IFT Grant Committee Tackles Difficult Job of Assessing more than Four Dozen Grant Applications for 2012-13

Members of the IFT Grant Selection Committee met in Oakland on May 18 & 19, 2012 to review a record 53 grant applications from CTA members and affiliated chapters. The results of their work will be shared with the IFT Board in mid-June and all applicants will be notified of the status of their proposals soon thereafter. Committee members include (clockwise from left front), David Orphal (Skyline High School, Social Studies- Oakland), Liane Cismowski (Mt. Diablo High School, English & Vice Principal- Mt. Diablo), Kelly Horner (IFT Staff), Barry Wissman (Corsini Elementary, 2nd Grade- Palm Springs) and Cynthia Soares (K-8 Counselor- Gridley).

The CTA Institute for Teaching has offered $5,000 to $20,000 annual grants for educators to pursue strength-based approaches to school improvement since 2010. Designed to support the belief that the most effective reform proceeds from the classroom up, the IFT Grant program has selected nearly two dozen grant recipients in its first two years. Fourteen individual grants have been awarded to individuals and teams of educators and nine local chapter affiliates have been selected for chapter grants.

IFT encourages applicants to ask themselves these questions:
Am I an active, dues-paying member of CTA? Do I have a reasonable expectation of being in a position to manage a project during the next school year? Do I have information and/or evidence that indicates the project I am considering will improve student achievement? Does my project idea address the needs of diverse or students at risk? Am I willing to share my learnings from this project with other educators? Do I have partners with whom I can plan and implement this project?

The IFT believes proposals that have many stakeholders involved are more likely to succeed. For more information, go to www.teacherdrivencchange.org.

Although this list is NOT a summary of the winning grant proposals, it does reflect the eclectic nature of the grant projects received by IFT.

- Performing Arts Academy
- Student as Mentors
- Get with the Program
- Literacy for All
- Parents as Partners
- Wildlife & Conservation
- Science Education
- On-line Teacher Professional Development
- School/Community Gardens
- Mobile Metal Shop
- Dual Immersion/Global Studies
- Literacy through the Arts
- Voices- Oral History Project
- Empowering Young Women
- Student Inventions
- Running for their Lives
- Culinary Arts Academy
- Intro. to Physics and Engineering using LEGO
- ARTECH
- E-Portfolio
- Zero Emissions Go-Karts
- Institutionalizing Equity
- Learn by Doing Science Labs
Several classes of 5th and 6th-grade Algebra Success Academy students in the Twin Rivers Unified School District near Sacramento will soon be joined by a small group of 3rd through 7th-grade students from four nearby school districts—Elk Grove, Eureka, Paradise and Riverdale, as part of the planned expansion of the ASA program during the next school year.

ASA will host a total of 18 teaching fellows as part of its ASA Math Academy. All of the teachers who volunteered to participate will gather at the CTA Natomas Office in mid-June for eight days of training and professional development. The ASA Fellows will receive a stipend, as well as university academic credit, for their participation in summer training.

**Children Now, the California Endowment and UC San Francisco Partner with IFT in Grant Proposal to Rethink School Discipline Policies**

The aim of the grant proposal is to re-examine school disciplinary policies that result in the criminalization of youth and suspensions and expulsions from school, especially for boys and young men of color. The grant proposes to engage California’s Education Coalition stakeholders in discussions of: (1) “push-out” disciplinary policies; (2) the ramifications of these policies; and (3) evidence-based alternatives.

Through convenings, trainings, and follow-up discussions, the grantees hope to build support among Education Coalition members and their organizations to advocate for evidence-based policies such as Restorative Justice and Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports.

The grant partners include: The CTA Institute for Teaching; the Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies at the University of California, San Francisco; Children Now, an advocacy organization dedicated to promoting children’s health and education in California; and The California Endowment (TCE).

The Presidents of TCE and CTA recently released a joint policy statement endorsing the multiple ways both organizations promote school policies supporting educated, healthy youth. They wrote, “Discussions need to focus on conflict resolution, prevention strategies and creating a school culture that reduces the ‘school push out’ of boys of color due to disciplinary actions. We encourage school districts to consider school discipline strategies aimed at reducing misconduct by teaching positive behavior and accountability from a young age.”

UCSF will monitor, document, and evaluate the process and the outcomes achieved, including the impact on policy changes within the three year timeline. The UCSF team has over 20 years of experience evaluating educational and health policy outcomes affecting youth.