Public Sector Structural Reform in K-12 Education
2012-13 Course Description

The United States is in the midst of a massive restructuring of public-sector service delivery and regulation, particularly as they relate to the governance and management of its public schools. Staffed by broadly interdisciplinary teams of accomplished professionals, the most successful of the new federal, state, and local education organizations are replacing decades-old public bureaucracies and interest group politics with “learning organizations” committed to using public problem solving techniques to accelerate adult and institutional, as well as student learning.

Columbia Law School, Columbia Business School, and Teachers College have launched the Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL) to mobilize university resources to study and, where appropriate, support these public reforms. As part of that effort, this year-long course is intended to prepare graduate-level Business, Education, Law, and Policy students for the challenges of public-sector problem solving and to provide them with opportunities to apply their knowledge – and newly developed skills – within the field of K-12 education. The course pursues these goals by:

1. Establishing conceptual frameworks for public-sector structural change: Theoretical readings, case studies, and class discussion examine important conceptual, organizational and legal shifts taking place in the public and nonprofit spheres, drawing on changes in the private sector.

2. Immersion in public K-12 restructuring: Examples from the federal, state, local, school and classroom context (including many current K-12 controversies) provide insight into the organizational, legal, administrative, and pedagogical changes taking place in K-12 education.

3. Building concrete professional skills through hands-on projects: Structured and team-based consulting projects for K-12 organizations enable students to build professional skills, domain expertise and professional contacts. Recent clients include the NYC Dep’t of Education, the NYC Leadership Academy, Excel Bridgeport (a non-profit supporting school reform in Bridgeport, CT), and Proof Points for Educational Success (a national non-profit).

Admission to the course is by application only. Interested students should submit a resume/CV, a transcript of grades thus far in your graduate program, and a one-page (or less) statement describing the following, none of which is a prerequisite, but all of which will be used as selection criteria:

- Reasons for wanting to take the course, including career aspirations
- Background and experience in public K-12 education
- Experience in public sector leadership, management, structure
- Consulting experience
- Experience conducting quantitative or business analysis
- Relevant course work in college and professional school

Students who are selected for the course will be asked to commit to 6 units over two semesters, and the course grade will be based upon satisfactory completion of the year's work, including year-long client projects.

We are no longer accepting applications for the course at this time.

To learn more about the course contact current students in the program:
- Christina Ma, Columbia Law School, christina.c.ma@gmail.com
- Jeff Maurone, Columbia Business School, jmaurone12@gsb.columbia.edu
- Amanda Meyer, Columbia Law School, amandameyer07@gmail.com
- Jessica Wallenstein, Teachers College, jessicawallen@gmail.com