Columbia Business School

B8558: Education Leadership * Spring 2016 *(Syllabus as of 11/4/15)*

**Instructor:**
Tracy Breslin
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**Class:**
Tuesdays, B Term
2:15 pm – 5:30 pm

**Location:**
Uris Hall, Room 329

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**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Background**
Once a world leader in educational performance, the U.S. now faces a national crisis in education. As a whole, the U.S. public education system does not produce students who are ready for college or competition in the global marketplace. In fact, students in the U.S. perform significantly less well academically than their peers from other industrialized nations – the United States now scores 27th (out of 34) in math, 20th in science, and 17th in reading, as measured by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012. This is despite the fact that we spend more per student on education than any other developed country. In addition, there is a persistent student achievement gap along income and ethnic lines. Our schools must improve dramatically in order to maintain our position in the competitive world economy.

Over the last decade, a number of results-oriented leaders in states, districts, charter management organizations, and nonprofits have led the reform of U.S. public education. These leaders bring a sense of urgency and new strategies to address current challenges and drive higher and more equitable outcomes for students. Some of the new ideas are proving to be critical levers for change, others face significant resistance or political challenges, and others have not delivered expected results. All hold lessons for how future leaders can contribute to solving one of the most important issues facing our nation: education.

**Course Description**
This course will focus on the human capital challenge facing K-12 public education in the United States. Teacher and principal effectiveness are the two most important school-based factors impacting student achievement. To ensure all students achieve at high levels, it is critical to have a great teacher in every classroom and effective leader in every school.

This human capital challenge is one of the biggest issues facing public education. Students will examine critical human capital issues and innovative strategies designed to drive higher academic achievement for all students. Students will analyze entrepreneurial solutions to prepare, recruit, evaluate, and retain effective teachers and school leaders and leadership approaches to bring about systemic change.

**Learning Objectives**
This course is designed with the following learning objectives for students:

- Understand the current and evolving context of public education in the United States
- Examine the key levers for education reform, innovative strategies, and their results
- Explore how business, leadership, and management practices can increase educational effectiveness and lead to higher student achievement
- Identify how skills and concepts developed through other business school courses are applicable to education
**Required Readings**

The required readings and cases will be provided in the B8558 Case Packet and, when possible, posted on Canvas.

**COURSE PROGRESSION (AT A GLANCE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session # and Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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</table>
| Session 1: Tuesday, March 22nd | Setting the Stage – The Need for Excellent Education | • Explore current challenges facing U.S. public education  
• Discuss achievement gap, economic impact, and U.S. ranking among world nations  
• Identify key human capital issues as levers of reform | N/A                                                                                                                                        |
| Session 2: Tuesday, March 29th | Managing Human Capital – DC Public Schools | • Discuss Washington, DC – school system focused on human capital as the foundation for its reforms  
• Explore teacher evaluation, rewards and consequences, and the role of labor unions in education reform | Dan Weisberg, Chief Executive Officer, TNTP                                                |
| Session 3: Tuesday, April 5th | Building a Teacher Pipeline | • Review effectiveness of teacher preparation programs  
• Explore innovative approaches – including Teach for America and Relay Graduate School of Education – to recruit, select, and prepare teachers | Norman Atkins, Co-Founder and President, Relay Graduate School of Education                  |
| Session 4: Tuesday, April 12th | Principal as CEO and Instructional Leader | • Discuss strategies to recruit, select, prepare, and support school leaders (principals)  
• Analyze one school district’s (Memphis) approach to building a principal pipeline and supporting principals  
• Identify broader efforts to improve principal quality across the nation | Ben Fenton, Chief Strategy Officer and Co-Founder, New Leaders                               |
| Session 5: Tuesday, April 19th | Accountability and Empowerment – New York City Department of Education | • Explore theories of action to measure performance and hold people accountable for results  
• Analyze results of Mayor Bloomberg’s and Joel Klein’s reform agenda in the New York City Department of Education – provided principals with increased autonomy and accountability for results  
• Discuss sustainability and different reforms pursued by Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina | Jonah Rockoff, Columbia Business School                                                      |
| Session 6: Tuesday, April 26th | District Transformation – Newark Public Schools | • Explore systemic transformation at the district level  
• Analyze how a superintendent used multiple levers to transform a school district & achieve results for students  
• Discuss the opportunities & challenges of implementing rapid, large-scale change to drive student achievement | Cami Anderson, Former State District Supt. of Newark Public Schools                          |
SESSION DETAILS

Session 1: Setting the Stage – The Need for Excellent Education
Tuesday, March 22nd

This session will set the stage for the rest of the course by exploring the current issues and challenges facing public education in the United States. We will discuss the achievement gap, economic impact of our educational system, and U.S. ranking among world nations. We then will explore the context and challenges to improving our school systems, including the political, financial, and regulatory environment, governance issues, workforce condition, constraints associated with labor contracts, and the complexity of managing multiple stakeholders.

Readings: Lessons of Hope: How to Fix Our Schools – Preface (Joel Klein)
          Summary of Educational Research and Statistics (The Broad Foundation)
          The Brink of Renewal: A Business Leader’s Guide to Progress in America's Schools (Gates, BCG, HBS)

Session 2: Managing Human Capital – DC Public Schools
Tuesday, March 29th

We will discuss Washington, DC as a school system that focused on human capital as the foundation for its reforms. Then, we will explore some of the more controversial topics in education – teacher evaluation, associated rewards and consequences, and the role of labor unions in education reform.

Speaker: (To be confirmed) Dan Weisberg, Chief Executive Officer, TNTP

Readings: Case: Sweeping Change: Michele Rhee's Journey to Transform the DC Public Schools (Broad Foundation – Jenkins & Katzir)
          The Widget Effective: Executive Summary (The New Teaching Project)
          The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America’s Urban Schools – Executive Summary (TNTP)
          Optional: Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching: Culminating Findings from the MET Project’s Three-Year Study (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)

Session 3: Building a Teacher Pipeline
Tuesday, April 5th

We will review the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and explore innovative approaches – including Teach for America and Relay Graduate School of Education – to recruit, select, and prepare teachers.

Speaker: (To be confirmed) Norman Atkins, Co-Founder and President, Relay Graduate School of Education

Readings: Case: Teach for America 2005 (Childress)
          Educating School Teachers: Executive Summary (Arthur Levine)
          2014 Teacher Prep Review Executive Summary, Introduction (National Council on Teacher Quality)
Session 4: Principal as CEO and Instructional Leader  
Tuesday, April 12th

In order to provide an excellent education for all students, all schools need great leaders. We will discuss strategies to recruit, select, prepare, and support school leaders who can transition from being managers of the status quo to instructional leaders who are CEOs and agents of change. After discussing one school district’s approach to building a principal pipeline and supporting school leaders, we will discuss broader efforts to improve principal quality across the nation.

Speaker:  *(To be confirmed)* Ben Fenton, Chief Strategy Officer and Co-Founder, New Leaders

Readings:  Case: Memphis City Schools: The Next Generation of Principals (Childress, Peterkin, Clayton)  
Principals in the Pipeline: Districts Construct a Framework to Develop School Leadership (JSD: The Learning Forward Journal)  
Great Principals at Scale (New Leaders and Alliance to Reform Education Leadership)

Session 5: Accountability and Empowerment  
Tuesday, April 19th

There are a number of theories of action at play in urban public school systems – all designed to dramatically improve student achievement. In this session, we will explore various theories of action to measure performance and hold people accountable for results.

This session will look at the results of Mayor Bloomberg’s and Joel Klein’s reform agenda in the New York City Department of Education. We will explore how shifts in organizational structure, control of funding, and labor agreements provided principals with increased autonomy as well as accountability for results. We then will discuss the sustainability of these efforts, different reforms pursued by Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina, and the impact on the school system.

Speaker:  *(To be confirmed)* Jonah Rockoff, Columbia Business School

Readings:  The Redesign of Urban School Systems: Theories of Action for Change (McAdams & Katzir, pp 4-8)  
Case: Focusing on Results at the New York City Department of Education (HBS – Childress, Cheek Clayton)  
Moving Mountains in New York City: Joel Klein’s Legacy by the Numbers (EducationWeek – Liebman, Rockoff)  
Chancellor Carmen Farina Changes New York City Schools’ Course (New York Times – Kate Taylor)  
Optional: De Blasio Aims to Reverse Education Policies in New York (Washington Post)

Session 6: District Transformation – Newark Public Schools  
Tuesday, April 26th
Our final session will explore systemic transformation at the district level. This session provides an opportunity for students to explore how one superintendent used multiple levers to transform a school district and achieve results for students. We will have a candid conversation about the opportunities and challenges of implementing rapid, large-scale change to drive student achievement. We will examine the opportunities and challenges at the district level, the impact of politics and defenders of the status quo, and the leadership moves one individual made in an effort to lead, scale, and sustain significant changes.

Speaker: *(To be confirmed)* Cami Anderson, Former State District Superintendent of Newark Public Schools

Readings: The Trading Post is Closed: Cami Anderson in Newark Public Schools (Stanford – Jenkins & Katzir)  
Newark’s Superintendent Rolls Up Her Sleeves and Gets to Work (Education Next – Meyer)  
The Real Story of Our Work to Transform Newark Public Schools (Cami Anderson)

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

This course has two distinct components: 1) classroom discussions and 2) a team-based paper.

*Classroom Sessions:* The class meets weekly for 6 sessions of 3 hours and 15 minutes each. Class sessions include a combination of case-based discussions and expert speakers to help students learn about real organizations, leaders, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to address those challenges.

Case studies and/or guest speakers will form the primary basis for classroom discussion and assignments. Most cases or speaker presentations will be supplemented with research publications, technical notes, news clips and/or videos to deepen students’ understanding of the context and issues. Experts who visit the class as guest speakers will give students’ exposure to leaders in the field and provide opportunities for candid conversations about what is and is not working and why.

*Team-Based Paper:* Students will work in teams for the duration of the course to write a paper analyzing a current human capital challenge in education reform. This project is designed to give students an opportunity to define a current human capital challenge faced in the education sector, research current state and innovative practices related to that issue, apply conceptual frameworks covered in classroom discussions, and recommend strategic solutions. Students may research a particular reform, offer a diagnostic evaluation of an issue in a particular school system, or provide advice to policy-makers moving forward.

A list of potential topics will be shared with students at the beginning of the course, though teams may work on a topic of their choosing. Teams will consist of three to four students. Students will submit preferences of both topics and team members, and the instructor will create teams based on those preferences.

**EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING POLICY**

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Attendance and Participation: 40%
- Weekly Surveys: 20%
- Final Paper: 40%

**Attendance and Participation (40%)**
This course adheres to Columbia Core Culture. Students are expected to be present, prepared, and active participants. Due to the highly collaborative and interactive nature of this class, it is critical that all students
attend every class meeting. If you must miss class for a legitimate reason, please notify the instructor in advance via e-mail. To receive full credit for participation, students must participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions.

Attendance and Participation Expectations:

- **Attend all classes** (points will be deducted for unexcused absences)
  - Arrive on time
  - Bring your nameplate and clicker to every class
  - Engage actively throughout
  - Stay for the full duration of the session
- **Lead and actively participate in classroom discussions** – Effective class participation includes:
  - Significant contributions to class discussion, including building on each other’s comments
  - Critical thinking skills – evidence of case analysis, deep understanding of the readings, and ability to identify implications of the readings for the case/issues discussed in class
  - Ability to take a stand – share your perspective on cases/various education reforms and provide evidence to support your position, expect cold calling
  - Willingness to test new ideas and push the class discussion forward
  - Ability to link course concepts from readings and prior classes
  - Effective introductions and thoughtful questions of guest speakers

**Weekly Surveys (20%)**

In order to prepare for each class discussion, students will read materials and complete a weekly survey by 11:59 pm on Sunday before each class. Survey responses play a key role in determining the structure, focus, and facilitation of each session, so it is important to complete surveys with thoughtful responses and on time.

**Weekly Surveys and Assignments Expectations:**

- Complete weekly online surveys
- Submit each survey by 11:59 pm on the Sunday before class (late surveys will be worth half credit)
- Complete all readings in advance of the relevant session
- Respond thoughtfully to assignment questions
  - Answer every question
  - Take a stand on issues and provide evidence for your position
  - Submit questions for upcoming guest speakers
- Provide feedback on class facilitation and guest speakers (feedback is for course improvement and will not be graded)

**Final Paper (40%)**

Each team (3-4 students) will submit a 10- to 15-page paper that defines a current human capital challenge faced in the education sector, researches current state and innovative practices related to that issue, applies conceptual frameworks covered in classroom discussions, and recommends strategic solutions.

**Final Paper Expectations:**

- Write a high-quality report that demonstrates a deep understanding of the topic and implications for the education field
- Partner with a team to achieve the project’s goals
- Link the paper to course concepts