

CTA Institute for Teaching

CTA Board Report:
February 2015

Strengths of teacher driven, strength-based change on display for participants at the IFT Teacher Innovation Expo



The February 6th Expo was designed as a showcase for a dozen IFT Grant recipients and members of CTA's Teacher Leadership Cohorts to present highlights of their strength-based projects to an audience of six dozen Teacher Think Tank members and their guests.

Summing up the exhilarating day, Tara Kajtaniak, a Fortuna High School English Teacher and a member of the IFT East Bay Teacher Think Tank, said what was on the mind of all Expo participants.

"All of these projects are future-oriented, student-centered, teacher-driven, and transforming their communities. Teachers have the capacity to innovate their practice and profession to connect communities with their classrooms in engaging ways, and the CTA's Institute for Teaching has trusted teachers, funded teachers, and allowed these teachers to make tremendous impacts on their schools and communities."



Tara also briefly described each presentation:

Anna Mumford's Green Garden Project, where a Pinterest idea becomes a school garden and her IFT grant becomes a catalyst for community donations.

Joel Sebastian, Sarah Morgan, and Rich Sandoval's Oral History Project and Summer History Institute get kids living history and collaborating with their community.

Deepika Srivastava inspires a love of math among both students and parents through the Moreno Valley Math League, the STEM symposium, and the Day of Coding.

Camie Walker connects her young engineers to the people of Haiti and enables them to problem-solve about Haiti's housing issues.

Nicole Robinson, through her two dance projects, creates a culture of responsibility by empowering students to choreograph, plan, and execute a public trolley dance.

Bonnie Magill's Marysville FFA [Future Farmers of America] students go into elementary schools and into the community to teach agricultural literacy.

Adriana Perez and Kelly Iwamoto help close the achievement gap in Inglewood through the incredibly inspiring Parent University.

Kory Bootsma brings hand-on, project-based learning to her science/ag classroom through hydroponics and aquaponics and organic farming.

Ashley Cooper shares her passion for professional capital and teacher leadership all over the state.

Cristina Buss and Marlaina Schroeder are powerhouse-teachers who got their district to change their bus schedule so that they could implement an Academic Outreach Program that prevents students from slipping through the cracks.

Brian Bartlett's Sculpting the Future program gets kids to work hands-on with tools and learn safety while expressing themselves through sculpture art.

Beverly Bricker partnered with CABA [California Association of Bilingual Educators] to empower her bilingual parents to educate and support their communities.



Participants at the Teacher Innovation Expo included Marysville High FFA students (top), who discussed their work teaching agricultural literacy to elementary students throughout the Marysville USD; **Liane Cismowski** (center), IFT Board member and founding member of the IFT Grant Selection Committee, who explained the Strength-Based Matrix that is used for scoring grant applications; and **Camie Walker** (bottom) who described her science and engineering work around earthquake safety and Haitian survivors with her middle school students in the Garden Grove USD.

Exploring Teacher Leadership Event Encourages Teachers-Driven Change

Dozens of outstanding educators gathered on Valentine's Day at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education to share their passion for empowering teachers to transform our profession.

During her opening remarks, Linda Darling-Hammond stated that she is optimistic about the current teacher leadership effort. She said, "We are in a new day in California...I believe that teacher leadership is an important element in that process, along with additional school funding, the Common Core State Standards and the Local Control Accountability Plans."

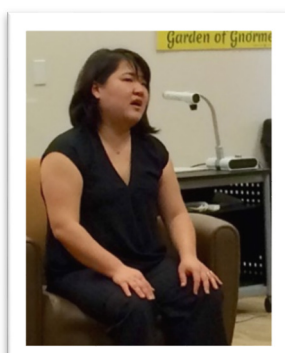
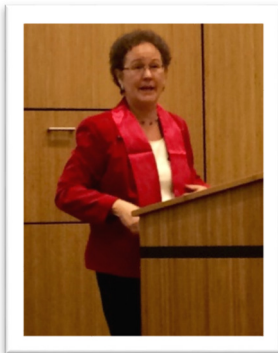
The event was organized around the **Teacher Leadership Competencies** authored in 2014 by the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the National Education Association (NEA).

The partners acknowledged in their report's introduction, "Teacher leadership is no longer optional. Its importance in student learning, teacher retention, school culture, school improvement, the crafting of sound education policy, and productive teachers' associations has been demonstrated by both research and practice."

"Those who engage in teacher leadership in any capacity have seen its impacts on their students and colleagues, but the evidence goes far beyond the anecdotal."

They envision a powerful new model for teacher leadership that stretches beyond previously held beliefs about the collective power of teachers.

They write that "leadership looks different for every teacher who pursues it. Teacher leaders come from all backgrounds, and with a wide variety of skill sets. But, they share a common desire to use those skill sets to benefit students and improve learning...What is required is for teacher leaders to step up and participate in the necessary changes and transformations."



Participants in the Teacher Leadership forum included **Linda Darling-Hammond** (left), Education Professor at Stanford who was the keynote speaker; **Robert Sautter** (center), an elementary school teacher from San Francisco Unified, who is also a two-time IFT grant recipient; and (right) **Rika Hirata**, a high school fine arts teacher who is a member of the South Bay Teacher Think Tank. They were joined by nearly 100 teachers from around California, many of whom received a pin for completing their certification as National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).



CTA Staff Members, **Jane Robb** (left) of the IPD Department and **Stacy Begin** (right) of Region 4, teamed with NBCT Coordinator **Linda Bauld** of Stanford's Graduate School of Education to organize the teacher leadership event on February 14th.

The impact of teacher leadership was analyzed through three different strands- Instructional Leadership, Policy Leadership and Association Leadership. These provide the foundation for this critical work.

Instruction is the key building block of teacher leadership. Outstanding professional practice must underpin all other efforts.

*Smart education policy should be shaped and guided by what accomplished teachers know about teaching and learning. A Panel of Experts, including High School English teacher and South Bay Think Tank member **David Cohen** (below left) discussed how teachers can play a role in policy development.*

*Two outstanding local Presidents, **Shannan Brown** (San Juan TA) and **Jennifer Thomas** (San Jose TA) explained that one of the proven ways to bring great instructional and policy teacher leaders together in the local teachers' association. Association leadership means understanding how to create and guide meaningful, positive and powerful collective action.*



IFT Board of Directors Meeting- February 26, 2015- Burlingame
IFT Workshop at CTA Equity & Human Rights Conference- March 8, 2015- Burlingame
IFT Workshop at CTA Region 3 Leadership Conference- March 15, 2015- Manhattan Beach