

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

"I just accepted a position with [an education law firm] as an associate attorney! I'll be working on employment matters, constitutional issues, and special education. I wouldn't even know about [the law firm] and the work they do with schools had it not been for my involvement with the Ed Law minor. I cannot thank you enough for opportunities you've afforded me!" – a recent Maurer graduate

What is the JD Minor in Education Policy?

Maurer's [JD Minor in Education Policy](#) is a one-of-a-kind interdisciplinary collaboration between the IU School of Education and Maurer. The School of Education's [program](#) known as one of the top education law programs. [Students explain](#) that they benefited from the engaging, interactive, and practical courses.

It's rare for schools of education to have one education law professors; yet, IU has two professors and an education law lecturer, as well as education law adjuncts who practice across the U.S. who teach the four required core Education Policy minor courses. Learn more about the education law professors here: Drs. [Janet Decker](#), [Vanessa Miller](#), and [Jennifer Rippner](#).

Because the courses are interdisciplinary, Maurer students who pursue the minor have an opportunity to discuss current legal, policy, and ethical issues with non-law classmates including teachers, principals, superintendents, and others pursuing graduate education at the School of Education. Students also appreciate the practical skills and flexibility the minor's online asynchronous courses offer. 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?*

Is the course content covered on the Bar Exam?

Yes. The four required core Education Policy minor courses cover many topics that will be assessed on the [Uniform Bar Exam](#) including Constitutional Law, Torts, and Contracts. Past graduates have said that the courses helped with Bar exam preparation because the minor courses covered some of the most important areas in a straight-forward, practical manner.

How does a specialization in Education Law relate to future employment?

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/labor, civil rights, special education practice groups, general education practice groups); governmental agencies (e.g., federal and state departments of education, Dept. of Justice); universities (e.g., general counsel's office, athletic department compliance, professors); and non-profit organizations (e.g., organizations dedicated to education reform, ACLU, Legal Aid). Please see also [Harvard's Education Law Employment Guide](#).

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

Yes. IU School of Education (SoE) faculty members have worked with many Maurer law students for over 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 Discussion Instructors/Adjunct/Associate Instructors for an undergraduate course at the SoE (which is compensated by a stipend and tuition fee remission) or employed as hourly Research Assistants.

What are the course descriptions of the four, required core Education Policy 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. *A608 is a pre-requisite for A615.*
- **B658/A675 Law & Education: Special Education Law (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., LGBTQ+, gifted and talented, homeless students).
- **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 the courses covered in my flat fee for law school?

Yes, unless you take a course in the summer, the four required core Education Policy minor courses are included in your flat fee. Some students do opt to take summer online courses that last six weeks. They have found that completing a summer course is manageable while doing a summer internship. Plus, summer course may help lighten a student's coursework during the regular school year. However, summer courses are not included in Maurer's flat fee tuition.

How many 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 6 credit hours 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).

How long does the JD minor take to complete?

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

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.

How do I apply?

Students interested in the minor **must apply** before registering for their third School of 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, she will email Maurer's Associate Director of Student Affairs, Alexis Lanham (adlanham@indiana.edu).
- **Step 3:** Before the deadlines (March 20 for summer; April 1 for fall), email Janet Decker (deckerjr@indiana.edu) to request permission to enroll in your School of Education courses. You will then be given preference to enroll in the reserved seats of the School of Education minor courses.

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. The School of Education courses are typically asynchronous and online.
 - Before the deadlines (Oct. 30 for spring & summer; April 1 for fall), email Janet Decker (deckerjr@indiana.edu) to request permission to enroll in your School of Education courses. You will then be given preference to enroll in the reserved seats of the School of Education minor courses.

- **BEFORE YOUR 3L YEAR, 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).**

When are the courses typically offered?

	Fall	Spring	Summer	Who can enroll
B658-A608	x	x	x	any Maurer student with permission to enroll (5 reserved spots)
B658-A615		x		minor students who have completed B658-A608 or Maurer students with permission to enroll (5 reserved spots)
B658-A675		x		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; **B658/C705**—Legal Aspects in Higher Education.

Who teaches the courses that are cross-listed at the School of Education?

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

Who are the current and past JD Minor students?

We have had 25+ 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.

How have past JD Minor students used the specialization?

School of Education faculty have also employed and mentored many Maurer law students over the past 20+ years. Some have matriculated into SoE **Ph.D. or MS** programs. The School of Ed/Maurer 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
- Frost Brown Todd
- Kansas Univ. Assessment & Technology Solutions
- IU Student Legal Services

Are there current employment opportunities for JD students?

- Yes, several law students have been employed as **associate instructors, adjuncts, or discussion instructors** at the School of Education.
- Others have been employed as hourly **research assistants**.
- Many students have been invited to **coauthor publications/presentations** with faculty as well.

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](#) 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. See [U.S. News and World Report ranking](#).