

FAQs: Maurer School of Law's J.D. Minor in Education Policy

What is the JD Minor in Education Policy?

Maurer's JD Minor in Education Policy is a one-of-a-kind interdisciplinary collaboration with the IU School of Education. The School of Education's program is one of the top in the country. It's rare for schools of education to have one education law professor; yet, IU has two professors and a visiting education law lecturer, as well as education law adjuncts who practice across the U.S. These faculty teach the required courses—many of which are taught online in an interactive format. Maurer students who pursue the minor have an opportunity to discuss current legal issues with classmates that include teachers, principals, superintendents and others pursuing graduate education at the School of Education.

IU's education law opportunities are continuously expanding. Many Maurer students have continued to earn their M.S. or PhD in Education Policy Studies. Further, the Education Law program has a culture of mentoring education law students and providing them with meaningful teaching, research, and service opportunities which prepare them to excel in the job market.

Who may be interested in this JD minor?

Interested in constitutional law? Civil rights? Employment law? Torts? Contracts? Education law offers a unique opportunity to learn about and practice a wide variety of legal issues, all while helping students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and others.

A sample of the type of questions that are analyzed:

- *Do students have a First Amendment right to wear Confederate flag or homophobic t-shirts to school?*
- *Can teachers or faculty be disciplined for what they post on social media?*
- *What happens when schools and families disagree about an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a student with disabilities?*
- *What are some of the legal issues involving students of color who are overrepresented in school disciplinary matters?*

Attorneys with a background in education law are employed in a variety of settings, including private practice—both representing student and parent plaintiffs and school districts (e.g., employment, civil rights, special education practice groups, general education practice groups); governmental agencies (e.g., federal and state departments of education); universities (e.g., general counsel's office, athletic department compliance, professors); and non-profit organizations (e.g., organizations dedicated to education reform). Please see also Harvard's Education Law Employment Guide

https://hls.harvard.edu/content/uploads/2008/07/2015_educationlawguide_final.pdf.

Are there other opportunities for Maurer students at the IU School of Education?

Yes. IU School of Education (SoE) faculty members, Janet Decker and Jennifer Rippner have worked with many Maurer law students for approximately two decades. Numerous Maurer students/alums have received mentoring and/or employment from SoE faculty members. The collaboration has resulted in numerous Maurer students securing education law-related employment after graduation. Several of these students have been employed as Associate Instructors at the SoE (\$1300/month stipend, healthcare, and 20 credits of fee remission) or employed as hourly Research Assistants.

How many additional courses will I need to complete the JD minor?

Essentially, education policy minor students enroll in two courses *in addition to* their JD degree requirements. Law students are **not** required to pay for the additional School of Education minor courses that go above the 88 hours for the JD because they are included in the law school's flat fee (as long as the student enrolls in them in Fall or Spring semesters). Typically, summer courses are available online, which students may also choose to

take. Former education policy minor students have found that taking a summer course is manageable while doing a summer internship and can potentially help lighten a student's coursework during the regular school year. However, summer courses are not included in Maurer's flat fee tuition.

How long does the JD minor take to complete?

One year is the minimum time to complete the courses that are cross-listed at the School of Education (i.e., B658-A608, B658-A675, B658-A615, and **either** B658-A720 **or** B658-C705). However, most students begin enrolling these courses during their 2L year.

What are the course descriptions of the School of Education courses?

- **B658/A608 Law & Education: Legal Perspectives on Education (3)** This course will prepare students to 1) identify legal issues occurring in public PK-12 schools; 2) appreciate the importance of legal literacy for administrators, educators, policymakers, and others; 3) understand legal principles and apply them to real life scenarios; 4) describe and analyze key principles of school/district policy as well as federal and state law; 5) conduct legal research to stay abreast of evolving law; 6) collaborate with others to solve complex legal issues, and 7) legally advocate for parents, students, schools, and districts.
- **B658/A615 Law & Education: Advanced School Law (3)** This course analyzes current school legal issues from a district-level perspective. School leaders and policy makers need an in-depth understanding of several legal and ethical issues that impact schools. The Prerequisite for this course is: *Legal Perspectives in Education* (B658 Education Law/A608) or equivalent with consent from instructor. In *Legal Perspectives in Education* (B658 Education Law/A608), students explore legal issues from a building-level perspective. Specifically within A608, students discussed legal scenarios focused on teachers and principals. *Advanced School Law* (B658 Education Law/A615) goes beyond *Legal Perspectives in Education* to examine other complex school legal issues at the district-level, including public employment law, evaluation and other issues that affect superintendents and other district-level leaders.
- **B658/A675 Law & Education: Leadership in Special Education (3)** Special education is the most commonly litigated area in public schools today. Students will analyze legal, political, cultural, and leadership issues surrounding these disputes, as well as federal and state legislation and case law. Topics will include: student harassment based on disability; litigation surrounding discipline of students with disabilities; the evolution of the U.S. special education system; special education and school choice; alternative dispute resolution in special education; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's due process procedures; eligibility of students with disabilities; school-family relationships in special education; and other special student populations (e.g., LGBT, gifted and talented, homeless students).
- **B658/A720 Law & Education: Workshop on Selected Problems in Ed Leadership (3)** The purpose of this course is to develop students' legal research and writing skills while increasing their knowledge about education law and policy. Students will investigate and discuss current issues, developments, and concerns surrounding education law and policy. Specific topics vary each semester.
- **B658/C705 Law & Education: Legal Aspects of Higher Education (3)** The purpose of this course is to introduce you to current legal issues occurring in higher education settings. Specifically, this course will prepare you to: 1) identify legal issues occurring in public higher education settings so that you can formulate, articulate, and defend alternative solutions; 2) describe and analyze key principles of higher education/college policy as well as federal and state law and apply them to real life scenarios; 3) increase your awareness about the importance of legal literacy for administrators, faculty, policymakers, and others; 4) access primary sources of law (i.e., federal and state statutes, regulations, and case law) needed to analyze and solve legal dilemmas and to stay abreast of evolving law; 5) collaborate with others to solve complex legal issues; 6) communicate persuasively in oral and written form so that you can advocate for yourself, colleagues, students, school, and district; and 7) analyze a variety of social

justice and ethical issues involving socio-economic status, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender.

Are all of the courses cross-listed at the School of Education offered online?

Yes, but some semesters hybrid courses requiring some face-to-face meetings are also an option.

When are the courses typically offered?

	Fall	Spring	Summer	Who can enroll
B658-A608	x	x	x (both sessions)	any Maurer student (5 reserved spots)
B658-A615		x	x	minor students who have completed B658-A608 or Maurer students with permission to enroll (5 reserved spots)
B658-A675	x		x	minor students or Maurer students with permission to enroll (5 reserved spots)
B658-A720		x (occasionally offered)		minor students or Maurer students with permission to enroll (5 reserved spots)
B658-C705	x			minor students or Maurer students with permission to enroll (5 reserved spots)

How many credit hours are required?

To be eligible to receive the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence with a minor in Education Policy, a student must complete a total of **94 credit hours** including:

(1) **Complete 82 semester hours of credit in the School of Law**, including all its required coursework and at least six credit hours in law courses that relate to this minor. While the minor-related courses that are offered will vary somewhat from year to year, the courses will include at least some of the following *and may include others*:

- B713 Administrative Law
- B580 Civil Rights Statutes
- B668 Constitutional Law II [First Amendment]
- B719 Employment Law
- B747 Jurisprudence
- B663 Labor Law
- B658 Law and Education
- B658 Law and Education: Higher Education
- B771 Mediation
- B620 Negotiations
- B569 Non-Profit Corporations
- B756 Race, American Society & the Law
- L704 Seminar in Antidiscrimination in Education
- L799 Seminar in Constitutional Law: First Amendment
- L799 Seminar in Constitutional Law: Law and Religion

(2) **Complete the following 4 additional courses (12 credit hours) in the School of Education** (course substitutions may be possible with compelling reasons and permission from Law and Education): **B658/A608**--Legal Perspectives on Education; **B658/A615**--Advanced School Law; **B658/A675**--Leadership in Special Education; and EITHER 1) **B658/A720**--Workshop on Selected Problems in Educational Leadership OR 2) **B658/C705**—Legal Aspects in Higher Education.

How do I apply?

Students interested in the minor **must apply** before registering for their third education course.

- **Step 1:** Apply to become a minor student by emailing the School of Education minor liaison, Janet Decker (deckerjr@indiana.edu). Your email should describe why you are interested in specializing in

education law and/or policy. It is also helpful for you to attach a resume and discuss your career aspirations so we can best support your interests.

- **Step 2:** Once you receive permission to enroll in minor coursework from Janet Decker, forward that email to the Maurer Associate Director of Student Affairs, Alexis Lanham (adlanham@indiana.edu), and specifically state that you have been given permission to be a minor student. You will then be given preference to enroll in the reserved seats of the education policy minor courses.

Who coordinates the courses cross-listed at the School of Education?

The program is coordinated by three school law attorneys who are also former K-12 teachers and P-20 policy professionals, as well as professors at IU's School of Education: [Janet Decker](#), J.D., Ph.D. (deckerjr@indiana.edu) and [Jennifer Rippner](#), J.D., Ph.D. (jrippner@iu.edu). Please feel free to contact us if you would like additional information.

Once I'm a minor student, what do I need to do?

Once students have become minor students, they are responsible for ensuring they are fulfilling the requirements of the minor. Specifically, they should:

- **Plan & enroll in the minor courses.** Approximately, 1-2 minor courses are offered each semester (including most summers). Therefore, students must communicate with Janet Decker to map out when they plan to enroll in the minor courses to ensure they can complete the requirements prior to graduation. All of the School of Education courses are online.
- **Meet with Maurer Associate Director of Student Affairs to ensure you will meet the Minor Requirements prior to graduation.** Maurer School of Law awards the minor; therefore, students should consult with those at the law school about minor requirements **(before students' third year, they should conduct a credit count to ensure they will have the requisite 94 credits & required courses for the minor).**

Who are the current and past JD Minor students?

We have had 20+ students graduate with the JD Minor and another 10+ who are currently completing the minor. If you would like to speak to an alum or current student to discuss their experience, please let Janet Decker (deckerjr@indiana.edu) know.

School of Education (SoE) faculty, Janet Decker and Jennifer Rippner have also employed and mentored many Maurer law students over the past 17+ years.

- This collaboration has resulted in numerous students securing **education law-related employment** after graduation including at
 - Indiana Dept. of Education
 - IU Athletics
 - Church, Church, Hittle + Antrim
 - IU General Counsel's Office
 - U.S. Dept. of Justice
 - Lewis Kappes
 - U.S. Dept. of Defense
 - Faegre, Baker & Daniels
 - Stites & Harbison
 - Aleshire & Robb
 - NYC Dept. of Education
 - Kids in Need of Defense, Indianapolis
 - Indiana State Board of Education
 - Franklin University
 - Orangeburg Consolidated Schools, South Carolina
 - FTR Transportation Intelligence
 - Univ. of South Carolina
 - Project Lead the Way
 - Manley Burke LPA
 - Indiana University (Maurer & the School of Education)
 - Univ. of Michigan
 - Indiana Legal Services

- Several of these students have been employed as **associate instructors** at SoE (\$1300/month stipend, healthcare, and 20 credits of fee remission).
- Others were employed as hourly **research assistants**.
- Many students have been invited to **coauthor publications/presentations** with faculty as well.
- Others have matriculated into SoE **Ph.D.** programs.

How high is the School of Education program ranked?

IU School of Education's Education Law program is one of the best in the country. It hosts the Martha McCarthy Education Law and Policy Institute (<https://education.indiana.edu/events/mccarthy-institute/index.html>) and offers 20+ sections of Education Law courses each year. Education Law is housed within IU's Educational Leadership program and the Educational Leadership & Policy Studies Department. The *U.S. News and World Report* ranked IU's program as the #24 Educational Leadership Program in the U.S. (and the highest ranked program in the state) and #4 as the Best Online Educational Leadership Master's Program.

Could this JD Minor or other Maurer courses transfer into the IU School of Education's PhD in Education Policy program?

Please contact Janet Decker (deckerjr@indiana.edu) to discuss this further. She is a 2004 Maurer alum who also received her PhD at IU's School of Education. Ten additional Maurer students were also PhD students.

Could this JD Minor transfer into the IU School of Education's Principal Licensure Program?

Possibly. The School of Education has not had a student pursue this yet, but we would be glad to assist any student who is interested in pursuing this. For those students at Maurer who have taught in a public school **for at least two years**, you might consider earning Indiana principal licensure. Principal licensure is typically a 24-credit hour program. However, if a Maurer student completes the education policy minor, it could be possible to earn principal licensure with an additional 6 courses (18 credits). The license would be relatively easy to pick up, as all of our courses are offered at least two times per year and are online. This license might be of interest to those law students who remain interested in school leadership or education policy work. Please note that students should consider whether they can pick up these 6 additional courses through their flat fee tuition program at the law school. If this is not possible, students would be required to pay additional tuition for these courses. We would also need to work with Maurer to get the principal licensure courses cross-listed for you.