

Special Education
Administrative Leadership
SEAL Program
At-a-Glance Guide



SEAL Program Components

Across the 23 months of the SEAL Program, scholars simultaneously engage in:

1. Courses
 2. Specialty Sessions
 3. Mentoring Towards Professional Competencies
 4. Internships
 5. Action Research
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Courses

The SEAL program has four semesterly courses, as well as twelve specialty sessions. Each course focuses on a different area critical to special education leadership, and the specialty sessions offer a chance to deeply investigate more complex and/or timely topics. Courses are held on weekday evenings, while the twelve 3-hour specialty sessions are typically held on designated Saturdays and/or during the summer months.

Course 1: Leadership for Today's Students and Schools (Fall, Semester 1)

This course is an introduction to school leadership, focusing on the many requirements, expectations and demands required for a successful school leader. Direct instruction is provided on topics identified as essential for school leadership, including but not limited to: the impact of leadership, leadership styles, situational and balanced leadership, establishment of vision, first and second order change in school reform, comprehensive school reform, building trust within the school community, appraisal systems, building functional school communities, having difficult conversations/productive approaches, confronting conditions that undermine learning, as well as creating and communicating positive school culture and climate.

Course 2: Leadership in Implementation of Policies, Laws and Regulations (Spring, Semester 1)

This course examines the impact of legislation and litigation on the education of special populations. There is an emphasis on ESSA, IDEA and Section 504, as well as Delaware-specific laws and regulations impacting students with exceptionalities, many of whom interface with multiple agencies and jurisdictions. The course covers emerging trends in special education based on interpretations of landmark court cases related to disability, legal updates on policies and procedures for exceptional learners, and discussions of guiding principles in special education law for addressing the needs of special populations.

Course 3: Leadership in Curriculum and Instruction for Inclusive Education (Fall, Semester 2)

This course examines the development and delivery of programming for exceptional learners. With an orientation toward Integrated Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), scholars review the deployment of evidence-based interventions suitable for general education populations and those with particular learning needs and they explore conceptual frameworks for adapting core instruction to diverse learners within inclusive settings. This course addresses assessment principles and methods, the implementation of the alternate assessment, and principles and mechanisms for accommodations and modifications. It also covers principles and strategies related to the workforce, including the design and implementation of professional development, coaching staff to solve problems, facilitating a positive educational climate and data-based decision-making. Special education management issues covered include: service delivery models, as well as vision, planning and goal setting. Financial and human resource allocation and management, IEP design and implementation, and student outcome documentation for the determination of educational benefit are also important topics covered in this course.

Course 4: Leadership for People, Systems and Operations (Spring, Semester 2)

This course examines the competencies necessary to manage special education programming and influence change district-wide for students with exceptionalities. Topics include but not be limited to: financing special education and related services, the role and development of the Consolidated Application, the relationship between the Delaware Department of Education and the LEA, the relationship between LEA Central Office and school buildings, administrative services, policies and protocols interviewing/hiring/supporting staff, the acquisition of specialized services and supports, communication, use of time, and data collection and analysis issues specific to special education. With an orientation toward Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), the course also reviews the Director of Special Education's role in the deployment of evidence-based interventions to build comprehensive systems of needs-based services for the student population.

Specialty Sessions

Critical special education-specific content is provided by program faculty and guest experts from the field in a separate topical module format. A total of 12 speciality sessions will be delivered in Saturday and/or summer "mini-retreat" formats conducive to learning, sharing and reflection throughout the program. Topics have included: A Fireside Chat with Judi Heumann, Disability & Identity in Special Education, Top 10 Legal Issues in Special Education with Perry Zirkel, Assistive Technology, Early Childhood, and The Special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict (SPARC).

Mentoring Toward Professional Competencies

The SEAL Program provides (1) Program Mentoring, (2) LEA-Based Mentoring, and (3) DDOE Mentoring to each scholar. Scholars leverage their mentors and program activities to meet over 60 professional competencies across the following 4 domains:

- Leadership for Purpose and Improvement
- Leadership for Self and Others
- Leadership for Student Success
- Leadership for the Learning Community

Internships

Throughout the program, scholars complete relevant competency-based school internship learning experiences with a minimum 240 hours. These experiences build and reinforce the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be an effective Director of Special Education. Documentation of scholar activities hours are logged and reviewed continuously.

- **Internship 1 (200 hours)**

The leadership and growth activities within Internship 1 are foundational for each scholar and are determined in conjunction with their LEA and Program Mentors. These activities are job-embedded; a minimum of 200 hours across the 23 months is required.

- **Internship 2 & Shadowing (40 hours combined)**

Internship 2: Each SEAL scholar is matched with a Delaware Department of Education mentor. Each DDOE Mentor provides expertise and leadership opportunities to their scholar that connect to the scholar's growth, areas of professional interest, and action research efforts.

Shadowing: During the summer months, each SEAL scholar completes a one-day immersion experience within an LEA different from their own. These hours are included in the 40 hours of Internship 2.

Action Research

Each SEAL scholar develops and implements a comprehensive action research project within their LEA. Action research projects are specifically developed by scholars, with mentor support, to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities. This project spans the 23 months of the program, with a culminating public presentation at the conclusion of the SEAL program.