International Educators Affirm Their Belief in Equity and Strengths

Educators from eight foreign countries gathered in Los Angeles for a four-day summit that revealed striking similarities in philosophy and approach to the “California Way” that was presented by summit hosts, the California Department of Education and the California Teachers Association.

In a letter of appreciation to Expo participants, Tom Torlakson, Superintendent of Public Instruction and CTA President Eric Heins stated, “the visiting countries and states expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the California Way, which you exemplify through your service to children and families each and every day.”

The Summit included presentations from two outstanding IFT Grant Recipients, Mikki Cichocki of the San Bernardino TA and Tricia Hyun of the Fullerton Elementary EA, as well as an up-close school visits to look at some of the successes of dedicated California educators. On the final day, the ARC participants boarded vans to visit four Los Angeles-area schools, including two where they could see the strength-based work being accomplished with the assistance of multiple IFT grants.

Scenes from the Summit (clockwise from top right) 1. ARC guests with teacher Lori Clock at Gardenhill Elementary in La Mirada to see her Spade Brigade Resiliency Garden. 2. IFT Grant recipients and staff spoke to participants about strength-based teacher driven change. 3. California’s SPI Tom Torlakson and Aaron Jiron from the Bechtel Foundation, one of the funders of the Summit, discuss what is working. 4. International visitors and school staff at Moffett Elementary observe Lennox’s Dual Language Program. 5. Dr. Pedro Noguera of UCLA and CTA President Eric Heins participate in a California-focused breakout session; 6. Sir Kenneth Robinson, one of several thought leaders attending the Summit, speaks with the group about the rapid pace of change and its impact on education.
Three IFT Grants in One Local School Generates Amazement and Pride in Hanford

Special from the **Hanford Sentinel**, “Christmas came early for the teachers and students at Jefferson Academy Charter School. Three teachers at Jefferson were awarded grants from the CTA Institute for Teaching and will use the funding for various activities involving science, literature and language.”

*Note: The CTA members applied separately for the grants. Although it is highly unusual for three teachers from the same school to receive an IFT grant, it is possible since grant applications are evaluated without identifying the applicants’ personal or school information.*

“The teachers, **Josefa Bustos Pelayo, Deborah Arnold and Juan Padilla**, said that the grant funds will be used to pay for three programs: *Si se Puede! Book Club, Creating Bilingual Scientists Through Science Olympiad and Portable Science Labs.*

Arnold said the school’s Olympiad team, which competes in science events, often wins the regional competition but does not perform as well when they go to the state competition because they lack necessary resources. Padilla added that his science students “have done so much but they could do so much more.”

Bustos Pelayo said that having the *Si se Puede! Book Club* was previously just a dream. Now with the book club, Bustos Pelayo plans to expand a multicultural environment through reading and discussion.

Arnold and Padilla said that with the funds they will be able to purchase high-tech equipment to help students learn better and in different ways. “Students will be able to do more lab experiments with real-life applications,” Padilla said.

Bustos Pelayo said they hope to continue the projects in years to come. CTA President Eric Heins said that many previously funded projects have gone on and grown with further funding from school districts and other means.”

---

**Long-time IFT Manager Retires After 46 Years in Public Education**

At its September meeting, the IFT Board of Directors wished good luck to its Manager/Program Director **Dick Gale**, who is retiring after twenty-two years as a CTA staff member. Under Gale’s leadership since 2008, the Institute for Teaching established a Grant Program for members, as well regional Teacher Think Tanks around the state. Gale has been a constant presence at CTA Conferences and was always willing to talk about the benefits of strength-based teacher driven change. He began his CTA career in 1996 as a field staff in the Inland Empire, moved to a regional NODD position in 2002 and served two years as the Executive Director of the San Diego Education Association.

**Dick Gale** taught over six thousand high school students during his 24 years as a social studies teacher in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties. He was the former President of the Bonita Unified TA and the Temecula Valley EA and spent more than a dozen years as a bargaining chair. He believes that this time in his classroom and in schools provided him with experience that he could draw on in his role with the IFT. Dick is proud that his work has empowered new Association leaders to advocate for more union engagement and support around the work that our members are doing with students in their school community.

---

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