



Islamic Speakers Bureau Education Administrator Tips

School Practices for Supporting Faculty and Students in Reducing Potential Discrimination or Harassment Towards Middle Eastern or Muslim Students

Providing Support to Teachers and Staff

1. Consider weekly or monthly discussions among staff about classroom discussions relating to current events and any problems or incidents, which have or might take place.
2. Offer counseling to any teacher or school employee who feels prejudice or fearful towards students (or their families) of Middle Eastern or Muslim background. Encourage teachers and other staff to acknowledge those feelings and to address them for the safety of the entire school body.
3. Provide diversity seminars for teachers, secretaries and other staff, specifically on Middle Eastern and Muslim culture, religion, practices and cultural norms. ING offers a professional development workshop titled, *"Supplementing Cultural Studies Relating to the Muslim World and Interacting with Muslim Students in Grades K-12."* To learn more about this workshop, visit the ING website at <http://www.ing.org/speakers/subpage.asp?num=16&pagenum=1>. To schedule a professional development course at your school or district, simply complete the online form at www.ing.org/speakers/request.asp or email ING at scheduler@ing.org.

Suggested Policies and Practices for District and School Employees

1. Institute or clarify existing policy of zero tolerance towards teasing, harassment, threats, and other hateful behavior, regardless of the identity of the perpetrator or victim, with clearly enunciated consequences. Such policies should be made public, in writing, in the classroom, as well as over the PA system.
2. Establish or enforce the filing of an incident report for each incident that occurs, with clear consequences to follow.
3. Provide written information to staff on professional behavior in problem solving and conflict resolution between students. Provide written information on your district or school system's rules on equity and compliance with local, county, state, and federal laws against discrimination and harassment.
4. Hold workshops on conflict resolution in peaceful ways. Peer counselors may be used and student government discussion and decisions can help give students a sense of ownership of solutions.
5. Arrange a system-wide training for all counselors on what to expect and how to respond to potential conflict or violence in response to current events.
6. Review with teachers and staff the district or school action plan for preventing and responding to school violence. Revisit the plan's goals, processes and procedures to handle possible disruptions, confusions, or attacks on students or staff. All employees at every level should have the names, titles, phone numbers, faxes, email addresses, and locations of designated school officials who handle various types of issues. In the case of an emergency, clear plans should exist for specific responses, identifying who does what, where emergency numbers are posted, and the location of designated assembly areas.
7. Review with teachers and school staff First Amendment rights and how they pertain to education. For example,

- Students cannot be prohibited from exercising their religious practices, which must be reasonably accommodated;
- Students cannot be prevented from speaking about their religion to others or even distributing religious or political material UNLESS the school has a policy that prevents distribution of all material by students.
- School staff cannot appear to be promoting or denigrating any religion or group of people.
- Teachers should allow for questions and differences of opinion in the classroom, which must be grounded in civil discourse and mutual respect.
- Teachers should never encourage the environment and learning process for students to come to their own conclusions about current events. Inviting guest speakers to the classroom might be a good way to address specific perspectives.

For more information about the First Amendment Center guidelines and teaching about religion in public schools, visit the First Amendment Center website.

<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel%5Fliberty/publicschools/>

Providing Support to Students

In student assemblies and over PA systems

1. Be supportive in words and deeds of a collective, inclusive, positive learning environment in the school and school district.
2. Provide public and repeated vocal support and respect for all members of the school community.
3. Discourage any teasing, harassment, mistreatment, and vigilantism directed towards students, faculty and/or staff.
4. Consistently encourage the importance of kindness, understanding, and school cohesion of all students, teachers, and staff regardless of ethnic or religious background.

In classrooms

1. Encourage public discussion about religious and ethnic beliefs and practices and how they differ from those who misuse them or use them to support terrorist activity.
2. Consider scheduling an on-site presentation through the Islamic Speakers Bureau by completing the online form at www.ing.org/speakers/request.asp or emailing ING at scheduler@ing.org.
3. Refer to the Islamic Speakers Bureau Tips for Teachers, which you can access from the ING website at http://www.ing.org/prevent_hate.

The Islamic Speakers Bureau is a program of ING, a nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1993 that promotes interreligious understanding, tolerance and harmony by increasing religious literacy. Through the Islamic Speakers Bureau program, more than 700 educational presentations about Islam and Muslims are delivered annually to schools, universities, law enforcement agencies, healthcare facilities, corporations and other institutions.

To schedule an educational presentation for your students, simply complete the online form at www.ing.org/speakers/request.asp or email ING at scheduler@ing.org. Please allow up to two weeks to schedule a presentation.