Grant Selection Committee Recommends a Record Number of Projects for 2018-19

Members of the IFT Grant Selection Committee met on May 18-20 in Natomas and are recommending approval of a record 52 grant projects to the IFT Board of Directors for 2018-19.

The committee members were extremely impressed with the overall quality of this year’s record 159 grant applications. Their task is to evaluate each proposal within the context of the seven factors of IFT’s Strength-Based Matrix (right). The evaluation awards up to three points for the project’s alignment with each of the seven factors. Grant proposals are reviewed without any additional identifying information.

BioSustainability Grant Benefits Blossom Immediately at Temecula Valley High School

Thanks to the skills and leadership of grant recipient, Toby Brannon, the recently-dedicated TVHS BioSustainability Aquaponics Greenhouse is already producing benefits for the greater Temecula school community.

As the produce and fish begin to be harvested from the greenhouse, the students have partnered with the local Temecula Community Pantry, as well as the TVHS Culinary Arts program. Beginning June 19th, TVHS students will offer week-long summer enrichment programs for elementary and middle school students who “Love Plants, Fish and Science!” Thanks to the support of CTA members and local community members, these grants are an investment in California’s students.

Toby Brannon (left) leads applause for culinary students, taught by Ivan Flowers, who catered the dedication ceremony. More than 100 people were on hand to bear witness to the deep learnings from this student-centered project. The well-respected science teacher humbly stated, “Nothing you will see in the greenhouse is Plan A, or even Plan B.” as his students nodded in assent.
Antelope Valley High’s “Games in the Park” Enhance Student Connections

This strength-based approach was developed by an IFT Teacher Think Tank Member

Jeff Patterson, AVHS English teacher and member of IFT’s Monrovia Teacher Think Tank, is passionate about creating community. He recently told IFT about a new concept at his school that has caught fire.

“We call it ‘Games in the Park’ and it is when we play board games such as chess, checkers, Connect 4, Dominoes, and other games at lunch to promote building positive school relationships between students, staff and faculty. Over the last two months, it has grown into a school-wide event where we have added ping pong tables, jump rope, and, for our last one of the year, opening the library to play video games.”

Jeff believes the activity has helped AVHS build positive, non-academic relationships with students, faculty & staff and the school community. “We created a fun, safe environment for students at lunch and encouraged active participation, a willingness to try something new and applying the experience to a more focused academic approach in class.”

Dr. David Vierra, the current District Superintendent and alumnus of AVHS (Class of 1975), visited Games in the Park and wrote to the students afterwards. “First, thank you very much for inviting me…Like many of you, I enjoyed the variety of games being offered. Though, more inspiring was watching the interaction among students and between students and staff. It is clear that there is a sense of community, harmony, good will, and enjoyment while interacting with one another during this lunch activity and I couldn’t be prouder of each and every one of you. Keep up the good work.”

IFT Bids Farewell and Thanks to Toby Boyd, Board Member Extraordinaire

The Institute for Teaching sends best wishes to long-time CTA & IFT Board member, E. Toby Boyd. Because of term limits, he will be leaving the Board in June. His unwavering commitment to IFT’s programs will truly be missed. From the early years of the Algebra Success Academy to last month’s Strength-based Justice Summit, Toby has always been present to support CTA members and IFT staff. Toby also served on the IFT Budget Committee for seven years and spent many hours visiting and talking with teachers from around the state who were involved in the IFT world as grant recipients or Teacher Think Tank members. We thank him for his steadfast belief in the power of strength-based teacher driven change.

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