

Korea International School, Jeju Campus

Responsible Leaders for Positive Change

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It is with pleasure I write this letter recommending my colleague and friend Nick Harris. I have had the pleasure of working with Nick for the last four years at Korea International School, Jeju.

I realize this letter is for Nick however I think it would be helpful if I shared a little of my background to better bring context to the recommendation. My name is Jeff Cordeiro. I have now been teaching for almost 30 years. My experiences range from over a decade in the inner city in the United States to postings in three different countries at three different international schools. I have served as a department chair, curriculum coordinator, assistant principal and athletic director.

I first got to know Nick as a colleague as we both taught in the social studies department at KISJ. (Nick actually operates between two different departments but he is based in the social studies department.) This may sound trivial but the first thing I learned about Nick was not through Nick but through his classroom. As is the ritual with new teachers at an international school the “newbies” generally come to the school the week ahead of the returning teachers. The school secretary gave me the keys to my new room and I went inside and realized she had made a mistake. I knew it was a mistake because the room was obviously set up by a teacher who was not leaving. I didn’t know who the teacher was but I marveled at the set up of the room. There were dozens, perhaps a hundred pictures adorning the walls of students doing all kinds of activities. There were word walls, inspirational posters, props, etc... It was obvious that whoever owned this room had taken the time and trouble to make it as student centered and inviting to students as humanly possible.

I then met Nick and the other returning teachers. As anyone who has taught at a new school can attest to the learning curve can be quite steep. Nick was always there to help me. Be it troubleshooting the copier, helping with the schools numerous technology platforms, or simply just a, “hey Jeff, how is it going, do you need any help,” comment at my door. The point being, in the international community collegial colleagues is a really big deal. And Nick has that in spades. (I must say his wife Sam is exactly the same way.)

Another aspect of Nick’s abilities that is worth enumerating is the rapport he builds with the students. I alluded to it in his room set up but it goes further than that. Nick is omnipresent on campus. Yes, he builds relationships with the kids through sports and teaching but he also makes a point to attend concerts, plays, and any other activities that helps make him relevant to the students. He also runs a



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highly successful Model UN club. Those of us in education realize what a big deal making connections with kids is and Nick is great at it.

When I became department chair last year I gained a new perspective into Nick's professionalism. Nick came to every meeting on time and prepared to contribute. (I do realize he is a leader at school himself with his 10th grade team lead responsibilities). What I can tell you is that many times Nick made me look good by his professional attitude and contributions to the department.

One other aspect of Nick that I admired and wished I possessed was his knowledge of "new technology" and its uses. I wish I could speak to it in a learned way but alas, that is not possible. What I can say is that Nick can and does make use of all the latest technologies. Between him and his wife Sam, I am constantly in their room asking about Zoom, or how to record a Youtube video, or how to use Edpuzzle, or whatever other new technologies there are.

In the end what are we really looking for in a teacher at an international community. Someone who builds relationships and gets along with all stakeholders? Check. Someone who acts professionally at all times. Check. Someone who works hard to become a content area and pedagogical expert. Check. Someone who can utilize the latest technology. Check. Someone who makes the people they report to look better. Check. Someone who will be stable and make a longer term commitment to the community they serve. Check.

I cannot recommend Nick highly enough. I would be available to answer any questions or follow ups you may have. My personal email is gizmosgolf@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

Jeff Cordeiro