



Course Information

Prefix & number	Title
EDST 555	School Finance
Instructor	Prerequisites or restrictions (if any)
Dr. Gerald Fallon	None

Focus or Content

The term “school finance” is usually not a recommended topic at cocktail parties, but it should be. School finance is not merely about budgets. It is about the politics, policies and competing interests that go *into deciding who and what matters in education*. In this course, we will explore the connections between issues of equity and social justice, and the decisions about budget allocations in educational settings. What is funded or cut? Is it science programs or music? Why is this? How do we fund special education and what does this say about what is valued and not by policymakers? This course looks at finance as part of larger socio-political contexts in Canada and BC. This course will be of interests to teachers and school- and district-based administrators, and those working on social justice and equity issues in K-12 education.

Goals, Objectives or Learning Outcomes

What should practicing school leaders know about the financing of education? Should we consider a budget as a discourse underlined by a certain understanding of what is public education, how should we provide it, for what purposes, and for whose benefit? These are the key guiding questions for this course. It is expected that the course will enable participants to develop an understanding of:

1. The basic approaches used to fund education, their rationales in terms of equity, adequacy, and efficiency, and their applicability to different types and levels of educational services.
2. The issues surrounding alternative revenue sources for education with particular focus on the property tax and market-driven funding mechanisms,
3. The main issues surrounding school-based budgeting and management in neoliberal times.

Assignments or Assessment Process

1. Contribution to class discussion and presentations - 10%
2. Critical Issue Focus Paper (45% — maximum 10 pages/2500 words — Solo or team work of two members): *Equity and Adequacy in School Finance*
3. Oral Presentation: *School Budgeting Process in your School District* (45% — Team work of two to three members – maximum of six teams)

Notes/Other

Instruction will consist of a combination of lectures by the instructor and guest speakers, participant presentation of cases, and small and large group discussions of legal issues. As a community of learners, students will share personal, professional, and collaborative queries, explorations, and expertise through group discussions and projects. Participants will need to have recourse to both the Law Library and the Faculty of Education Library for the purpose of researching and preparing their seminar presentations and final papers.