Moreno Valley Math League Grant Gives Middle School Students a Chance to Compute and Compete with Fellow Math Scholars

One teacher’s vision has helped create a new reality for mathematics students in six middle schools in the Moreno Valley Unified School District in Riverside County.

MVEA/CTA member Deepika Srivastava wanted to create a Math Program that promoted collaboration, critical thinking, logical reasoning and problem solving. With the aid of technology, she also hoped to capture the creativity of her students.

In 2013, she and her math teachers received a $20,000 IFT Grant to help turn that vision into a reality. Their successes were recently showcased at September’s CDE STEM Symposium in San Diego.

IFT joined more than three thousand students, educators and industry experts who participated in the conference to promote STEM education, share success stories and generate more diversity in enrollment in STEM courses.

The MVEA teacher group, which was composed of two math coaches at each of the six middle schools, applied for and received a second-year grant in 2014 to continue to expand this work. IFT Grants are funded by the voluntary dues contributions of CTA members statewide who support the work of the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning.

The Moreno Valley Math League (MVML) grant project provides an opportunity for each of MVUSD’s 8,000 middle school students to be part of the first level of competition. The next level involves 20 teams of three participants (one each from 6th, 7th and 8th grade) who compete for one of top three positions at each school.

Finally, three teams from each middle school qualify to participate in the MVML finals, held before parents and school community members in late May.
Algebra Success Academy Begins Fifth Year Creating School and Community Connections around Mathematics Instruction

During the 2013-14 school year, the Institute for Teaching managed a second-year grant of $375,000 from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation in support of our Algebra Success Academy. The ASA project included 98 teachers from 13 school districts. IFT also worked to align ASA program goals with LCAP requirements in order to build financial support from these participating districts.

For the 2014-15 school year, the program grew to include 103 teachers. Statewide, districts with ten or more ASA Fellows include Amador County, Calaveras, Chula Vista, Riverdale and Vallejo.

The current ASA Leadership Team includes Wendy Gallimore, Lead Teacher, and Kat Kennedy, Donna Dreith and C. Scott Miller, District Mentors. They provide teacher training and assist with program implementation in the classrooms and school-wide.

These Sacramento-area photos show Family Math Night kickoff activities in several ASA participating districts. Founded with the belief that students will progress in mathematics when parents have a stake in their children’s math instruction, ASA Fellows actively work to create a school community where mathematics is hands-on and fun.

Appreciative Inquiry Helping to Bring CTA Strategic Plan to Life

Former IFT Manager Dr. Yale Wishnick has been working closely with CTA leaders to assist in an urgent organizational change process. Specifically, over the past two-and-a-half months, Yale has brought the principles of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to the CTA leaders and staff on the Long Term Strategic Plan Coordinating Workgroup and to members of the CTA Board of Directors.

The Strategic Plan’s Focus Area of Structure and Governance calls for a year-long process of inquiry, examining all structures and entities within CTA in depth and identifying changes that will support CTA’s ability to carry out its mission. IFT is gratified that our organization’s leaders specifically identified Appreciative Inquiry as the process in which to train our members.

To discover our organizational wealth, CTA Board members, State Council members, Service Center Council members and Staff will be working this fall to utilize Appreciative Inquiry to identify our organization’s “positive core” and then link this knowledge to the heart of CTA’s strategic change agenda. Using the lens of Appreciative Inquiry will assist in the effort to focus on a desired future outcome, built on the strengths and passions of the past and present.