

Educational Institutions
Cultural Competency - Religion
Findings

1. Cultural competency is recognized as a critical educational component.

Learning occurs within the context of the values, beliefs, and rituals of the school community and the larger society...

To communicate and do an effective job of teaching, California's educators need to have a cultural understanding of themselves, the students they teach, and the communities that house them.

*California needs to develop a comprehensive, culturally relevant and responsive strategy for educators that will help them to become the kind of educator who can teach any student effectively.**

2. Student, parent, teacher and community “values, beliefs and rituals” include those contained in the religious diversity among the residents of California.
3. Religious cultural competency is not currently included in the cultural competency curriculum or stated requirements for educators in their trainings, credential process or continuing professional development.

The exclusion of religion from cultural competency in the fabric of California's educator training and professional development reflects a historic distinction between religion and all other aspects of our society. The late 20th century acknowledgement that diversity was a core aspect of society in the United States resulted in a conversation on various aspects of a society that is “multi-cultural.” The historic “religion/state” separation precluded the inclusion of religion within this conversation.

The formation “Regional Clergy Engagement” (RCE) and the first “Regional Clergy Network” (RCN), the Peninsula Clergy Network (PCN), provided the only entity in the nation that engaged the professional leadership of the full religion sector within a region. This resulted in an unprecedented level of conversations between clergy and professional leadership of the other sectors. These conversations became the foundation for the formation of an appropriate and efficient context for the inclusion of religion in the “multi-cultural” conversation.

Ongoing regional clergy and civic leaders Dialogues and the clergy and superintendent of schools Discussions by school district, resulted in the initial findings of the exclusion of religious cultural competency, the specific impact in classrooms, schools and districts, and the appropriate responses. A Multi-Faith Awareness curriculum, designed and taught by Rabbi Miller provided educators with the core religious cultural competency and the capacity to formulate sound policy and practice related to the religious dynamic within educational institutions.

Rabbi Miller is acknowledged nationally and internationally as the primary specialists in the area of religious context in public institutions. He co-authored “A Local Officials Guide to Working with Clergy and Congregations,” with the publisher California institute for Local Government.

Multi-Faith Awareness training and consultation on religion cultural competency has been provided for institutions within the government, education, social service, business and religion sectors.

These assist institutions in framing their internal discussion to examine current practices in any way related to religion. This includes how religion relates to personnel practices, client services and the formation of religion sector community partnerships.**

*Recommendation 4 - Provide Culturally Relevant Professional Development for All School Personnel
Closing the Achievement Gap - California P-16 Council

** Recommendation 3 - Partnership to Close the Achievement Gap - Includes religion sector among those community entities as critical partners. “A Local Officials Guide to Working with Clergy and Congregations” is the designed best practices for these partnerships, specifically the vast, neighborhood based resources of the congregations.

Rabbi Jay Miller RELIGION SECTOR

1.0 On the Town Square 2.0 Walls of Separation
3.0 Alignment: Among Congregations - Within Society

jaymiller@blueconnect.org 650.740.4411