Transforming the Profession: One Teacher at a Time

California’s educators are fortunate to begin the new 2016-17 school year with meaningful professional development opportunities that offer a chance to learn from outstanding teaching colleagues. Over the past couple of years, the idea of teacher-led professional development has been formalized by CTA’s Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC) and IFT’s Teacher Innovation Expo.

The ILC, which is also supported by the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) and the National Board Research Center (NBRC), has encouraged its hundreds of teachers to pair up to present ideas on how educators can integrate the California Standards/NGSS into their instructional practice. On September 17th, ILC members from throughout Orange County gathered on a Saturday morning at Cal State Fullerton to present the **Teachers Teaching Teachers Symposium**. Seventeen hour-long sessions touched on topics ranging from collaborative conversations to engaging parents as literacy partners.

Similar workshops were offered on October 1st & 2nd in Rancho Mirage during the **San G Leadership Conference** and in Vacaville at the **Cordelia Instructional Leadership Conference** on October 8th. These teacher-led events demonstrate that the CTA Long-Term Strategic Plan, adopted in 2014, is gaining traction in helping to transform our profession (see page 2).

Even the National Education Association (NEA) has begun to advocate for greater instructional leadership roles for members and to offer **Student-Centered Advocacy Grants** to local affiliates. The Fresno TA received such a grant in 2015-16. In a recent report, NEA wrote: “A few short years ago, we began hearing reports of local affiliates that were changing the way they talked about the union. Instead of focusing almost exclusively on members’ bread-and-butter issues, these affiliates created a new narrative; one that redefines the role of the union in much broader terms.

No longer satisfied with the status quo, these affiliates instead decided to:

- Leverage collective power in new ways to raise the voice and vision of educators
- Take charge and implement educator-led solutions that work for students
- Use approaches tailored to each community to assure fairness and opportunity for every student
- Voice the needs of parents, communities, and students to create great public schools for every student
- Advocate for schools students deserve

**Allison Carey (left), one of the conference organizers and a member of the North Orange County Teacher Think Tank, greets a teacher at the Saturday event. Garden Grove teacher Camie Walker (middle) welcomes participants to her NGSS/Engineering in the Elementary Schools workshop. Camie and her ILC partner, Denise Bradford of Saddleback Valley EA, were among more than two dozen teacher presenters. Tustin EA member Dawn Lam (right) talked about how to use technology to encourage mastery of the 4 C’s: critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. She described how student-centered Ed Cafés can engage students on topics of their own choosing.**
Ten Years from Now, Will California’s Teacher Leadership Blossoms Yield Fruit?

As part of CTA’s long-term strategic planning, members and staff were asked to come up with a powerful, positive vision of the future.

Dateline- Sacramento, California, October 6, 2026

The State of California, viewed as an outlier in educational circles nationwide, is today recognized as the national leader in educational outcomes.

While the traditional measures of school success, test scores and dropout rates, have continued to rise and fall respectively, the state of California has demonstrated that the development of a strength-based, teacher led and student-centered educational system has yielded far greater dividends for students, families and communities.

The story of how this happened is best exemplified by the changes developed and implemented by the state teachers union, the California Teachers Association. While the teachers union has existed for 163 years, it embarked ten years ago on a mission to bring forth the voice of classroom practitioners into the forefront of their organizational work.

As a result of this work, CTA was able to help flip the structure of the state’s educational system so that legislators, school boards and administrators assumed their proper place as true supporters of the decisions made by professional educators who work day-to-day and face-to-face with 6.5 million students enrolled in nearly 10,000 schools across the state.

Gone are scripted curriculum, pacing guides and high-stakes standardized tests. In their place are student-centered instructional practices that enhance college and career readiness, a vibrant Peer Assistance program that improves instruction and provides career-long support for educators and a State Council of Education that looks holistically at the public education system.

CTA has changed its governance, structure and resource allocation to empower its members to become recognized experts in educational policy development.

As a result, the teaching profession has undergone a renaissance in the state as college graduates flock to schools of education and public opinion ranks teaching as among the most highly respected professions. Most importantly, the Union is now seen a champion of student outcomes.

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