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**Sent:** Wednesday, February 19, 2020 1:44 PM  
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**Cc:** Pierandozzi, Kathrine <Kathrine.Pierandozzi@indianriverschools.org>; Lord, Colleen <Colleen.Lord@indianriverschools.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Thank you & cultural competence follow-up

Hello,

Thank you for the trainings and giving your time and effort. Yesterday's presentation was helpful, and I agree that there is much more that can be done as we move forwards. The TEDX is very good, and the competencies are a good outline of goals we should set as a school in our district. I have the glossary of key terms copies made for today's session at the main campus.

Thank you!

*Shawn D. O'Keefe*

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**Subject:** Thank you & cultural competence follow-up

Good morning, Mr. O'Keefe, Ms. Bethel, & Mr. Riskin.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to interact with your FLC faculty yesterday! You have an incredible team – they were engaged, responsive, and many had clearly already started to do their own work to build culturally responsive classroom environments. Just as we discussed – modeling is critical, so congrats to you all on the work you are doing with your team! I look forward to working with your main campus faculty today.

I attached the NEA Cultural Competence brief I referenced. I also think this this is an excellent TED talk for your leadership team to review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bX9vgD7iTqw> (it is a great one to use when challenging teachers to start to think outside the box regarding their instructional practices). Let me know if you would like to review it and then come together to process it as a team. I **will outline what future PD sessions/work groups with your team could look like and submit it to you for feedback by the start of next week.** Thank you for the invitation to help create an ongoing training model. I am excited to pilot this work with you at VBHS.

I feel very confident that you will see positive shifts in the metrics we use to measure success (grades, test scores, attendance, discipline, SEL perceptions) the more you do this work with your team. I also think it is critical that faculty are able to see the overlap and connection between culturally responsive/relevant pedagogy, social emotional learning, and other work that we have initiated in the district over the past several years (e.g., PBIS, restorative practices, etc.). This is really about practice and integration is key – it is not all or nothing, and our goal will be helping faculty to see the gestalt so they may actualize the work in their own teaching practices. *SEL Every Day* is another excellent resource I suggest for every secondary educator and administrator; it is a quick read and is selling for ~\$12 on Amazon: <https://www.seleveryday.com/> The author does a beautiful job of helping the reader to see the explicit connections among SEL, cultural competence, equity, restorative practices, AND academic standards! This would be a really easy book to read as a group and process.

I could overwhelm you with resources right now, but I think it is best for you to see the suggested flow first. I taught in higher ed for many years, and I incorporated culturally responsive practices in my own work and integrated activities designed to promote cultural competence in nearly all of my classes. People really do have to be prepared to have hard conversations that require them to examine their own biases and change their behavior. I found that the most effective way of helping people engage in truly transformational work is to arm them sufficiently with the tools they need to do the work successfully (e.g., a shared vocabulary, content to review and time to truly consider their own thoughts and beliefs, information about what the data show, a judgement free environment, and an understanding that discomfort is a requirement for change). It is unrealistic to expect that everyone will change after a single PD – these conversations must be ongoing and part of the overall school culture.

Thanks again!

All the best,  
SP

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