

# FIELD EXPERIENCE GUIDE

## Superintendent

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP  
PHYLLIS J. WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Beginning in Summer 2025, candidates seeking Superintendent and Principal Licensure (MED, Superintendent Leadership, Principal leadership) will be required to complete a minimum of 216 hours of Field Experience (Standard 8). There are three categories of field work experience activities, (a) course based, (b) outside of coursework required, and (c) outside of coursework elective. Your fieldwork hours will be documented in the corresponding Excel workbook.

For each of the Course Based Activities, check the box provided on the Course Based tab upon completion and, from the drop down menu, fill in the semester completed. No signature is required for these activities.

Example:

Course	Check	Semester	Assignment	Hours
EDLD 550 Foundations of Educational Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Check		Boy's Culture Instruments Applied (6 hours)	

For each of the outside of course required activities, check the box provided on the Required tab upon completion and, from the drop down menu, fill in the semester completed. Supervisor signature is required for these hours.

Example:

		Check	Semester	Hours	Signature
1	Clinical Supervision Cycle (after or during EDLD 552) (3 Hours)	<input type="checkbox"/> Check			

For each Recommended Activity, use the drop down menu to identify the semester completed, add the number of hours completed, and acquire the supervisor's signature.

Example:

Recommended	Semester	Hours	Signature
1) Visit a school district at least 2 MHA sizes larger or smaller than your school district and interact with the administration to understand the nuances of a school of that size.			

## **COURSE BASED ACTIVITIES (53 HOURS)**

Course based field experiences will be articulated in the course syllabi along with the assessment rubric for that activity. These are listed below:

- EDLD 657 Facilities Planning
  - Checklists ADA, Playgrounds etc. - 3 Hours
- EDLD 653 School Personnel Administration
  - Personnel Plan – 10 Hours
- EDLD 658 Public Relations for Superintendents
  - Public Relations Plan – 10 Hours
- EDLD 656 Economics of Education
  - Interview Board Chair – 2 hours minimum (can be multiple interviews and can have more hours)
    - Accountability for student achievement
    - Fiscal accountability
    - Working with the community
    - Public Relations
    - Superintendent evaluation
    - Board and Superintendent roles and responsibilities
  - Systems Analysis Paper– 2 Hours
- EDLD 556 School Finance
  - School Budget - 20 Hours
- EDLD 554 School Law
  - Case analysis - 6 Hours

## OUTSIDE OF COURSE REQUIRED ACTIVITIES (75 HOURS)

- **Attend 12 Board Meetings – 2 Hours/Board Meeting = Total of 24 Hours Minimum**
  - Attending regular school board meetings provides insight into roles and responsibilities and the decision-making process of a school district's governing body. Attention should be paid to discussions on budgets, policies, contracts, personnel, and other critical topics that influence the district's direction.
- **Attend 3 Board Subcommittee Meetings – 1 Hour/Meeting = Total of 3 Hours Minimum**
  - Subcommittee meetings focus on specific areas of concern, such as budgeting, policy development, or curriculum. These meetings are smaller and more focused than full board meetings, providing opportunities for in-depth discussion and decision-making. This experience offers a closer look at the operational side of board functions and allows for engagement in specialized topics.
- **Interview the District Business Manager/Clerk – 2 Hours (can be multiple interviews and more hours)**
  - Interviews with the District Business Manager or Clerk provide insights into the financial and operational aspects of the district. These individuals oversee budgeting, accounting, payroll, and purchasing, among other duties. Understanding their roles can provide a clearer picture of how financial decisions are made and how resources are allocated.

The following areas should be included in the interview:

- Budget Development Cycle  
The budget development cycle is the process by which school districts create their annual budgets. This includes analyzing past budgets, forecasting future needs, prioritizing expenditures, and securing approval from the board.
- Budget Management  
Budget management involves monitoring and adjusting the district's finances throughout the fiscal year. It includes tracking revenue and expenditures, ensuring compliance with budget oversight requirements, and making adjustments as needed to meet financial goals. This activity helps you understand the ongoing responsibility of managing a district's financial health.
- Line of Command Between the Business Manager/Clerk, the Superintendent, and the Board  
Who supervises the business manager, the school board or the superintendent and what are the implications of this line of command? This activity can provide an understanding of the oversight structures between board-clerk-superintendent.

➤ **Interview with a District Secretary/Administrative Assistant – 1 Hour (can be multiple interviews and more hours)**

- A district secretary plays a key administrative role, handling correspondence, documentation, and scheduling for district meetings and events. Interviewing the district secretary can provide insight into the behind-the-scene management operations of the district and the flow of information.

The following areas should be included in the interview:

- PR/Communication  
Public Relations and communication involve managing the district's relationship with the community, including media relations, social media, and internal communications. This role focuses on ensuring that the district's messages are clear, consistent, and aligned with its goals.
- Data Management  
Data management involves understanding the role of the district secretary in collecting, analyzing, and utilizing student performance data to inform decisions. This can include tracking test scores, attendance, and other academic metrics to drive instructional changes and improve student outcomes.
- Administrative Roles and Responsibilities  
Understanding administrative roles and responsibilities of the district secretary as they relate to the superintendent-principals-school board.

➤ **Transportation Director – 2 Hours Minimum (Can Be Multiple Interviews and More Hours)**

- The Transportation Director manages school and extracurricular bus operations, ensuring safe, efficient, and timely transportation for students. Interviews or meetings with this director will cover areas like route planning, bus safety, compliance with state regulations, bus and staff scheduling, and budgeting for transportation needs.

Additional areas can include:

- Recruitment
- Purchasing
- Student Behavior
- Personnel Training/Safety
- Bus Maintenance Plan

➤ **Review the Transportation Contract in a School District That Contracts Their Transportation – 1 Hour**

- A transportation contract outlines the terms and conditions under which a third-party company provides transportation services for the district. Reviewing this contract helps you understand the logistical and financial aspects of outsourcing transportation.

- **Curriculum Director or Coop Curriculum Director – 2 Hours**
  - The Curriculum Director is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, and evaluation of the school's or coop's curriculum. This role ensures that teaching materials, instructional methods, and assessments align with state standards and meet the diverse needs of students. Areas to consider:
    - Curriculum Cycle
    - Assessment
    - Standards Alignment
    - Data-Informed Decisions Around Curriculum Change
  
- **Maintenance Director – 2 Hours (Can Be Multiple Interviews and More Hours)**
  - The Maintenance Director oversees all facilities-related functions, including building repairs, grounds maintenance, and custodial services. Interviews with the director provide insights into the district's maintenance strategy, safety protocols, and compliance with regulations like OSHA. Areas may include:
    - Safety Meetings
    - Building Maintenance Schedule
    - Roof Maintenance
    - Custodial Concerns
    - Maintenance and Custodial Personnel
    - OSHA/Dept. of Labor
    - Boiler
    - Grounds Maintenance
  
- **Head Cook – 2 Hours (Can Be Multiple Interviews and More Hours)**
  - The Head Cook is responsible for overseeing the school's food service operations. This includes menu planning, procurement, compliance with nutrition standards, and managing kitchen staff. Interviewing the head cook provides insights into the challenges and responsibilities associated with running a school meal program.
    - Procurement
    - Documentation of Paperwork Requirements
    - OPI Nutrition Requirements
    - What Are the Issues a Head Cook Deals With?
    - Personnel
    - Student Behavior Issues
    - Equipment Maintenance Issues
  
- **Athletic Director – 2 Hours (Can Be Multiple Interviews and More Hours)**
  - The Athletic Director is responsible for overseeing the school's athletic programs. This includes scheduling, coordinating transportation, managing budgets, and ensuring compliance with regulations. Areas may include:
    - Game and Practice Scheduling
    - Travel and Transportation
    - Parent Relations

- Coaches' Evaluations and Contracts
  - Schedule for Purchasing Uniforms
  - Facility Use and Maintenance
  - Equipment Purchase Schedule
  - Process for Checking of Student's Physicals, Sign-Off Sheets, Drug Policies
  - Beginning of Season Parent Meetings
- **Attend Safety Committee Meetings – 2 Hours (May Require More Than One Meeting)**
  - Safety committee meetings focus on identifying and addressing potential hazards in the school environment. Attending these meetings provides an understanding of how safety policies are created, reviewed, and enforced.
- **Explore the Safe School Center at the University of Montana website to identify current issues and resources in school safety. (2 hours)**
  - Participants are required to visit the [Safe School Center](#) at the University of Montana's website to identify current issues and resources related to school safety. The time allocated should focus on researching and analyzing relevant materials that can inform best practices for enhancing safety measures within your schools.
- **Shadowing the Superintendent – 12 Hours Total (Two Days Required and Can Be More Hours)**
  - Shadowing the Superintendent provides a firsthand look at the leadership and decision-making processes at the top level of the school district. It offers insight into managing district-wide operations, including policy development, budgeting, and working with board members and staff.
- **Attend a Regional MASS Meeting with a Superintendent – 4 Hours**
  - Montana has nine MASS regions.
  - The Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS) meetings gather educational leaders to discuss state and local education issues, share best practices, and work on initiatives. This is an opportunity to connect with peers and stay informed on educational trends and challenges.
- **Analyze Handbooks for Compliance with District Policies – 10 Hours**
  - Analyzing school handbooks ensures that they align with district policies and comply with state and federal regulations. This activity ensures that the school's rules, expectations, and procedures are clearly communicated and legally sound.
  - Share your findings with your superintendent.
- **Meet with the Person Responsible (School Principal or Counselor) for Analyzing the Efficacy or Help Develop (Using Data) the Class Schedule – 4 Hours**
  - This activity involves reviewing student data and feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the class schedule. Adjustments may be made to improve learning outcomes, ensure fairness, or accommodate student needs better.

➤ **Review District Web Page and PR Plan – 2 Hours**

- Reviewing the district's website and public relations plan ensures that they align with the district's communication strategy and accurately reflect the district's goals, policies, and achievements. This helps improve engagement and transparency with the community. Areas to review:

- Board Minutes, Board Agendas and Packets
- Lunch Menu, Policies, and Handbooks
- Staff Lists and Contact Information
- Administrative List and Content (Required Forms)
- Athletics



## RECOMMENDED FIELD EXPERIENCE ACTIVITIES

- **Attend Negotiations Meetings**
  - These are discussions between school board members, union representatives, aimed at reaching agreements on contracts, terms of employment, working conditions, or other matters. Participation allows you to observe the process of collective bargaining, understanding the strategies, interests, and compromises involved in reaching a mutually acceptable outcome.
- **Attend a Grievance Meeting**
  - A grievance meeting is where employees, typically union members, bring forward complaints about perceived violations of the contract or workplace conditions. These meetings provide insight into conflict resolution, understanding employee concerns, and addressing disputes through structured processes.
- **Attend a Uniform Complaint Policy Meeting**
  - This meeting focuses on addressing community or stakeholder concerns related to potential violations of district policies. This is a chance to see how the district manages compliance with local policies, state and federal education laws, and how complaints are handled formally and systematically to ensure fairness.
- **Attend a Book Challenge Meeting**
  - In this meeting, challenges to books or educational materials used in schools are discussed, particularly when parents or community members object to certain content. It provides a platform for understanding how school districts make decisions about what educational resources are appropriate for students. Review the district's policy on classroom material challenges prior to this meeting.
- **Attend a Building & Grounds Committee Meeting**
  - These meetings address the maintenance, repair, and improvement of school facilities and grounds. Observation of the meeting provides an understanding of the long-range planning and budgeting considerations required for school upkeep and the safety and functionality of school environments.
- **Attend a Meeting Involving Union Representation**
  - These meetings often focus on discussions related to employee rights, negotiations, and collective bargaining agreements. Attending such a meeting gives you an opportunity to see how unions advocate for their members and how negotiations or discussions are conducted between management and unions.
- **Review Agreements Regarding Athletic, Curriculum, or Special Education Cooperatives**
  - Reviewing these types of agreements involves examining the terms and conditions under which schools collaborate on shared programs, such as athletics, curriculum

development, or special education services. Understanding these agreements provides insight into inter-district cooperation, resource allocation, and program management.

- **Attend an Athletic, Curriculum, or Special Education Cooperative Board Meeting**
  - These board meetings provide a forum regarding the operations and direction of shared athletic programs, curriculum development initiatives, or special education cooperative efforts. Observing these meetings provides you with an opportunity to understand the strategic goals, budgets, and policy decisions affecting cooperative agreements.
- **Attend a Service Organization (Lions, Kiwanis, Senior Citizen, Chamber of Commerce) Meeting**
  - Service organizations often play an important role in community engagement and support for schools. Attending a meeting provides you with an opportunity to understand the role these organizations play in fostering community relations and supporting local initiatives, including educational efforts.
- **Interview 3 Principals at Different Grade Levels Regarding Superintendent-Principal Relationships**
  - This activity involves interviewing school principals (from at least two different grade levels) to understand how they interact with and are supported by the superintendent. It helps you gather insights into leadership dynamics, communication, and decision-making processes within the school district.
- **Attend a Policy Review Meeting**
  - In a policy review meeting, school administrators and board members discuss existing or proposed policies, ensuring they align with educational goals, legal requirements, and community expectations. Observing these discussions can provide you with an understanding of how policies are developed, revised, and implemented within the district.
- **Attend Administrative or Department Head Meetings**
  - These meetings often focus on school operations, department objectives, and the alignment of goals with the district's overall mission. Attending these meetings provides you with a chance to understand the decision-making processes at the administrative level and how different departments work together to meet educational objectives.
- **Attend a Graduation Planning Meeting**
  - A graduation planning meeting involves discussions about all aspects of the graduation ceremony, including venue, speakers, schedules, and logistics. Attending provides insights into the planning and coordination required for successful school events, as well as the traditions that shape these important milestones for students.
- **Visit the Legislature When It Is in Session**
  - Visiting the legislature allows you to observe the political processes and decisions that affect education at the state level. It provides a unique opportunity to see how

education policy is shaped, discussed, and voted upon, and how school districts interact with lawmakers.

- **Review an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Complaint**
  - Reviewing an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) complaint involves examining workplace safety concerns, particularly in relation to school environments. This provides you with an understanding of how safety issues are identified, reported, and resolved to ensure a safe working environment for staff and students.
- **Review Findings from the Department of Labor**
  - This activity involves examining reports or findings from the Department of Labor regarding employment practices, labor standards, or safety violations in schools. Understanding these findings provides you with insight into compliance with labor laws and how schools address workforce issues.
- **Review the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Asbestos Report**
  - The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires schools to inspect for asbestos and develop management plans to deal with any found materials. Reviewing this report provides you with an understanding of the importance of maintaining a safe environment for students and staff by addressing potential asbestos hazards.
- **Review School Safety Plan**
  - Reviewing the school safety plan involves analyzing the procedures and policies in place to protect students, staff, and visitors from emergencies such as natural disasters, active threats, or other crises. This review provides you with an understanding of how schools prepare for, and respond to, various safety challenges.
- **Locate and Understand Your Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)**
  - Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) contain information on handling chemicals and materials safely. Locating and reviewing these sheets provides you with an understanding of how schools manage hazardous substances to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.
- **Analyze Student Enrollment Projections**
  - Reviewing student enrollment projections involves assessing anticipated changes in the student population and their impact on school staffing, facilities, and budgeting. This review provides you with an understanding of the long-term planning required to accommodate growth or decline in student numbers.
- **Review Annual Student Summative Achievement Data – Track Longitudinally**
  - Reviewing these data involves examining student academic achievement over at least three years, typically through standardized tests or other assessments. Tracking this data longitudinally provides you with an understanding of the trends in academic achievement and informs decisions about curriculum and instruction.

- **Examine Curriculum Review Cycles and Their Relationship to the Budget**
  - Examining the curriculum review cycle and aligning it with the budget helps to ensure that curriculum improvements are adequately funded and supported. This is a critical step in making sure that educational priorities are in sync with available resources.
- **Review or Participate in Completing the Annual Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) Report**
  - Annual Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) report tracks how schools comply with civil rights laws, including issues related to discrimination. Reviewing or completing this report ensures that schools are maintaining compliance with federal and state civil rights standards.
- **Review or Participate in Completing the Annual Accreditation Report or Process**
  - The Annual Accreditation Report is a comprehensive and detailed documentation of each district's progress toward goals and standards. The Montana accreditation process for schools involves metrics such as staffing, student test scores, and implementation of policies, which help determine if schools meet state standards.
- **Athletics – Facilitate Some Aspect of a Home Event (Concessions, Run a Track Meet, Tournament, Hospitality Room, etc.)**
  - Facilitating an aspect of a home athletic event, such as running a track meet or managing concessions, gives you a hands-on role in understanding how school athletic events are organized. It involves coordination, logistics, and public relations to ensure the event runs smoothly.