a public regional research university, the Department of Education Leadership (hereafter DEL) was founded in the Fall of 2011. DEL's major political scope is to assume a leading role both nationally and internationally in preparing a new generation of education leaders and policy analysts, highly prepared in educational leadership and policy studies who could exercise critical transformative leadership committed to social and cognitive justice.

We believe that education should be a place that cultivates humanity, a place that fosters the 'ability to imagine the experiences of another'; a locus that emphasizes the ability to think critically, the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems; a place that fosters creativity and the formation of a holistic citizen. We believe that education and educational institutions should be driven by leaders and not by managers. Given the current global crises with a profound devastating impact in our region, we maintain that the flourishing of a democratic society relies on a democratic educational system capable of a critical balance between the need to sustain a strong economy and the preparation of a more holistic citizen. We claim educational leadership and policy studies as contested political terrains profoundly coded with ethical, moral and spiritual dimensions. DEL offers a critical transformative doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies designed to produce future practitioners and scholars who will work as professors, researchers, administrators, or executives in leadership roles in a variety of institutional settings. Graduates of this program will be committed to transforming students, institutions and their contexts in pursuit of a more ethical, just and fair society and to improving educational achievement in environments, that are dynamic, interactive, culturally diverse, and democratic. The doctoral program aims to prepare individuals capable of understanding global contemporary dynamics as well as leading

1 systemic transformations that promote learning and improve educational attainment in
2 schools. Our program prepares future education leaders quite sentient of the need for
3 advocacy leadership. We claim that there is no authentic education with a lack of basic
4 social needs for the massive majority of society. In so doing – and aligned with the more
5 recent and insightful research in the field – our program calls for a collaborative and
6 critical transformative leadership, one that encourages an open transformative leadership
7 practice quite capable of creating the caring and authentic culture as well as empowering
8 teachers, students, parents and the community in critical transformative leadership. To
9 accomplish the above the proposed program is driven by a set of beliefs, namely that
10 human growth and development are transformative lifelong pursuits; that schools are
11 political and cultural artifacts of local and global contexts; that diversity strengthens
12 organizations; that while transformative leadership implies individual and team work that
13 stimulates differences, it is also driven by moral and ethical imperatives; and that one can
14 only have an impact globally if one is capable of making a difference locally. DEL is
15 oriented by a set of principles regarding critical transformative Educational Leadership
16 and Policy Studies. Such principles are the vivid result of an ample and heated
17 participatory debate among faculty, administrators, superintendents, principals, teachers,
18 parents, social activists and community in general. Both the department and the doctoral
19 program were built with them and not for them to which we express here our sincere
20 gratitude.

21 22 23 **Principle 1**

24 **Education is a political act.**

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26 Accordingly, the education policies produced at all levels of government (local, state,
27 federal, and international) reflect the political struggles and power dynamics inherent in
28 our society. DEL explores these varying dynamics and influences and develop future
29 school leaders and scholars in the field of public education who are actively aware and
30 engaged with these complex and layered interactions.

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Principle 2

Education leadership and policy understands and claims education as a public good.

Of vital importance to our society and the collective good is the nature and quality of the education we provide our children. Moreover, a recognition that education envisions leadership and policies that ensure that every child receives an equal educational opportunity to maximize their potential. In this way, education as a public good is promoted.

Principle 3

Educational leadership and policy places the educational system within the dynamics of ideological production.

As such, it recognizes that there policies and curriculum decisions and choices that reflect certain ideological leanings that, when reproduced, can perpetuate inequalities in the education system. These ideological leanings are not always obvious. These ideologies reflect existing power imbalances. Therefore, recognition of these ideological underpinnings – and the reasons for their perpetuation – are crucial understandings in developing educational leadership and policy.

Principle 4

Educational leadership and policy acknowledge power and privilege and argues for a new conception of power.

Certain interests and ideologies can carry a disproportionate amount of power in education systems and society in general. An understanding of the above-mentioned principles necessitates a shift in power to rectify imbalances that manifest in the education system and greater society. Accordingly, educational leadership and policy must reflect this need and attempt to re-calibrate the power balances.

Principle 5

Educational leadership and policy recognizes education and schools as critical transformative agencies.

1 Despite the power imbalances inherent in educational systems, it is understood that these
2 agencies may be changed from within and by those who have heretofore been
3 disadvantaged by the existing mechanisms and struggles. Moreover, in recognizing this, it
4 is understood that schools and education are part of a set of agencies and constructs that,
5 together, require reformation to mitigate against existing power imbalances.

6 7 **Principle 6**

8 **Educational leadership and policy is an intellectual and moral craft that articulates**
9 **individual and collective purposes**

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11 We understand educational leadership and policy as moral undertaking grounded on
12 critical intellectual trajectories that seek a critique and transformation of dominant
13 structures. We emphasize the need to articulate individual and collective aims to attain
14 purposes related with equity and excellence

15 16 **Principle 7**

17 **Educational leadership and policy is a commitment to democratize democracy.**

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19 We perceived educational leadership and policy as committed to a praxis of democracy as
20 an unfinished process, a reality that is not solely to be theorized in relation to ordinary
21 political structures, but that must be extended to civil society and culture.

22 23 **Principle 8**

24 **Educational leadership and policy understands that the struggle for social justice is a**
25 **struggle for cognitive justice.**

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27 De-centering dominant paradigms requires the perpetual inclusion of epistemological
28 diversity. This would signify the inclusion indigenous knowledge(s), counter-histories, and
29 methodologies. Educational leadership and policy seeks an understanding of leadership
30 that is not bounded to individualism but rather through an analytical lens that centralizes
31 power politics, interactions, and the context through which these dynamics operate.

Principle 09

Educational leadership and policy understands that global challenges needed to be won locally.

Educational leadership and policy understands the importance of transformation of the local context while not abstracting the intricate relationships between the local and global.

Principle 10

Educational leadership and policy fosters indigenous knowledges, counter-histories, and methodologies.

Educational leadership and policy fosters not only a critique of existing institutions and social, political, and economic arrangements; it also opens up an analytical lens towards alternative possibilities.

Principle 11

Educational leadership and policy is community ‘engagé’.

Educational leadership and policy is committed to the engagement of leadership and policy studies within and beyond the boundaries or organizational settings. It fosters transformative partnerships with community and society by and large.

Principle 12

Educational leadership and policy understands schools as spaces that cultivate humanity.

Therefore, to this end, it promotes efforts to develop critical thinking, an understanding that schools are part of a complex web of institutions in a global society, and appreciation of different perspectives beyond one’s own.

DEL unanimously adopted both the Mission and the Guiding Principles on March 2012.