IFT Board Welcomes Two New Members as Association Leaders and Staff Prepare for a Challenging 2011-2012 School Year

Members of the CTA Institute for Teaching Board of Directors welcomed Mikki Cichocki and Toby Boyd to the IFT Board in June at the final meeting of the 2010-11 school year. Those two joined outgoing IFT Board members, David Sanchez and Gail Mendes, to discuss the work of the Institute and to approve IFT’s annual budget for the 2011-12 school year.

As part of the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning, IFT is a separate 501(c)3 non-profit foundation with its own Board of Directors. The ten-member IFT Board meets every other month during the school year in Burlingame and directs the activities of the Institute for Teaching in consultation with IFT staff, Dick Gale (San Diego), IFT Manager/Program Director and Anita Benitas, (Natomas), IFT Program Consultant.

In addition, Wei Pan, CTA’s Accounting Manager and Justo Robles, Manager of the CTA IPD Department work closely with the IFT Board in support of its programs and activities. NODD staffer Angela Boyle attends all Board meetings as the liaison for CSO, the union for CTA’s field and departmental staff. IFT also works directly with chapter support staff in the field.

Because IFT’s programs are statewide in scope, the small active staff is supplemented by the hard work from a number of CTA emeritus staff including: Marlene Bell, Director of the IFT/UC Davis Algebra Success Academy (ASA); Tom Madden, organizer for the ASA; Kelly Horner, Liaison to the IFT Grant Selection and Visitation Committees; and Yale Wishnick, IFT webmaster and strength-based guru. Both Horner and Wishnick are former Managers of the IFT.

Detailed descriptions of IFT’s Grant Program, Algebra Success Academy, Positive Deviance program, as well as STEM, Early Childhood; Teacher Home Visit and School Garden activities can be found on the Institute for Teaching website: www.teacherdrivenchange.org.
A Smashing Success . . .

IFT is proud to collaborate with the San Francisco-based Level Playing Field Institute. The LPFI is dedicated to increasing fairness in education and the workplace by closing the opportunity gap and removing barriers to success.

One of their most highly-regarded programs is the SMASH summer scholars program that gives motivated high school students a leg up on college and STEM-related careers.

Each year LPFI selects high-potential, low-income high school students of color to participate in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) focused SMASH Academy free of charge.

The goals of SMASH are:

• To prepare students from underrepresented communities to be competitive in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) related studies at competitive universities.
• To educate students about graduate school opportunities and encourage them to eventually attend in order to further pursue professional, STEM-related studies or careers.
• To encourage a sense of social responsibility through promotion of critical thinking, civic awareness and leadership.

SMASH scholars spend five weeks each summer at a SMASH site on a college campus (currently at UC Berkeley or Stanford) immersed in rigorous STEM classes. SMASH scholars also receive year-round academic support including SAT prep, college counseling, financial aid workshops and other activities to ensure continued academic success. Applications are due on March 1, 2012. For more information, go to http://www.lpfi.org/smash.

In addition, each Spring, Level Playing Field Institute hires top-notch math, science, and technical writing instructors for SMASH Academy at college campuses over the summer. Interested teachers should visit the LPFI website for additional information and applications- http://www.lpfi.org/join-our-team.

UC Berkeley is the original home of the Level Playing Field Institute’s SMASH program. IFT visited the program in July to observe teachers and students engaged in a variety of challenging classes. At left, Desiree Seales, a 2009 SMASH graduate who attends UCLA, returns to encourage current students in the program. Above, IFT Consultant Anita Benitas listens as Robert Schwartz, LPFI Executive Director, explains the current SMASH expansion plans to campuses in Southern California and on the East Coast in the summer of 2012.