International Educators Pay a Visit to Learn About “The California Way”

CTA Will Present a Closer Look at How Our Union Promotes Professional Collaboration

The Institute for Teaching will be showcased as part of a Mini Teacher Innovation Expo on the opening day of the third-annual summit of the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory (ARC). This year’s event will be held at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles on Sept. 8-11.

The program features presentations by two IFT Grant Recipients, Mikki Cichocki of the San Bernardino TA and Tricia Hyun of the Fullerton Elementary EA. They will discuss their strength-based projects, as well of the work of their Teacher Think Tanks.

CTA President Eric Heins will be part of a group highlighting the work of the Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC), which has, since 2014, promoted educator-led professional development. ILC member, Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez of the Montebello TA, will discuss how we can sustain a successful model of Educators Educating Educators to continuously improve educational outcomes for our students.

According to the California Department of Education, the California Way “rests on the belief that educators want to excel, trusts them to improve when given the proper supports, and provides local schools and districts with the leeway and flexibility to deploy resources so they can improve.” The California Way engages students, parents, and communities as part of a collaborative decision-making process around how to fund and implement these improvement efforts and provides supplemental resources to ensure that California’s English Learners (ELs), foster youths, and students in poverty have the learning supports they need.

In 2016, Claremont Graduate University Professor Charles Kerchner wrote, “The California Way is not speedy. Changing a school district from a culture of compliance to a culture of continuous improvement will test the patience of our political system, but we know that the alternative doesn’t work. Instead of being seen as a laggard in education improvement, California is being seen as a positive example.”

The Collaboratory builds on current strengths and strategies of your own and other educational systems with the intention of improving them over time through deliberately designed processes. It seeks out and spread current best practices and develop next practices that reflect Atlantic Rim values.

The founding organizations include the Ministries of Education of Scotland, Iceland, Ireland, Finland, Aruba, Sweden, Wales and the Canadian province of Ontario, the Office of the Secretary of Education in Vermont, and the California Board of Education.
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

Distinguished Educator Carl Cohn Joins the IFT Board of Directors

Decades of Experience in California Provide Him with Vision and Context

The Institute for Teaching is pleased to welcome Dr. Carl A. Cohn to its Board of Directors. Beginning nearly fifty ago in Compton, California, Dr. Cohn served as a teacher, counselor, central-office administrator, and superintendent before coming out of retirement in 2005 to become the superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, California’s second largest public-school system. He had previously been the superintendent in Long Beach, California’s third-largest district, winning the Broad Prize for Urban Education and becoming the longest-serving superintendent of a large urban school district in the nation.

Throughout his career, he has helped shape the educational leaders of tomorrow as a professor at multiple universities—including the University of Southern California and Harvard. Dr. Cohn is a recognized thought leader in the national educational arena, has presented at dozens of educational conferences throughout the United States and contributed to journal and media articles regarding educational leadership and reform.

“There has been no surer example of imagining a better life than being privileged to observe first-hand what is going on in the schools and districts of our state. So many educators are hard at work creating a brighter future for all those kids who historically have been underserved. We at the Collaborative get to see that on a daily basis.” Carl Cohn, April 2018

Most recently, the former State Board of Education member served as the first executive director of the California Collaborative of Educational Excellence (CCEE). The CCEE was created in 2013 as part of California’s Local Control Funding Formula, which changed the way public schools are funded, evaluated and supported. It is a statewide agency tasked with advising and assisting student achievement across the state via the new Local Control and Accountability Plans. Dr. Cohn retired from that position in August 2018.

Dr. Cohn believes that “there are no quick fixes or perfect educational theories. School reform is a slow, steady, labor-intensive process. It is heavily dependent on harnessing the talents of individuals.” The IFT believes that his experience, expertise and knowledge will be major assets as we continue our strength-based work.

IFT Teacher Think Tanks Offer A Unique Kind of Member Engagement

Do you know a teacher or certificated support staff member who is an excellent at their job, understands the “big picture” about what is happening to our profession and wouldn’t otherwise be involved in our Union work? If so, the IFT invites them to join one of our six regional teacher think tanks. There they will meet fellow union members who are not only passionate about their work, but also eager to voice their ideas on the teaching profession, public education and the teaching and learning process. The IFT is attempting to harness their energy and bring a strength-based perspective to the conversation. With your help, we can ensure that the right people are in the room.

IFT’s contact information is below. Please send us a name.