Demonstrating a willingness to dream big, CTA members submitted a record 159 grant applications by the April 30th deadline. This total represents a 20% increase over last year’s previous record.

Thanks to the voluntary dues contributions from CTA members statewide, members of the IFT Grant Selection Committee will be able to fund around four dozen of these strength-based grant projects for the next school year.

Selection Committee members, Liane Cismowski, Beth Micari, Sarah Morgan, Peter Somberg and Barry Wissman, along with IFT staff member Anita Benitas, will meet May 18-20th in Natomas to review applications for this teacher-driven grant program.

Their recommendations will be brought to the IFT Board for approval in mid-June. Grant checks will be sent in July. The local association will serve as the fiscal agent on behalf of grant recipients.

This will be the ninth year of the IFT Grant Program and, to date, the CTA Institute for Teaching has distributed more than $2.9 million to support the creativity and ingenuity of CTA members who are delivering each and every day for their students.

Collaborative Focus on Strengths at Moreno Valley Think Tank Justice Summit

“Our strengths present opportunities to envision new realities for public education and if we educate, organize, and mobilize we can design strategies to make our dreams come true.” - Dr. Yale Wishnick

Over 50 CTA members attending the Moreno Valley Think Tank Strength-Based Justice Summit did just that. They gathered on April 20-21 in San Bernardino, and during those two days they focused on “Creating Successful Opportunities for All Students.”

The result was the design and development of "Action Planning Strength-Based Stories" to make their dream of a "Culture of Success" for all students a reality. You can see their work on the IFT HUB. These "Strengthers" are leading the charge to bring "Strength-Based Justice" to public education.

If you are ready to collaborate in creating successful opportunities for all students, go to the www.strengthbasedhub.org and register and login. Then, go to the community link and join the conversation.
Local Grant Visits Reveal the Diversity and Intensity of Teachers’ Passions

The school names are different and the cities are miles apart. The subject matter areas and grade levels also vary. But, the passion is present everywhere. It is the common denominator that is annually revealed during IFT’s statewide tour of the classrooms and the programs of our grant recipients. Visits for the Class of 2017-18 are just concluding and below you catch a glimpse of the wide variety of projects supported by CTA members’ voluntary dues contributions.

Katella High Student Named Youth of the Year by the City of Anaheim

Two-time IFT grant recipient Ryan Ruelas of Anaheim has been working to make sure his high school students know about the importance of civic engagement and community service. On May 8th, one of his students, Kim Perez, was recognized as the City of Anaheim’s Youth of the Year. Ryan said, “Kim received this award because of the astounding level of community service in which she has participated.” He added, “Kim started the Civic Engagement Club at Katella High last year and it has really transformed the school’s culture and empowered the students.” Ryan mentioned that funds from his grants had enabled many of his east side Anaheim students to collaborate regularly and grow, not only as students, but also as active and civically engaged members of the local community.

He stressed that Kim’s recognition was not just for her, but was also an award for all of the other students who have been active with Roundtable meetings the past two years. Ryan praised club advisor Gema Suarez, who has been a great mentor to Kim and the other students and has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Katella HS Civic Engagement Club is supported and sustainable.

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 ift@teacherdrivenchange.org