IFT Grants Enable Educators to Build on Students’ Strengths
Thirty-Three Grants were Awarded Statewide for the Current School Year

For the third consecutive year, the CTA Institute for Teaching has been fortunate to be able to award CTA members $5,000-$20,000 grant awards to promote strength-based teacher driven change. Nearly three dozen grants were distributed for the 2012-13 school year, using program funds provided by CTA members utilizing a portion of their $20 voluntary dues contribution to the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning. Because IFT believes that teachers know best how to improve education, these funded projects come directly from the imaginations of California educators. The wide variety of projects range from Green Jobs to Science Labs; from School Gardens to Culinary Arts; from Performing Arts to Parent Leadership; from Student Inventions to E-Portfolios and much more.

(Above) Busy hands swipe at iPad screens in Vicki Fishman’s RSP class at Holmes Elementary School in San Diego. (Right) Fishman, a member of the San Diego EA, observes as two of her third-grade students use their iPads to enhance their reading and comprehension skills. (Below) Two sixth-graders from Jack Riviere’s class at Cabrillo Middle School work together on a joint project. Their collaboration was made possible by an IFT Chapter grant to United Teachers of Santa Clara to fund iPads for students in one classroom. Their teacher understands and believes in the power of technology to enhance educational outcomes for middle school students.

Beginning in 2010, CTA members and chapters with strength-based ideas about improving student achievement have received funding to turn those ideas into reality. Designed to support the belief that the most effective transformations proceed from the classroom up, the IFT Grant program has awarded over 50 Educator and Chapter grants in its first three years. Over $500,000 has been distributed to individual educators, as well as small groups of teachers who share a common vision for school improvement. Several of the grant projects have been sustained by the school district when the grant funding ended because administrators and school board members saw value in the approach. For a year-by-year summary of IFT Grants awarded, please go to: www.teacherdrivenchange.org/past-grant-recipients.
2013-2014 IFT GRANT APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE NOW ONLINE

The 2013-2014 Grant Program is open and IFT eagerly awaits applications from CTA members and chapters for projects and programs that demonstrate the efficacy of the strength-based, teacher driven approach to school change.

Individual grants up to $5,000 and Chapter grants up to $20,000 are available for the next school year. Applications and information are available on-line at the IFT website www.teacherdrivenchange.org. The deadline to submit a grant application is April 30, 2013.

Applications will be reviewed in May by the IFT Grant Selection Committee, composed of teachers from around the state. Awards will be announced in June. During the school year, members of the Grant Selection Committee will join IFT staff to visit each project location and to meet with team members to discover their learnings.

Grant proposals are judged based on a strength-based matrix (below) that includes seven factors. A Strength-Based Primer and Frequently-Asked Grant Questions can be found on the IFT website. Project grants are awarded directly to CTA members, although the funds are administered by their local Associations in order to avoid any tax liability to the grant recipients.

### IFT Grant Program: Strength-Based Matrix

1. **Student Centered**
   - Emphasis is placed on learning over teaching.

2. **Work Oriented**
   - Work is valued, purposeful, and relevant to students.

3. **Student Relations**
   - Students view other students as supportive and interested in their well-being.

4. **Results Oriented**
   - Students understand strength-based thinking increases capacity and resilience to achieve goals.

5. **School-Wide Relations**
   - All school stakeholders are responsible for the education of each student.

6. **School-Family Relations**
   - Parents as a strong partner in the teaching and learning process are encouraged to be involved in their child’s education.

7. **Future Oriented**
   - Students have a dramatic, positive image of the future.

Creating a School Community Culture of Success Through a Teacher Driven Strength-Based Framework