



CTA Institute for Teaching

CTA Board Report:
July 2011

IFT Selects Five Local Affiliated Chapters and Six CTA Members for 2011-12 Strength-Based Grant Awards

Members of the IFT Grant Selection Committee met in late May to select recipients for this year's IFT Grant program. The awards, which range from \$4,500 to \$20,000, are for the 2011-2012 school year. Committee members include Liane Cismowski, Vice-Principal/Teacher at Mt. Diablo's Olympic H.S.; David Orphal, Social Studies teacher at Skyline H.S. in Oakland; Barry Wissman, 2nd-grade teacher at Corsini Elementary School in Palm Springs & Kiran Kumar, former English teacher at Lorbeer Middle School in Pomona. They were assisted by IFT emeritus staff, Kelly Horner and Yale Wishnick. Their decisions were difficult because IFT received a total of 31 grant applications, with requests totaling over \$350,000, nearly double the budgeted grant amount. The eleven winning proposals, which were evaluated using a strength-based rubric, are listed below. Please go to the IFT website- www.teacherdrivenchange.org- for more grant information.

Merced Union High School District Teachers Assn.- Hip-Hop Academy at Atwater H.S., **Chapter Grant- \$20,000**

This project is an innovative approach to meet the various diverse needs of Atwater High School students by focusing on their interests and strengths. The learning will be multi-faceted and peer-based because the Hip-Hop Academy is student-driven. It will be offered as an elective class/activity that focuses on four areas (art, dancing, writing, and deejaying) and is intended to help English Language Learners, as well as other students to feel connected to the school and to the larger community. In addition to employing staff for instruction and supervision, community members and parent volunteers are encouraged to participate.

Oceanside Teachers Association- TEAM- Teachers Enhancing Accomplished Methods, **Chapter Grant- \$6,000**

This project is designed by local Association leaders to build a strong network of teachers who will consistently share their expertise with others, thus expanding the impact of each teacher's pedagogical excellence in classrooms across the Oceanside USD. Teachers who engage in this kind of collaborative appreciative inquiry will impact student achievement in many positive ways and will create teacher-driven change which will be sustainable in a way that traditional "fix-it" school reform efforts cannot. TEAM will hold community events to provide families with tools to support the strength-based approach to learning that their children are utilizing in the classroom.

Potter Valley Teachers Association- MultiCultural Club at Potter Valley H.S., **Chapter Grant- \$5,690**

This project, a joint venture of both the certificated and ESP chapters of the rural Potter Valley Community USD, is designed to sustain and expand the MultiCultural Club for local high school students. The Club increases student appreciation for other cultures through field trips, school assemblies, guest speakers, research, videos and community-based events. The Club helps to retain students who may otherwise feel disenfranchised and supports their individual and collective educational needs. Co-planning club activities enhances students' opportunities to learn cooperative sharing and to become more involved in both school activities and the larger community.

San Bernardino Teachers Assn.- National Board Certification Candidate Support Program, **Chapter Grant- \$6,600**

This project is an outgrowth of the activities of the SBTA Instructional and Professional Development Committee and is designed to provide opportunities for local educators to go through the National Board Certification process and to receive regular support from the Association using local NBCTs. Because research is consistently positive about the impact of the NBCT process on teacher practice, professional development and areas of school improvement that are critical to raising student achievement, SBTA will actively work to increase the number of NBCTs at high-needs schools and to create a stronger network for collaboration and resource-sharing among San Bernardino City USD teachers.

Teachers Association of Norwalk-La Mirada- Green Jobs Prep School at La Mirada H.S., Chapter Grant- \$10,000

This strength-based project works to create an affirmative career technical education/career pathway utilizing a “school within a school” program. The program prepares at-risk high school students in grades 9 to 11 to join post-secondary programs in environmental majors, which lead to an industry-recognized certificate, licensure, associate or baccalaureate degree and ultimately succeed in the “green economy.” The grant recognizes the engagement and enthusiasm of students and teachers in 2010-11 and builds on the program’s accomplishments, which were funded, in part, by a previous IFT Chapter Grant.

Chip Fraser, Ventura EA- It’s My Life, Educator Grant- \$5,000

This is a student-centered project that is both content and process. It is designed to educate, encourage and empower students about what the adult world offers (and demands), and how to be motivated, aware and equipped to meet those challenges confidently. *It’s My Life* focuses on improving those skills that have been shown to be keys to postsecondary success: goal setting, problem solving, character development and confidence building. The curriculum, which will be introduced to teachers at Pacific High School, will assist each student in recognizing their own potential, interests and passions through positive participation in teacher-directed activities.

Nancy Hillard, Gonzales TA- WhyTry Program, Educator Grant- \$4,500

This project centers around *WhyTry*, a social skills program that uses a multisensory approach to teach critical social and emotional principles that help students learn to persevere despite setbacks. The proposal is focused on in-coming 9th-graders at Gonzales High and provides training to their teachers. *WhyTry* will be presented to all freshmen students during their once-a-week homeroom period in an effort to instill a greater connection to school and a sense of supported academic success. The program also fosters parent and community connections to ensure a strong support network.

Elizabeth Hinnart, Gonzales TA- Eighth-Grade Academic Decathlon, Educator Grant- \$5,000

This school project would support Fairview Middle School’s challenging Academic Decathlon program. The grant will enable the previous program, which was centered around spring standardized tests, to be expanded to the whole school year. Because the decathlon is focused in four subject areas, and students take standardized tests in these same subjects, it is hoped that the program will result in higher test scores overall. Funds will provide student incentives, as well as after-school tutorials with subject-area teachers.

Jack Riviere, United Teachers of Santa Clara, Digital Skills for a Digital Age, Educator Grant- \$5,000

This project will enable the staff at Cabrillo Middle School to have complete access to the most useful and creative Adobe software tools and to enable students to use these tools for projects in a variety of classes. Teaching students to use this software not only makes their learning experience intrinsically motivating, it also supplies them with useful digital skills for their future. Sixth-graders will be taught through tutorials linked to the school’s website, while seven-graders will be able to enroll in a semester-long Tech Literacy class. Eighth grade students will be able to use these tools to produce the school newspaper, literary magazine and yearbook.

Mariana Robles, Riverside City TA- ArtTech, Educator Grant- \$4,925

This project is intended to develop an Arts and Technology (ArtTech) strand at Hawthorne Elementary School. The new strand will include at least one classroom in each grade K through 6, as well as four K-6 special education classes. Thirteen teachers are committed to participate next year and will devote one lesson per week to cover the California Standards for the Arts. This work will give 350 students the opportunity to experience art integrated into other curricular areas and to benefit from increased and improved use of the educational technology available at the school. Previous local and federal grants have supported arts education at the school and there is a strong parent and community component built into the program.

Robert Sautter, United Educators of San Francisco- Triumphs in the Classroom, Educator Grant- \$4,965

This project supports the work of the Equity-Centered Professional Learning Community at Flynn Elementary School. The ECPLC uses strength-based techniques in their attempt to create a space where teachers support one another. By uncovering, discussing, analyzing and reflecting on the techniques, practices and strategies that they know work in reaching students of color, they will be able to raise the academic achievement of all students. The intended outcome of the work of the ECPLC is to reform the school from within.



Important IFT Budget Information

On June 16, 2011, the IFT Board of Directors approved the 2011-2012 CTA Institute for Teaching budget in the amount of \$1,696,650. The annual budget includes funding from the CTA Foundation of \$1,500,000.