



CTA Institute for Teaching

CTA Board Report:
March 2014

Here's a Twist: Imagine a Campus Where Educators Encourage Their Middle School Students to "Play Games"

"We had an interest and someone heard us. The someone who heard us was the IFT." In many ways, this comment, by Kittisha Croney, a 6th-grade teacher from Bakersfield, sums up one of the true values of the IFT Grant Program. Grants provide resources that allow CTA members to follow their passion.

"I was looking for ways to reach out to parents and build connections with the local school community." She felt that her 2013-14 community engagement proposal, "Shark Pride," matched up nicely with IFT's strength-based matrix (see the matrix on page 2).

According to Croney, "the goal of our project was to provide an opportunity for our students and their families to participate in three family-oriented events during the next school year. Since our school is located in an economically challenged area in northeastern Bakersfield, many parents do not have the means to attend school events. Parent involvement is crucial to the success of student development. "



Hattie Ricks, Grant recipient Kittisha Croney, Betty Taylor, Amanda Gonzales and Christina Salazar pose in the Stiern MS gymnasium on February 13, 2014. Their Family Game Night was fun for all. They had about 200 students and family members in attendance and, in partnership with their local Target store, gave away more than six dozen games.

Green Jobs Academy Rolls On

Solar Academy students at La Mirada H.S. are joined by CTA President Dean Vogel during a January visit to the L.A. County campus. Teacher Norma Williamson, and the TA of Norwalk-La Mirada, are the only 4-time recipients of an IFT grant. Since 2010, more than \$60,000 in grant funds has been used to support this innovative program.



Because the grant money funds transportation and other amenities for students and parents, Croney believes that such events will help strengthen their Professional Learning Communities by building positive parent, teacher and student relationships.

In addition to the February's Family Game Night, the school staff has organized a Family Movie Night and a Concert on the Quad this spring.

Stiern MS serves over 1,400 students in grades six through eight. Over 93% of the students are classified as economically disadvantaged and nearly 42% are English Language Learners. School administrators see this teacher-driven project as complementary to the school's on-going efforts to promote parental involvement.

The school employs eight bilingual support staff members to assist with translation services. Parenting classes are offered in conjunction with the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), which began working in Bakersfield in 2006.

2014-2015 **IFT GRANT** APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE NOW ONLINE

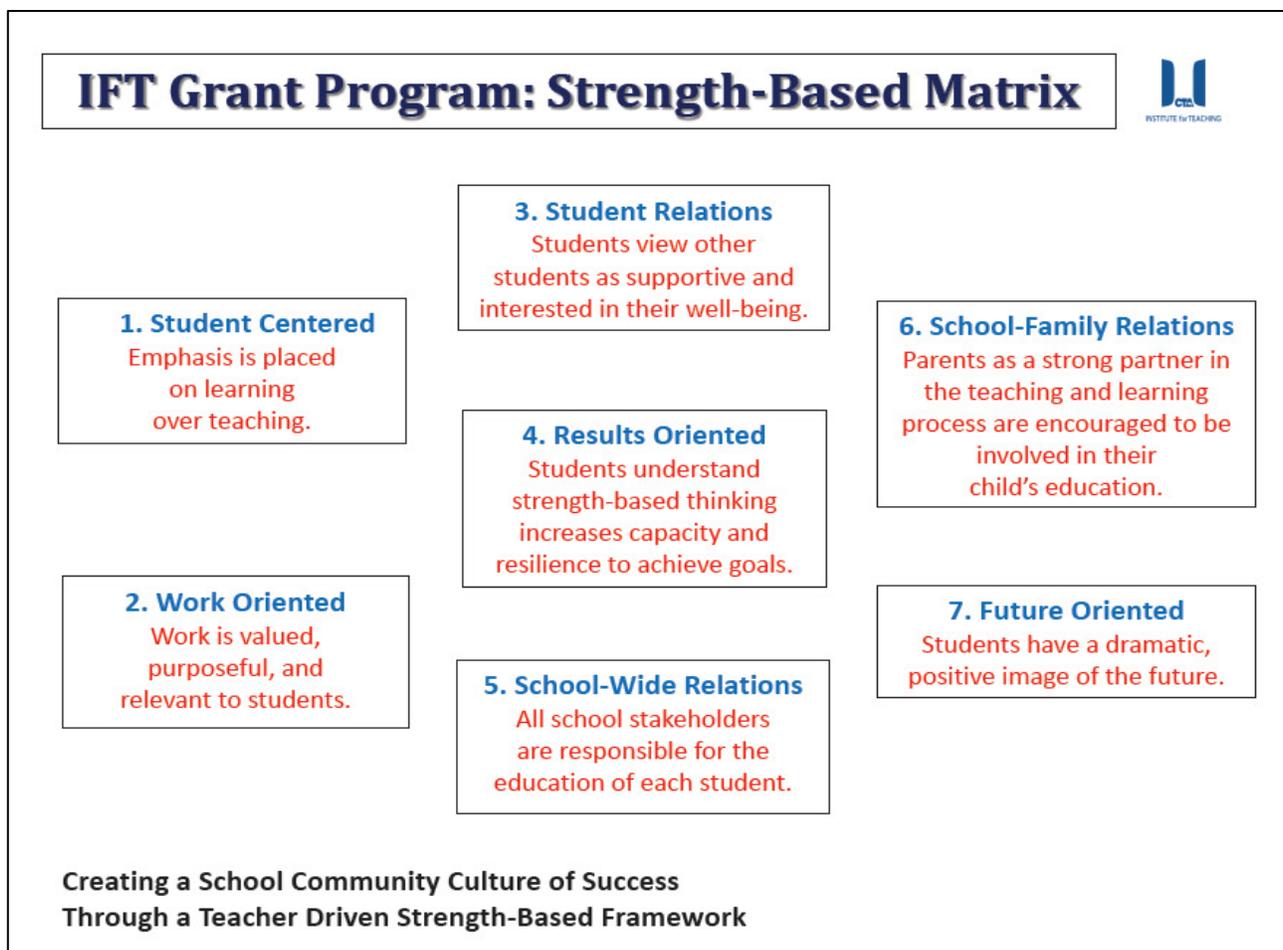
CTA members and chapters that want to support their strength-based approaches to school change are encouraged to apply for an IFT Grant for next year. This could be the individual practitioner who wants to try something new in their classroom or a team of teachers who share a common dream to advance their school's success.

Individual grants up to \$5,000 and Chapter grants up to \$20,000 are available for the 2014-15 school year. Grant information and a link to the on-line application can be found at IFT's website- www.teacherdrivenchange.org.

The deadline to submit a grant application is April 30, 2014.

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 and the regional Teacher Think Tanks 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. 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. . For a year-by-year summary of IFT Grants awarded, please go to: www.teacherdrivenchange.org/past-grant-recipients



Campus Visits to IFT Grant Recipients – Continue in March & April in 27 CA Locations
Workshop at CTA Good Teaching Conference- South- March 15, 2014- Anaheim
Regional Teacher Think Tank Facilitators Meeting- March 20, 2014- Oakland