

# Educational Dilemmas of Justice



Meira Levinson

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## CURRENT RESEARCH

### Combining theory and practice to help support educators and policymakers

Educators and educational policymakers face challenging ethical decisions on a regular basis. For example, consider a student with diagnosed impulse control issues who benefits from being mainstreamed with her peers, but who also frequently disrupts class. Should she have a right to stay in the class? What do her peers deserve? What accommodations should we ethically expect the school to make, and at what cost? Or another example: When drastic budget cuts mandate teacher firings, what selection criteria should guide which teachers are fired, given the lack of valid or reliable measures of teacher quality? Is there an approach that is fair to both students and teachers?

Harvard professor Meira Levinson aims to combine her academic training in political philosophy with her eight years' experience as an urban middle school teacher in Atlanta and Boston to support educators and policymakers who address such dilemmas in their daily work. Dr. Levinson's research helps educators and policymakers ask the right questions about their moral obligations to others, offers shared language to talk about the ethical choices they face, and enables them to make better choices on behalf of our children, schools, and society as a whole.

Dr. Levinson is doing so by developing new political and moral theory to address questions on the ground, and by modifying already-developed concepts so they are responsive to the specific features of educational and policy-driven contexts. "I came into the urban classroom with a doctorate in political theory already, and I still couldn't solve some of the ethical dilemmas I faced as a teacher and on the instructional leadership team," Dr. Levinson explains. "Academic philosophy has...

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## AFFILIATION



Harvard University

## EDUCATION

- D.Phil. in Politics, Nuffield College 1997, Oxford University
- B.A. in Philosophy, cum laude and Distinction in Philosophy 1992, Yale University

## AWARDS

- Guggenheim Fellowship, 2014
- North American Society for Social Philosophy Book Award, 2014
- Michael Harrington Book Award, New Political Science Caucus, American Political Science Association, 2013
- NCSS 2013 Exemplary Research in Social Studies Education Award, National Council for the Social Studies, 2013
- Bunting Fellow, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, 2004

## RESEARCH AREAS

Education, Policy

## FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support Dr. Meira Levinson's research to help educators and policymakers make more just and ethical choices on behalf of our children, schools, and society as a whole. Donations will support the necessary \$465K per year required for research personnel, case study writers and videographers, travel, and materials development and dissemination. In choosing to donate, you will be an important part of improving educational ethics.