California Teachers Association          Foundation for Teaching & Learning

CTA Institute for Teaching                  CTA Board Report
September 2015

**Educator Connections Yield New Opportunities for Teacher Leadership**

*Teacher Think Tank Members Reach Out to Promote Strength-Based Teacher Driven Change*

Teacher Think Tank members in the South Bay and the Central Valley are engaging with colleagues about the importance of teacher driven change in helping to transform our profession.

A mixer that was hosted by members of the CVIFT Think Tank at a local restaurant in Fresno in May brought together representatives of three local teacher organizations; the **San Joaquin Valley Writing Project**, the **Fresno Area Council of English Teachers** and the Central Valley chapter of **Computer Using Educators**.

In late July, Think Tank members from Northern California’s South Bay area sponsored an IFT reception for teachers at Café Stritch in downtown San Jose. They invited local teachers who had earlier participated in a free, all-day professional development event by teachers, for teachers.

The **“Better Together: California Teachers Summit,”** encouraged teachers to come together to build powerful networks, share successful classroom practices and access effective resources to implement the California Standards. Held simultaneously at 33 different college locations throughout the state, it drew 15,000 educators. The event featured EdCamp sessions, some of which were facilitated by members of CTA’s **Instructional Leadership Corps**.

IFT Board member Liane Cismowski participated in the Teacher Summit event held at St. Mary’s College. Her presentation was positively mentioned in an **Ed Source** article following the gathering.

“Mt. Diablo High School Principal Liane Cismowski, who is a National Board Certified teacher, praised the EdCamp model because it allows teachers to control their own professional development.

‘Think of one student whose life you made a difference in,’ she asked the group. ‘Then say it out loud.’

The room erupted in a chorus of names as teachers collectively recalled the positive roles they have played in the lives of countless students throughout their numerous years of teaching.”

Exactly!
IFT Board Welcomes New Voices and Viewpoints

The IFT Board of Directors is fortunate to be able to count on the expertise and insight of outstanding CTA members as it charts a course to promote strength-based teacher driven change within our union. IFT is proud to welcome four new members as we begin the 2015-16 school year. CTA Vice-President Theresa Montañó and CTA Secretary-Treasurer David Goldberg will join newly-elected CTA President Eric Heins as part of the IFT leadership team. Although we will miss the input of Dean Vogel and Mikki Cichocki Semo, the new officers are eager to guide the work of the Foundation for Teaching and Learning for the next two years. CTA Board members Toby Boyd and Jim Groth will carry on in their capacity as liaisons from Northern California and Southern California respectively. In addition, long-time Board members Beverly Tucker and Liane Cismowski will continue adding their insights at the bi-monthly gatherings.

The By-Laws of the Institute for Teaching specifically designate the three CTA Officers as the executive officers of the IFT Board of Directors. Theresa Montañó, Eric Heins and David Goldberg (pictured above) have already expressed enthusiasm about their work with the IFT.

Theresa’s years of experience as a middle and high school teacher in Los Angeles, coupled with more than decade in higher education, gives her a special understanding of issues facing educators in California’s public schools. David, who is from a family of education union leaders, has spent most of his career as a bilingual teacher in the Los Angeles USD. He is fluent in both Spanish and sign language.

The Board’s four classroom teachers each represent one of CTA’s four geographical regions. They are (below from left) Adam Ebrahim, Serina West, Michelle Ramos and Eric Enriquez.

The IFT Board has expanded in recent years to include additional CTA members who represent the views of the many outstanding classroom practitioners working on a day-to-day basis to improve teaching and learning in schools and classrooms across the state.

Joining the Board for their first full year of service are Serina West, a veteran kindergarten teacher from Oceanside and Adam Ebrahim, a Literacy Coach working with the Fresno County Office of Education.

Serina is beginning her 15th-year of teaching. She is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher and holds advanced degrees in Teaching/Learning and Leadership and Educational Administration. She is active in leadership with the Oceanside TA.

“CTA’s overarching aim is urgent and ambitious: to shift the social narrative on education reform toward a student-centered agenda that fully incorporates the insights and expertise of educational professionals.”

- CTA Strategic Plan, 2014

Adam, who is also a member of CTA’s Instructional Leadership Corps, recently took a new job in which he will work in support of teachers in Fresno County. He previously spent five years as an IB teacher in Fresno Unified and served as the Vice-President of Fresno TA.

They will join Michelle Ramos, a science teacher from Covina USD and Eric Enriquez, a math teacher from Hayward USD, who were appointed to the IFT Board in 2013. These four exceptional teachers, who are also members of their respective regional Teacher Think Tanks, bring real-world perspectives that enrich IFT Board discussions and provide much needed insights as the Board goes about its work of revising the IFT Business Plan and aligning it with the CTA Strategic Plan.

The CTA Institute for Teaching (IFT) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. IFT supports strength-based teacher driven change in school communities across California. Please contact IFT at 619-683-3990 or at contact@teacherdrivenchange.org