Equity & Human Rights Conference 2016
Teacher Driven Change: Shaping the Future
By. Anita Benitas, IFT program consultant
strength based teacher driven change

WHAT DOES IT MEAN...

...to YOU? ...to your STUDENTS? ...to our FAMILIES?
...to your SCHOOL? ...to your DISTRICT? ...to our UNION?
...to our PROFESSION? ...to PUBLIC EDUCATION?

Please visit IFT’s website- www.teacherdrivencchange.org
Follow IFT on Twitter- @CTAIFT
Like CTA Institute for Teaching on Facebook-
The CTA IFT is attempting to bring a new approach to school change. Based on our Foundation work and discussions with hundreds of practitioners and students, the IFT has determined that school change must include two key factors: (1) It needs to be teacher-driven and (2) It should be based on what is working and successful in our schools and classrooms. By focusing on what works in our schools, the IFT believes strength-based models for school change add a new dimension to school improvement.

**Current IFT Projects**

- **IFT Grant Program**
  The $5,000-$20,000 grants are designed for pre-K-12 teachers and certificated support staff, ESP members and college instructors. Proposals are reviewed, using a strength-based matrix, by an IFT Grant Selection committee composed of outstanding teachers. In the program’s first six years, IFT awarded 167 grants totaling over $1.7 million.

- **Teacher Think Tanks**
  IFT has organized a diverse set of CTA members to be part of IFT’s Regional Teacher Think Tanks. These eight regional Teacher Think Tanks give a voice to dozens of CTA members who are excellent classroom practitioners and passionate about sharing innovative ideas and building upon what works.

- **Teacher Innovation Expo**
  The Expo, presented as part of the pre-Good Teaching Conferences, is designed as a showcase for exemplary IFT Grant recipients and members of CTA’s Teacher Leadership Cohorts to present highlights of their strength-based projects to an audience of fellow teachers. It demonstrates that teachers have the capacity to innovate their practice and profession to connect communities with their classrooms in engaging ways.

- **Positive Deviance Project**
  IFT is seeking volunteers to work on a project designed to increase the high school graduation rate by focusing on those students who are successfully staying in school and thriving despite such social factors as poverty, family problems, crime and gangs. These outliers are known as “positive deviants.”

- **Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project**
  IFT supports home visits because they work and teachers have always done them. That practice has been enhanced with a strategic focus and collaboration dedicated to this proven strategy with positive outcomes for families, staff, and most importantly, students of all grade levels.

- **California School Garden Network**
  IFT supports CSGN’s mission to promote school gardens as a means “to enhance academic achievement, a healthy lifestyle, environmental stewardship, and community/social development.”

- **Strength-Based School Transformation Projects**
  IFT is looking to engage with members in schoolwide appreciative inquiry projects based on the identified strengths of the local school community. These field-based projects are locally designed and their successful outcomes are critical in demonstrating the efficacy of strength-based teacher driven change.

For more information, please visit the IFT website- [www.teacherdrivenchange.org](http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org) or join the “CTA Institute for Teaching” community on Facebook and Twitter @CTAIFT.
## Strength-Based Matrix

### School Community Culture of Success
The school and the community play an important role in creating a culture of success for all students. The school, with the community, emphasizes the strengths of all students and value a teaching and learning environment that promotes student assets over deficits.

### Teaching & Learning: Strength-Based Framework
The teaching and learning process is based on a curriculum that is grounded in student strengths. Teachers, with students, jointly focus on strengths to create a classroom environment filled with infinite possibilities for success.

### The Seven Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Centered</strong></td>
<td>Emphasis is placed on learning over teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Work is valued, purposeful, and relevant to students.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Future Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Students have a dramatic, positive image of the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Students understand strength-based thinking increases capacity and resilience to achieve goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Relations</strong></td>
<td>Students view other students as supportive and interested in their well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School-Family Relations</strong></td>
<td>Parents as a strong partner in the teaching and learning process are encouraged to be involved in their child’s education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School-Wide Relations</strong></td>
<td>All school stakeholders are responsible for the education of each student.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Creating a School Community Culture of Success Through a Teacher Driven Strength-Based Framework
www.teacherdrivenchange.org
Description of Terms

**AFFIRMATIVE FOCUS** – The change process begins by reframing problems, obstacles, and challenges as affirmative statements. The strength-based approach does not negate nor ignore problems. Rather, it shifts the lens and/or frame of reference that is used to define what is happening. Instead of looking for “what’s wrong” or “needs fixing” the focus is on “what’s right” or “what’s working” and seeks to do more of it. Affirmative statements are based on current successes within the system. The criteria for writing an affirmative statement include:

- Topics are stated in the positive.
- Topics are desirable. They identify the objectives people want.
- Individuals are genuinely curious about them and want to learn more.
- The topics move in the direction people want to go

Affirmative statements should evoke energizing and relevant conversations among constituency stakeholders.

**INTERNALLY DRIVEN** - Based on the theory of local of control, individuals that are internally driven, meaning a person controls their own life, tend to exhibit initiating behaviors and are an influencing force for change. Individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that events result primarily from their own behavior and actions. Those with a high external locus of control believe that powerful others, fate, or chance primarily determine events. Individuals with a high internal locus of control are more likely to assume that their efforts will be successful. They are more active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation and are not content with the status quo.

**PERSONAL STRENGTHS & POSITIVE EXPERIENCES** - The Strength-Based Approach is a way of thinking and behaving based on the assumption that people have strengths and positive experiences that increase their empowerment and capacity to act. In its broadest sense, focusing on what works, is a systematic discovery of the requisite strengths required to overcome challenges. By discovering what works, we apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. By focusing on strengths and positive experiences we are able to move beyond simple problem-solving to create and invent new options and possibilities for change.

**CAPACITY TO ACT** - Individuals are rational decision-makers and make systematic use of the information available to them. Individuals are likely to have a strong intention to act if they believe they have the requisite support, resources, and opportunities to carry out a specific behavior.

**ORCHESTRATED CHANGE** - Teachers do not direct but orchestrate the change process by including the personal strengths and positive experiences of school-community stakeholders. Teacher Driven Strength-Based Change (TDSBC) is both a metaphor and a practical guide for improving all schools for all children. All CTA members are teachers and are essential to the teaching and learning process regardless of the role they play in the school system. Parents and school-community stakeholders also are critical to insuring a successful learning environment. To increase sustainability, it is essential that the entire system be involved in the change process. From a strength-based perspective, the more diverse the stakeholder population, the greater the positive resources available to the change process.
Teacher Leadership. What can we do?

Comment list developed by Teacher Think Tank members at their statewide conference in April 2014.

1. Lead by example/actions not words. Proceed until apprehended. Taking action and leading by example.
2. Just do it and then share your success.
3. Part time release positions so teachers can stay in teaching still be a teacher leader.
4. Believe in yourself. Be proud of who you are and your profession. Talk it up, live it, believe in it. We are amazing.
5. Empower each other to speak up and bring along other rank and file to be leaders.
6. Address the Bully Principals. Identifying characteristics and solutions for changing the behaviors or eliminating the bully from the site or the system.
7. Fight for supportive principals. CTA should highlight principals doing right by their school.
8. Facilitate/push-pull our colleagues to fill the leadership roles in our district/site. Advertise and educate ways to get involved-initiate change.
9. Take a risk-averse colleague by the hand and take a curricular risk together.
10. Invite Arne Duncan to sub for you when need to be at the next IFT meeting.
11. Empower teachers and students, be kind and positive.
12. Open our schools (classes) to one another.
13. Change the “Us vs. Them” paradigm between teachers and administration.
14. CTA, in partnership with local unions, establish teacher-driven, democratically rich strength-based pilot/charter schools.
15. Always question. Keep an open mind. The idea you keep pursuing has a chance of becoming reality. It may already be a reality somewhere. Obstacles can be overcome.
16. Question curricular decisions by the district curricular people who are not in the classroom.
17. Do what’s best for kids no matter what.
18. Remember that it’s about the good of the whole, not promoting our district, school or self.
19. Share your ideas and materials.
20. Try something new, take risks and be humble. It is easier to get forgiveness than permission. ACT.
21. Take charge of your classroom, of your school, of your districted by management – how do we fix that?
22. Respect TOSAs more. Many are exemplary teachers who have much to share.
23. Create an Association position whose focus is to coordinate and facilitate and inform curriculum and instructional matters within a district. Gotta be strength-based. Think about how IFT is to CTA.
24. Opt your own kids out of standardized testing.
25. Train teachers to use speech as a teaching tool.
26. Develop relationships with your students; parents. Negotiate compensation for home visits.
27. Vote, inform, contact, empower and support, encourage members’ initiatives.
28. Develop partnership with association and administration where at teachers always have a place in adopting materials, hiring, all curricular matters, etc. Save a spot for a teacher rep on these panels.
29. Support the bargaining process perhaps with templates for language in contracts that will put teachers in charge of developing curriculum models, mentoring programs. Management should take a back seat to practitioners. Innovation must be bottom up, not top down.
30. Develop repositories of information and professional development so that we rely on each other.
What does Teacher Driven Strength-Based (TDSB) Change mean in practical terms? How is TDSB thinking different from other school change strategies? What are the differences between strength-based and deficit-based teaching approaches?

TDSB change does not seek to reform public education; its goal is to transform the teaching and learning process from deficits to strengths. The deficit-based model focuses on solving problems in education; problems associated with teaching and teachers, learning and outcomes, and standards and expectation. The goal of deficit-based consultants, politicians, and education bureaucrats is promote solutions to problems they have identified.

Most elected leaders and educational bureaucrats at the state and federal levels view the public schools in deficit terms and seldom focus on individual and school-wide strengths. In addition, most politicians and educational consultants do not believe teachers can improve the schools from the inside out. Rather, the prevailing thinking is school change must be externally driven and focus on specific problems.

TDSB change is grounded in the belief that only teachers, with the support of school-community members, can initiate changes that will ultimately benefit all children and the
teaching and learning process. By emphasizing student strengths over weaknesses, what works over failures, and resources over obstacles, we change everything about our schools. In other words, our students, regardless of their status or condition become the centerpiece on what takes place in the teaching and learning environment. Another way of saying this is that you get what you look for: In a strength-based place you look for potential and opportunities and in a deficit-based environment you look for problems and obstacles to success. By rejecting deficits, we focus on the people - teachers - most responsible for knowing “what works” and what needs to be done to create a successful teaching and learning environment.

**Teachers are Key** - Teachers know what has worked in the past and can use this knowledge to innovate and produce schools that challenge students and encourage success. Through strength-based conversations with school-community members, teachers discover what it means to be a successful and what works in our schools. Strength-based thinking requires both a change of heart and mind and by focusing on strengths and positive experiences, every local school-community can generate a body of knowledge to build a great learning place for every child. But this means politicians and educational bureaucrats release their strangle hold on parents and teachers; most important, they stop thinking of children in deficit terms.

**Getting Started** - Becoming a TDSB change advocate is relatively easy. First, ask yourself a simple question: “Why I am a great teacher?” There is a good chance you have never asked yourself such a question. But that’s it. TDSB change begins with increasing your awareness of how great you are as a classroom teacher. Focusing on your greatness changes your mindset along with your direction and purpose.

Second, organize a TDSB team of teachers, parents, and school employees. Like any new approach, you need to start with what you have in place: your friends, colleagues, and associates. Your goal as a team is to determine what’s great about the people around you and what’s great about your classroom, school, or district. Without getting too complicated, this means asking affirmative or strength-based questions and interviewing everyone you can in the system.

Here are some strength-based interview steps: (1) Determine your focus. Which of the seven factors do you want to emphasize: Future Oriented, School Family Relations, School Wide Relations, Student Centered, Work Oriented, Results Oriented, Student Relations, (2) Develop a set of strength-based questions, (3) Determine who should do the interviews and who should be interviewed, and (4) Begin interviewing.
Interviews are not dialogues or conversations. Through TDSB interviews you simply collect strength-based information. During the interviews you don’t debate or argue a point. However, you certainly can ask questions if you need more information or clarification.

Once your interviews are completed and information collected contact the IFT. We will help you move to the next step in creating a Strength-Based learning environment for your students.

Moving from Problems to Strengths - We are so used to looking for problems, rather than what works; focusing on what is going wrong, rather than what’s going right. And while a strengths approach may not come naturally, TDSB change can have extremely positive and productive results. So if you’re ready to start, here are some questions you can ask teachers and other school-community members to begin creating a strength-based learning environment for your students.

Strength-Based Questions - The sample questions below will help get you started. But they are just a beginning. The IFT wants to develop a repository of TDSB questions for CTA members. Please use the comment section below to add your TDSB questions.

1. What works really well around here (classroom, school, district)?
2. What are you doing that is great for kids?
3. Describe what is most exciting about your school-wide relations?
4. Without being modest, describe why you are a great teacher.
5. How have other people contributed to your success?
6. Describe your most powerful strengths as a teacher.
7. What is it about teaching that you enjoy the most?
8. Describe one of your most successful parent-teacher conferences.
9. What does success look like in your classroom?
10. Tell me what a good day looks like for you.
11. As a teacher, what great things are you doing that make you even better?
12. What are you most proud of in your professional life?
13. Thinking about great teaching, what comes to mind?
14. What inspires you to teach?
15. What makes teaching most enjoyable?
16. How do students behave when they believe they have a positive future?
17. How do students behave when they have a powerful work ethic?
18. When did you know you wanted to be a teacher?
19. When things are going well in your teaching, what is happening?
20. What is it about your teaching that helps you stay strong?
21. What do you value about yourself as a teacher?
22. What would other people who know you tell you why you are a great teacher?
23. How would your family and friends describe you as a teacher?
24. Thinking about your ability to overcome challenges, what helps you the most?
25. How does teaching give you a sense of wellbeing?
26. Describe your hopes and dreams as a teacher.
27. How have people around you helped you overcome challenges?
28. What are three things that have helped you overcome obstacles?
29. Describe your most positive experiences with students’ parents.
30. What do you enjoy most about being part of a professional community?
31. What is it about the future that gives you confidence?
32. How has the teaching profession improved over the years?
33. How would you describe the strengths, skills, and resources you have in your life?
34. Describe why you are most hopeful about the public schools.
35. What are the most positive factors in your life as a teacher?
36. What are three things that are going well in your life as a teacher right now?
37. What gives you energy as a teacher?
38. What is the most rewarding part of your life as an educator?
39. Describe the contributions you have made to public education.
40. Describe a time when school-community members worked successfully together.
41. Based on your experiences, what do you believe are great parenting skills?
42. What makes you feel excited or useful or satisfied as a classroom teacher?
43. What do you believe encourages positive student-teacher relations?
44. What strength stands out as most important to your success as an educator?
45. How have your needs been met as a teacher?
46. Describe the administrative support you have received as a classroom teacher.
47. Tell me about the creative teaching strategies you have tried in your classroom.
48. What is that "one thing" you enjoy most about teaching?
49. Describe what your school district has done to help you become a better teacher?
50. What resources do you find most helpful in making you a great teacher?

Add Your Voice

These appreciative questions are designed around strength-based thinking. But they are just examples. IFT needs your suggestions and TDSB questions. Please click the Comment Link below to record your ideas and TDSB questions.

Related Stories

- IFT Interview of CTA & IFT President Dean Vogel - "Success Begins with Paying Attention"
- CTA IFT Teacher Innovation Expo
- Saboteurs of the Mind and Deficit-Thinking

May 14, 2015
Four things CTA members should know about applying for an IFT Grant

Since 2010, the CTA Institute for Teaching has been utilizing a portion of CTA members’ $20 voluntary dues contributions to fund strength-based teacher driven projects at schools all over California. To date, IFT has funded 167 grant projects totaling more than $1.7 million. All CTA members are eligible to apply for an Educator grant (up to $5,000) or an Impact grant (up to $20,000).

This is a competitive grant program and grants are evaluated by the IFT Grant Selection Committee, made up of five educators from around the state and an IFT staff consultant. These educators represent various grade levels and are experienced in the strength-based approach. In the first six years of the program, IFT received a total of 415 grant applications. The 167 funded grants represent an acceptance rate of more than 40%.

A link to the grant application and tons of supporting information is available under the Grant tab on the IFT website. The grant application period opens on January 1st. Applications are due no later than April 30th. The Grant Selection Committee meets in May. They use the IFT Strength-based Matrix as the lens to evaluate the proposals.

Grant recommendations will come to the IFT Board of Directors in June for formal approval. Grant checks are mailed in late July/early August for use in the upcoming school year. As part of the application process, local Association Presidents are asked to sign off indicating their willingness to have the local Association serve as a fiscal agent on behalf of the grant recipient. This increases accountability and insures that the individual member incurs no tax liability.

Go to the IFT Website for more information: www.teacherdrivencentrechange.org
## 2015-2016 IFT Grant Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Project Title</th>
<th>CTA Region</th>
<th>Local Association</th>
<th>Amount Funded</th>
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<td>Marysville TA</td>
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<td>Agriculture Science</td>
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<td>Babies and Beads</td>
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<td>San Diego EA</td>
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<td>Bio Garden Center</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Victor Valley TA</td>
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<td>C2: Creative Connections</td>
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<td>Chico Unified TA</td>
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<td>CIBACS- Center for Int'l. Business and Communication Studies</td>
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<td>Huntington Beach UHSD EA</td>
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<td>Discovery Club</td>
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<td>Assn. of Colfax Educators</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<td>Edison High School Robotics</td>
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<td>Fresno TA</td>
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<td>Follow Your Arrow</td>
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<td>Palm Springs TA</td>
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<td>Twin Rivers UE</td>
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<td>Ontario-Montclair TA</td>
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<td>Cal State Northridge (CFA)</td>
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<td>Growing Healthy Students- Today, Tomorrow, For Life</td>
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<td>Desert Sands TA</td>
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<td>Growing Relationships</td>
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<td>Prepare/Care/Share: Using Engineering to Make Global Connections</td>
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<td>Fontana TA</td>
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<td>The PAW Press School Newspaper/Newspaper Club</td>
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**Total** $491,410

**Average Grant** $12,932

*12 Previous grant recipients highlighted in blue (31%)*

*2 Associations with multiple grants highlighted in yellow*

**CTA Regional Breakdown:**
- Region 1- 4 (11%)
- Region 2- 7 (18%)
- Region 3- 10 (24%)
- Region 4- 18 (45%)
IFT 2015-16 Grants

Discovery Club – Association of Colfax Educators
Impact Grant- $ 20,000
This grant supports the continued expansion of Colfax Elementary’s After-School Program, beyond Bulldog Athletics and Homework Club, to include DISCOVERY Clubs, the new enrichment component long sought and well received in its first year by our small rural community. DISCOVERY provides a diverse selection of fun and interesting opportunities for students to explore, create, express, collaborate, and learn with others across grade levels. DISCOVERY partners teachers with parents and community members, empowering them to share their expertise, passions, and stories with our children. Throughout the year, 2nd-8th students will choose from a dynamic variety of offerings in arts and crafts, music, cooperative and critical-thinking games, technology and design, and theater.

High Performance Mathematics – Association of Colton Educators
Impact Grant- $ 15,928
Common Core asks teachers to prepare students using real life applications and problem solving abilities. Using a research based program called HiPerMath, Ruth Harris Middle School students will work in teams using science and math on simulators to build car engines and race cars on a virtual race track. This activity demonstrates the importance of math and develops collaborative skills. This program would directly support, grow and sustain interest in STEM activities in underrepresented populations and prepare students for High School Engineering pathways. This project addresses 4 critical areas that are needed in the 21st century educational movement: Critical Thinking, Communication, Creativity and Collaboration.

Good Heart Chicana/o and Native Science Project – CFA- CSU Northridge
Impact Grant- $ 20,000
Good Heart Chicana/o and Native Science is an interdisciplinary project designed to inspire low-income Latina/o and Native American student populations towards STEAM disciplines through the subject of climate change. Over the course of the project, third through fifth graders at San Fernando Elementary will study the use of the local land base in the past (social studies, environmental science), perform hands-on projects that reflect the current reality (science, technology) and, with mentored guidance, actively plan a local, impactful project (technology, engineering, art) that takes into account the needs of their families, fellow students and community.

C2: Creative Connections – Chico Unified TA
Impact Grant- $ 19,100
The success of our Pleasant Valley High School pARTnership for the FUTURE grant in 2014-15 has encouraged a new collaboration joining the visual and performing arts in C2: Creative Connections. Music is an integral part of students’ lives and through its incorporation into the visual arts, greater opportunities for students will result. Music and art teachers and our Teacher-Librarian will create curriculum and activities that unite students, parents, and community in experiences where students use their strengths. C2 builds on a strong foundation. We plan to take the next step by applying our learning to a strength-based curriculum that intertwines visual and performing arts.

Robotics and Engineering – Covina Unified EA
Impact Grant- $ 20,000
The Robotics and Engineering grant would support a wide range of students from Traweek Middle School and Covina High School. Robotics supplies are cost-prohibitive to the point that few school sites maintain an active robotics club or class. This grant would ensure that a robotics club would exist on both campuses and would pay for robotics supplies and competition fees. Many of these costs are one-time fees that would get the ball rolling toward establishing annual support for robotics by our district administration.

Growing Healthy Students- Desert Sands TA
Impact Grant- $ 20,000
The goal of this proposal is to strengthen and advocate stronger student, family, and community involvement while striving to promote physical fitness and academic scholars. Hoover Elementary will aim to increase 2015-16 student health and wellness by promoting school-wide student membership in The 100 Mile Club®, and group participation, to include transitional kinder through fifth grade students, and family and staff members, in at least 5 local 5ks. The entire staff is committed to providing an expanded physical education program in and out of the classroom while advocating a culture of lifelong health-related fitness and active lifestyles, physical competence, cognitive understanding, positive attitudes, and to promoting healthy scholars’ today, tomorrow, and for life!

Stauffer Enrichment Garden – Downey EA
Educator Grant- $ 5,000
At Stauffer Middle School, we feel, that eating is an Ecological Act; the production, consumption and marketing of food is the key to everything. Students will become engaged in the food chain, and how food choices can affect the Energy crisis, Climate crisis and Healthcare crisis in our country. The garden opens up all of these lessons that could not be more hands on STEM. In the recently expanded garden, our teachers work as a team to expose more students to a variety of foods, have them learn to problem solve, enhance their social skills. Now, school wide, Nutrition, Math, English and Science lessons can all be better understood when students grow the foods they are learning about, while harvesting, cooking and eating as well. We want to teach the students the importance of not just growing their own food, but also the value of respecting the earth and having a thorough understanding of our earth’s resources.

Kaweah High School Ag Program – Exeter TA
Impact Grant- $ 20,000
This project provides students at Kaweah High School the opportunity to gain basic knowledge of Ornamental Horticulture and to gain hands-on experience in the nursery and floral industries. They will sustain a greenhouse, outside garden, tree nursery and floral design that becomes more productive with age. Students will have opportunities to become involved in school activities, learn valuable life skills and to develop their own personal strengths through unique service projects, field experiences, and career exploration. Ultimately, our goal is to implement an Agricultural Work Readiness Program where students are instructed on the application and interview process, writing resumes, and seeking letters of recommendations.
The Dance Collaborative — Fontana TA
Impact Grant: $ 20,000
This is a renewal of a grant which was funded for the 2014-2015 school year, which will provide a dance education partnership with two new schools for the 2015-2016 school year. This project will help support and create a collaboration between A. B. Miller High School Dance, PLACE Performance, The California Arts Project (TCAP), local dance artists and 2 Fontana Unified School District elementary schools and their teachers to produce the Dance Collaborative. This project will create opportunity for elementary students explore their artistic potential while providing professional development for their teachers in dance education. It will also provide an opportunity for A. B. Miller High School students to create, implement and teach a 6 course dance module for 4th and 5th grade students and their teachers These modules will use dance as a vehicle to explore the depths of the students’ creative expression, artistic perception and kinesthetic awareness. Teachers will learn to incorporate dance concepts and ideas to enhance their classroom instruction.

Edison High School Robotics — Fresno TA
Educator Grant: $ 5,000
The Edison High School Robotics team is a rapidly growing part of the school’s academic section. Receiving exponential growth in the past two years, the team is expected to receive an influx of new members in the 2016 school year. The team is applying for this grant in order to be able to expand our outreach to attract more and more students to the STEM related fields of education in the coming years. Currently supporting 30 members, the team will use funds to support a larger team, and also to expand and develop our community outreach efforts.

The PAW Press School Newspaper/Newspaper Club – Fullerton Elementary TA
Educator Grant: $ 5,000
Students must be taught to think deeply and use literacy skills across content areas, and learn to argue instead of persuade in their writing. A school newspaper gets at the heart of this by challenging students to engage in meaningful work targeted to real audiences. This grant will inaugurate and produce a monthly School Newspaper, The PAW Press, and Newspaper Club at Woodcrest Elementary, a Title I K-6 elementary school. It will meet the objective of providing our ELL students with 21st century Writing, Communication, and Technology skills, which they will need to succeed in college and their careers. Through the guidance of the Club’s teacher advisors, local journalist professionals, and educational excursions, students will develop/conduct interviews, write articles and columns, design monthly features, and collaborate to produce a monthly newspaper, and contribute to our school’s mission and focus as a Technology & Communication magnet.

Prepare/Care/Share: Using Engineering to Make Global Connections! – Garden Grove EA
Educator Grant: $ 5,000
This program will use engineering activities to empower 5th grade students at Murdy Elementary, to create, design and improve technologies. 5th grade teachers will partner with parents and after school Kids Club, to give students real life, hands on, experiences using Engineering is Elementary curriculum. Engineering is an important component of STEM education. More importantly, through helping students become engaged, motivated, and excited about the learning process, it can act as a catalyst for global awareness as students extend their engineering projects to help others!

CIBACS- The Center for International Business and Communications Studies — Huntington Beach UHSD EA
Impact Grant: $ 20,000
Innovation, critical thinking, communication skills and confidence will improve for the students involved in CIBACS. Our successful business program at Edison High School is in need of financial support in order to put the right technology tools in the hands of our creative business students. By giving our energetic young entrepreneurs the right technology to use in class on a daily basis, they will improve both their written and verbal communication skills. Our focus on developing their communication skills is perfectly timed to match the new emphasis on the Common Core Standards.

Imperial Valley Discovery Zone — Imperial Valley TA
Impact Grant: $20,000
The Imperial Valley Discovery Zone (IVDZ) will utilize high school students to facilitate teacher generated NGSS-aligned lessons for elementary-aged students in the Imperial Valley Unified School District. Instructional days will be whole days of STEM learning. IVDZ instruction will include field trips to local sites of science learning. In addition, IVDZ will support STEM literacy in our region by organizing engineering challenges, maintaining a Makerspace, and attending community events with informal STEM exhibits. Our mission is to tap into our region’s natural curiosity to bolster their knowledge and interest in STEM learning. We plan a complete shift in the way science is taught in favor of a more student-centered approach, making learning enjoyable.

Me and the World: Developing Intercultural Communication Competence in Bilingual Students – Lennox TA
Impact Grant: $ 20,000
Moffett Elementary houses the Lennox School District’s Dual Language Program, a 50/50 English and Spanish simultaneous language acquisition model. The IFT Grant was previously awarded to Moffett to create multicultural units that have been successfully implemented; however, through the process of implementation, we have determined that further development is needed. Research on intercultural communication competence stresses that students need to have a more informed understanding of their culture and language and how they see the world in order to successfully interact and build relationships. Our proposal focuses on building metalinguistic awareness and cultural understanding to guide and effectively prepare our students to participate fully in the diverse, interconnected and innovation oriented global societies of the 21st Century.

WeatherBug Weather Station — Martinez EA
Impact Grant: $ 16,240
The instructional shifts required for quality teaching and learning with the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Math, along with the Next Generation Science Standards, emphasize the 4 Cs - creativity, creative thinking, communication and collaboration. Teachers are motivated to integrate math, science, and ELA into meaningful experiences for our students. At John Swett Elementary, we would like to bring the dynamic and interactive WeatherBug program to our district. This includes a standards-based curriculum, professional development, as well as a scientific-grade weather station that can be integrated with our existing technology.
Agriculture Literacy — Marysville Unified TA
**Impact Grant** - $12,195
The Marysville High School Agriculture Department (280 students) would like to continue their role as educators of Agriculture Literacy to over 2,800 K-8 students within the Marysville Joint Unified School District. Agriculture Literacy integrates Agriculture Education into the common core standards of K-8 curriculum and covers all disciplines including science, math, language arts and social studies. The CTA-IFT grant received in 2013 for Agriculture Literacy provided tremendous growth in our district in the area of agriculture education. This past year we have taught NGSS at three other elementary schools and have participated in a nutrition fair with two educational booths. Principals are starting to recruit the high school students to teach a science unit at their individual elementary schools.

Moreno Valley Math League — Moreno Valley EA
**Impact Grant** - $20,000
Teacher leaders at Moreno Valley Unified School District (MVUSD) are pleased to continue the Moreno Valley Math League (MVML) program for 8,000 middle school students and expand it to all 34,000 families of MVUSD during the 2015-16 school year. In 2015-16, MVML intends to transform traditional classrooms into vibrant learning communities by broadening the goal of mathematics education from mere mastery of algorithms to development of critical thinking and problem solving skills. We look forward to another year of successful partnership with IFT to expand this holistic mathematical program that transforms students who were technology consumers into technology creators and innovators.

MDHS IHTA Sustainable Hospitality Proposal — Mount Diablo EA
**Impact Grant** - $20,000
This proposal will use teacher driven, strength-based strategies to further develop a Career Technical Education Pathway at Mount Diablo High School, with Career-Tech Education in Hospitality, Tourism & Recreation. MDHS staff will build a strong community in the classroom while creating a culture of success for all students. Funding will support student Internships and field studies. 12th grade Sustainable Tourism students will complete a 40 hour professional Internship with one of 10 Industry partners, including the National Park Service, East Bay Regional Parks. Students will work 40 hours off campus in exchange for academic credit and a $200 stipend. In addition, 10th & 11th students will earn $200 to participate in a 10 week after-school program or 3 week summer program in which students will learn to grow, harvest, process, cook and serve healthy meals from scratch.

Learn to Grow, Grow to Learn — Oceanside TA
**Educator Grant** - $5,000
“Learn to Grow, Grow to Learn” is a proposal to create a garden at our K-8 school in Oceanside, California. In cooperation with neighboring schools, local students, and the Camp Pendleton community, “Learn to Grow, Grow to Learn” will offer students the opportunity to plan, plant, tend, and reap the fruits of their labor through the academic scope of life science. With student-driven, hands-on learning, “Learn to Grow, Grow to Learn” will sow the seeds of scientific intellect and inquiry within the young minds at Santa Margarita Elementary.

Student Ambassadors— Oceanside TA
**Educator Grant** - $5,000
**Garrison Elementary** Student Ambassadors is a group of 3rd through 5th grade students who participate as leaders and role models in student government. Students are voted and/or appointed by their classmates and teachers and meet weekly to plan and implement services and events for the school and community. We annually hold a "No Bullying Week: Because Nice Matters", a Red Ribbon Week (anti-drug), a Spirit Week and participate in The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society’s "Pennies for Patients" fund raiser. We have also performed in the school talent show and paired with pre-school teachers to host an Autism Awareness Week. The monies from the IFT Grant would be used to augment the current Student Ambassadors program and provide more opportunities for Student Ambassadors to serve the school, students, parents, staff and community.

GoFaR The Goodness of Fit and Readiness — Ontario-Montclair TA
**Impact Grant** - $16,400
To continue GoFaR at Wiltsey Middle School and extend to one more OMSD Middle School. Taught in three phases; Self-Empowerment, Leadership, and Building Community, GoFaR helped Wiltsey students, both through their own efforts and with the help and support of others during the 2014-15 year become academically productive and fulfilled citizens. 41% of students saw an increase in their overall ELA & math grades, 76% of all students increased their reading level by one or more grades and 53% maintained a satisfactory or above rating on their overall behavior performance.

Follow Your Arrow — Palm Springs TA
**Impact Grant** - $10,000
**James Workman Middle School**’s Adventure Education teachers, are challenging their 7th and 8th grade Adventure Classes to “Follow their arrows” wherever they go. The Follow Your Arrow project will be implementing archery, a non-traditional sport, into the existing Adventure Education program. We believe that adding archery to the program will: build self-confidence, advance student motivation, better student behavior, and improve student concentration and focus by using archery skills. Everyone can enjoy success in archery whether or not they are the tallest, fastest, or strongest person around. Archery can help students develop concentration and life skills. It also offers them extra incentives to keep up the good work – and the good grades. Students of all genders, abilities and backgrounds can flourish. Students learn to wait their turn, follow directions, set goals and challenge themselves as they learn the rules and etiquette associated with archery. Archery develops character, and students will benefit the rest of their lives.

NGSS- STEM to STEAM — Palm Springs TA
**Impact Grant** - $20,000
The kindergarten and first grade teams of Della Lindley Elementary, are submitting this application to continue to support our science program, including STEM and STEAM concepts. We also want to expand this vertically to include the first grade. NGSS are based on the principle that children are born investigators, who naturally explore and interact with their world. This school year we recruited parents and older students who are enthusiastic about supporting younger students with questioning, recording data and using technology. At the community level, we have businesses and organizations that provide informative and engaging presentations. At the state level, the California Education and Environmental Initiative continues to provide trainings using NGSS lessons at the kinder and first grade level.
King Arthur’s Chair – Salida TA
**Educator Grant- $ 5,000**
King Arthur’s Chair will provide a motivating experience for students who are learning to read and write. At Independence Charter School, there is a throne (King Arthur’s Chair) in which students read to the class. This program will take the Author’s Chair to another level by archiving students’ readings onto a digital video library. During the first portion of this program, each student will be recorded while reading familiar picture books aloud. Guest readers from the community will be given the opportunity to record a read-aloud for our digital library. The other portion of the program will involve students creating, publishing, and sharing their own stories.

Growing Relationships – San Bernardino TA
**Educator Grant- $ 5,000**
There are so many benefits of adding gardens to our communities’ schools. Many schools, like Davidson Elementary School, lack the ingredients and resources to build their own gardens. Our goal is to partner with Kellogg Garden Products to work with students to build a healthy garden. We will encourage students to build organic gardens, and will be rewarding them for their innovative thinking. Our students will design the blueprint for a raised bed garden and determine all of the materials that will be needed to build and maintain our garden.

Babies and Beads – San Diego EA
**Impact Grant- $ 10,000**
Babies and Beads is a non-profit organization that provides job training, mentoring, parenting education classes, career planning and program services to students who are parenting or are at risk, ages 18 to 22 years old. The goal is to teach these students to be self-sufficient by training them to make and sell jewelry. Profits generated from jewelry sales will assist students in buying baby necessities, while they learn job skills and complete their education. We serve students who attend TRACE/San Diego Unified School District, have a disability, live in San Diego, and have not completed a high school diploma.

Journey Along the Silk Road – Southwest TA
**Educator Grant- $ 3,126**
This grant will support the “Journey Along the Silk Road,” a partnership between 6th grade and primary classrooms at Emory Elementary culminating in a simulation event. IFT funding will be used to cover the cost of event materials, incentives, and teacher compensation. Sixth graders will work with primary buddies on a monthly basis as mentor readers, sharing their knowledge of ancient cultures through digital/oral presentations and other CCSS activities. Sixth grade students will also plan and design all elements for a simulated journey along the Silk Road. Because of the scope of this event, parents will be utilized in planning and organizing.

Lakewood Lion’s Roar – Sunnyvale EA
**Educator Grant- $ 2,695**
In the 2014-15 school year, we began a newspaper for Lakewood Elementary School. The Lion’s Roar has been a big success. Many of our Lakewood students are English learners, and come from households without a high degree of literacy. The Lion’s Roar has given students an opportunity to learn about research, technology, and publishing for authentic audiences, all in a rigorous, collaborative, student-driven environment. The newspaper has helped to make reading and writing exciting for students throughout the school.

Mentoring Middle School Students in Robotics – TA of Long Beach
**Impact Grant- $ 14,020**
Collaboration between California Academy of Mathematics and Science (CAMS) and Colin Powell Academy will help develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by using robotics and the engineering design process. Middle school students will be provided after school bus transportation to CAMS, where the high school students will mentor their younger peers in a series of robotics workshops. These workshops will be designed by students, and will focus on mechanical and electrical systems and computer programming.

Spade Brigade Resiliency Garden – TA of Norwalk-La Mirada
**Educator Grant- $ 5,000**
The Gardenhill Elementary Spade Brigade Garden project is designed to be an intervention for our socially and emotionally at-risk students. The goal of the project is to use gardening to develop key protective traits that affect self-esteem and promote resiliency. Each team will be composed of a community member mentor, student leader, and two children identified as at-risk. Younger members will return the following year as the team leader to train and mentor new members. Students will experience the importance of decisions making, problem solving, delayed gratification, nurturing living organisms, and being concerned and caring for something other than themselves.

Foxboro Garden: Fox to Fork! – Travis Unified TA
**Impact Grant- $ 20,000**
The Foxboro Elementary Garden, established in 1995, is a special place for learners of all ages and abilities. From soil-and-seed to dining plate, it allows hands-on experiences related to many of our goals for Life Science, Math, and Language Arts, to name a few. Raised-bed planting spaces serve as a home base for a variety of projects; we are eager to improve the safety of our aging wooden boxes, and expand with eco-friendly raised-beds. Along with native California plants for our insect and Social Studies units, our beloved outdoor classroom will also benefit from shade structure improvements and multi-student handwashing stations.

GLAD for the Arts – Twin Rivers United Educators
**Impact Grant- $ 17,500**
Educators at Joyce Elementary believe student learning will be enhanced with the school wide implementation of Guided Language Acquisition and Design (GLAD) strategies and visual and performing arts integration. GLAD strategies and VAPA integration will engage and motivate students leading to deeper learning and understanding of concepts, as well as an increase in broadly applicable skills and master of grade level standards. GLAD strategies, with their embedded practices for building teamwork and deeper understanding of concepts, greater sense of classroom community and equity, along with and arts integration, will increase access to learning and make school more meaningful and enjoyable for all students.

Vertical Collaboration in STEAM – United Teachers of Pasadena
**Educator Grant- $ 5,000**
This grant will allow our school, Sierra Madre Elementary, with a focus on the primary grades, to participate in a STEAM CCSS NGSS project based vertical collaboration learning experience. Our emphasis will be on Earth Space Sciences. It will be run by teachers, an outside astronomer, artist, and dance teacher, and community scientists. As a performing arts school, we have seen where weaving the arts into all subjects will make students feel more alive. We want to add the “A” to STEM and create STEAM for this...
The collaboration of teachers and outside professionals will create a curriculum that students across grade levels will teach each other. This experience will culminate in a school-wide, community-based Science Star Gazing Night. It will be rich with information about the planets, art, a Jet Propulsion Lab written play, and opportunities to look through telescopes at the evening stars.

**Agriculture Science – Val Verde TA**  
*Educator Grant- $ 5,000*  
Having an agriculture science class gives Lakeside Middle School students the opportunity to become introduced to crop sustainability, learning about the environment, improving leadership and social skills and working together to accomplish a common goal.

**Bio Garden Center – Victor Valley TA**  
*Educator Grant- $5,000*  
In an Adelanto High School biology classroom, life is discussed every day, but rarely do the students encounter actual living things in their study of life; this proposal changes that. Our proposal is to have students learn biology by working with living things throughout the year in cycles, as biology does. The focus will be a student maintained classroom garden center that gets set up the first week of school during the instruction of the scientific method. As the year progresses, the garden’s cycle will begin. As we study each unit during the year we will focus it on building it around building the classroom garden project (since there are several classes there will be many layers going on at any one time for data collection (terraria, hydroponics, aquaponics, cloning, etc.). As we study genetics, students will be breeding fruit flies, which they will feed to goldfish. The goldfish will then be excreting urine into the water which goes to fertilizing the plants whose roots hang into the water taking in the nitrogen from the urine. The plants then when mature are starter plants for faculty gardens that we can sell to promote the ongoing nature of our cyclic project.

**RBV Robotics – Vista TA**  
*Impact Grant- $ 20,000*  
The Rancho Buena Vista High School Robotics program will expand on the strengths of RBV’s Beginning Robotics course creating more opportunities for students to be team members and team leaders in a variety of robotic and design competitions. Student surveys show that design challenges have ignited interest in engineering design in the classroom, and students have enjoyed learning to code through robotics. The grant will provide materials and robots have student run STEM clinics and robotic competitions in the classroom, school wide, and in local and regional community competitions, increasing teacher, community members, and parent involvement in student learning.

**River Jim’s Adventure Education – Willows Unified TA**  
*Impact Grant- $ 19,958*  
This proposal is for River Jim’s Adventure Education Canoeing Experiences to include: Four Willows Intermediate School 6th grade class one-day canoe orientation and team-building experiences; Two 1-day canoe skills orientation and water safety days; Three 3-day canoe campout experiences for 7th and 8th graders; Three parent-student-teacher potluck orientation dinners. The parent-student-teacher potlucks would be for relationship development between parents and teachers, and to communicate what we will be doing on the canoeing field trips with their children. The overarching purpose of the canoe camping experiences is to connect students to their teachers and school in a fun and novel way.
IFT Grant Application Outline

This is an example of the application questions. It is recommended that you compose the answers to the paragraph questions in a word processing program and then cut and paste that text into the online application.

- **Contact Information:** Provide the contact information for the Grant Coordinator in the fields below. The Grant Coordinator is the lead contact person for the grant.
  
  First Name  
  Last Name  
  Title  
  E-mail Address  
  Telephone  
  Address, City, State, Zip

- **Association Information:** If you need assistance with completing the Association Information section, you may contact your Site Rep, Local Association President or Board Member.
  
  Association Name  
  Association Mailing Address  
  Association City, State, Zip  
  Association President Name  
  Association President Email  
  Association President Home/Cell Number  
  CTA Staff Member Name  
  CTA Staff Member Email  
  CTA Staff Member Office/Cell Number

- **School Information:**
  
  School Name  
  School Street Address, City, Zip  
  School Phone Number  
  School Fax Number  
  Grade Level(s)  
  Number of Students  
  School District Name

- **Team Members:** If you are working with team members, please provide the following information for each of your team members. If you are identified as the Grant Coordinator, you do not need to include yourself again in this section.
  
  Team Member Name  
  Email Address  
  Home/Cell Number

- **Request Information:**
  
  Project Title  
  What Type of Grant Are You Applying For? Educator Grant or Impact Grant  
  (Educator Grant- Grants awarded up to $5,000; Impact Grant- Grants awarded up to $20,000)
• Write a one paragraph (75-100 words) summary of your grant proposal.

• Using the Seven Strength-Based Matrix Factors as a guide, answer the following questions.
  Matrix Factor 1 - “Student Centered” Describe how your grant proposal will enrich student creativity, invention, and resourcefulness.

  Matrix Factor 2 - “Work Oriented” Describe how your grant proposal will promote student responsibility and self-reliance.

  Matrix Factor 3 - “Student Relations” Describe how your grant proposal will expand positive student interdependence.

  Matrix Factor 4 - “Results Oriented” Describe how your grant proposal emphasizes student strengths over deficits.

  Matrix Factor 5 - “School-Wide Relations” Describe how your grant proposal will increase commitment from school-community stakeholders for the teaching and learning process.

  Matrix Factor 6 - “School-Family Relationships” Describe how your grant proposal will integrate parental personal strengths and positive experiences into the teaching and learning environment.

  Matrix Factor 7 - “Future Oriented” Describe how your grant proposal will boost student expectations, hope and optimism about the future.

• Include a timeline or flow chart that indicates approximately when major activities will occur.

• Include a budget, table or chart that includes the items/materials needed and approximate costs for each.

• If applicable, list any additional funds that you have requested or anticipate receiving and any “in-kind” contributions that will assist in supporting the cost of your IFT grant proposal.

• Signature page: Should this project be awarded grant funds, the Association needs to serve as the fiscal agent to distribute grant funds and help the applicant prepare a final summary of financial expenditures. The Association president’s signature will be necessary to complete the application.
IFT GRANT APPLICATION - Questions

Factor One: **Student Centered** - Emphasis is placed on learning over teaching.

Grant Requirement: Describe how your grant proposal will enrich student creativity, invention, and resourcefulness.

Factor Two: **Work Oriented** - Work is valued, purposeful, and relevant to students.

Grant Requirement: Describe how your grant proposal will promote student responsibility and self-reliance.

Factor Three: **Student Relations** - Students view other students as supportive and interested in their well-being.

Grant Requirement: Describe how your grant proposal will expand positive student interdependence.

Factor Four: **Results Oriented** - Students understand strength-based thinking increases capacity and resilience to achieve goals.

Grant Requirement: Describe how your grant proposal emphasizes strengths over deficit-based thinking.

Factor Five: **School-Wide Relations** - All school stakeholders are responsible for the education of each student.

Grant Requirement: Describe how your grant proposal will increase commitment from school-community stakeholders for the teaching and learning process.

Factor Six: **School-Family Relations** - Parents as strong partners in the teaching and learning process are encouraged to be involved in their children’s education.

Grant Requirement: Describe how your grant proposal will integrate parental personal strengths and positive experiences into the teaching and learning environment.

Factor Seven: **Future Oriented** - Students have a dramatic, positive image of the future.

Grant Requirement: Describe how your grant proposal will boost student expectations, hope and optimism about the future.
School Visits Affirm Value of 2015-16 Strength-Based Grants

One of the most rewarding parts of the IFT Grant Program is traveling around the state and checking in with our grant recipients in their classrooms, at their schools and in their communities. IFT believes that it is in this environment, their “natural habitat,” where IFT staff, local Association leaders, regional teacher think tank members and supportive colleagues can join together to learn from the 2015-16 grant recipients and their students.

For this school year, the IFT Grant Selection Committee selected 38 grant projects statewide, awarding a record total of $491,910. That broad base of grant projects translates to more than three months of crisscrossing California and discovering the innovative, strength-based ideas that CTA members are implementing to enhance learning opportunities for their students.

This year’s grant visit cycle began in January in the Twin Rivers USD at Joyce Elementary in North Highlands. Anita Benitas, IFT staffer, met grant recipient Julieanne Neal and her students for a celebration of her GLAD for the Arts grant. They were joined by Kristen Finney, President of Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE) and Rob Myers (Principal of F.C. Joyce Elementary). Fortunately, Anita loves to travel. Her grant journeys will continue until early May. She will talk with CTA members from Brawley to Huntington Beach, from Fontana to Fresno, from Sierra Madre to San Diego.

Julianne and her colleagues believe that student learning will be enhanced with the school-wide implementation of Guided Language Acquisition and Design (GLAD) strategies and visual and performing arts integration. They designed a project that would incorporate this approach with VAPA integration to engage and motivate students. The educators at Joyce believed that GLAD strategies, with their embedded practices for building teamwork and deeper understanding of concepts, greater sense of classroom community and equity, along with and arts integration, would increase access to learning and make school more meaningful and enjoyable for all students. They felt this would lead to deeper learning and mastery of grade level standards.

More than 150 students and parents from the F.C. Joyce school community gathered together (above and below right) on January 28, 2016 for a Learning Demonstration Night, one of several that will be held this year. (Below left) Kristen Finney, TRUE President also attended the after-school learning event to show her support for the strength-based work being accomplished by grant recipient, Julieanne Neal and her colleagues. In recent years, TRUE also supported the Algebra Success Academy, a Twin Rivers-based mathematics project.
IFT Grant Recipients + Think Tank Members + Emphasis on Strength-Based Teaching and Learning = The IFT Teacher Innovation Expo!

When hundreds of CTA members gather in Orange County (Garden Grove) the weekend of February 26th-28th for the CTA Good Teaching Conference-South, they will have several opportunities to sample strength-based teacher change.

First, all systems are go for Friday’s IFT Teacher Innovation Expo all-day preconference. Nearly one hundred educators are registered for this teacher-planned and teacher-led Expo that will feature presentations from nine successful IFT grant recipients. Among the attendees will be more than two dozen IFT Teacher Think Tank members and their invited guests.

Then on Saturday, the first day of the Good Teaching Conference, participants can again learn more about the Institute for teaching’s strength-based approach. There is a teacher driven session by members of IFT’s San Diego Teacher Think Tank called “Just Do It-A Practical Guide to Empower Educational Practitioners.”

Newest IFT Board Member Brings Passion for the Classroom

IFT welcomes Caesar Chavez High School English teacher Justin McGehee as the newest member of the IFT Board of Directors. Justin, who is a member of the Natomas Teacher Think Tank, becomes the fifth full-time teacher to join IFT’s Board in the past two and a half years. Predictably for a Language Arts teacher, Justin’s way with words has enabled him to succeed not only in his classroom, but also as a member of the Natomas Teacher Think Tank, CTA’s Assessment Literacy Task Force and the Stockton Teachers Association’s Bargaining Team.

Justin’s involvement in the Union was sparked by his appointment as a VIVA Teacher, a group of educators assembled by the National Education Association to assess teachers; attitudes toward accountability. Out of one thousand people who were involved in the project, Justin was one of 16 who was invited to Washington D.C. to present the report to NEA.

According to Justin, not only did this year-long experience “permanently change my view of the profession,” but it enabled him to become acquainted with CTA President Eric Heins. After meeting Justin in Washington D.C., it was Heins who recommended that he participate in the IFT Teacher Think Tank program.

In his non-teaching time, Justin helps design local assessments for his district, trains his colleagues in formative assessment, works with the District’s Professional Development Center and serves as a Common Core curriculum designer. Although he has no formal leadership position at his school, he is regarded as a leader by his teaching colleagues. Justin is married to Rachel and is the father of two sons, Geist, 9 and Zac, 7.

Justin McGehee is one of 28 teachers who have worked at Stockton’s Chavez High School since it opened in 2005. He teaches 10th & 11th-grade English, as well as Level 1 ELD. He also serves as the lab proctor for the school’s online credit recovery program.
Start-Up

**Getting Started** – To become a member of the CTA IFT Strength-Based HUB you need to register, login and complete your profile. Your profile jumpstarts the conversations with other HUB members. Your profile is a place to let other HUB members know your opinions, experiences and expertise. Please note other HUB members will be able to review your profile.

**The Hub Menu** – The HUB menu is located at the top right corner. The HUB includes all of the social media features you normally find on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, just to mention a few. Start by clicking your Wall in the HUB menu. The Wall shows all of your activities. The Wall uses the Activity Stream as interactive wall-to-wall posts. You can show your support by clicking the “like” thumbs-up symbol. You can upload images and videos to the Wall as well. Standard image types (jpg, png, gif) can be uploaded if you enable “User Photo Uploading”. Play with the various features in the HUB menu to experience the power of the HUB.
Reach Out – Through the CTA IFT Strength-Based Hub you can reach out beyond your school and district. Make friends, discuss issues, review IFT grants and make your voice be heard. With the HUB you have the opportunity to move beyond your own network of colleagues and friends. You will be able to start new relationships through direct messages. You can form groups which can be expanded into forums. Upload images, like and support ideas and opinions and express your values and beliefs throughout the HUB.

Plant Culture of Success Seeds – Three things to keep in mind: (1) Do everything you can to nurture and feed your HUB relationships; (2) Keep your relationships fresh and up to date; and (3) Invite other friends to join and become active participants in the HUB.

Creating a Culture of Success – The HUB is a large and small interconnected network of teachers working to create a culture of success for all children. Focusing on the seven factors of success, teachers discuss their ideas on how strength-based teacher driven change can reframe the future of public education. Moving from one group and forum to another, messaging, imaging and giving voice to a diversity of thought and possibility, teachers with other school stakeholders are creating a dynamic community that is growing every day.

Join and Organize Online Communities – The HUB is not only useful for small communities where you know each member personally, you can easily organize a community with thousands of colleagues and community members, interacting with each other in very sophisticated ways. The HUB is a community of active producers; teachers and school community members who believe talents and strengths should drive the learning process and innovation and creativity begin at the ground level. And because the HUB platform is designed around open source values, everyone involved is encouraged to create and develop new strategies and approaches to increase and expand the strength-based teacher driven community.
The Seven Factors of Success – The Strength-Based Hub is a unique place for educators to discuss and experiment with strength-based thinking generally, and specifically the seven factors which drive a culture of success. The seven factors represent the framework for the IFT Grant Program. IFT has provided grants to California's teachers and local CTA chapters who are moving strength-based theory and thinking to practice, breaking new ground in school change.

Strength-Based HUB Features – Start a strength-based group, organize a forum, find and make new friends, share images and videos and become part of a teacher community of hope, possibility and success. All CTA members are invited to join to make their voice heard. Using the HUB features below, build your own strength-based community from the ground-up.

Profile – Complete your profile so other HUB members will know your professional interests and background.

Wall – Like Facebook, members can write on each other’s Walls and “Like” each other’s posts.

Media – Members can upload photos, organize them into albums, and tag their friends. The HUB is available on any device where you can easily swipe photos.

Settings – This feature allows you to review the HUB features, including notification settings.

Friend Connections – This one we all know from Facebook, where you can keep track of your friends.
Private Messaging – A perfect way of communicating in a less social and more personal manner.

Activity Streams – Comparable to a Facebook Timeline, this is where you keep track of your connections, group mentions, posts, comments and activities.

Notifications – This feature ensures you have a 360 degree knowledge of what’s taking place in the HUB.

Groups – Any member can create a group. When a member creates a group, this person automatically becomes the group administrator. The group administrator can invite friends to congregate, establish communications among members, extend privileges to other members, and enable group forums.

Forums – Members of the HUB have a virtual place to meet where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged. Acting as a marketplace for ideas, forums allow members to invent, dialogue and produce strength-based strategies locally and statewide.
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IFT Board of Directors

The members of the Board are: Eric C. Heins, Theresa Montaño, David B. Goldberg, Jim Groth, E. Toby Boyd, Adam Ebrahim, Eric Enriquez, Michelle Ramos, Serina West, Justin McGehee, Liane Cismowksi, and Beverly Tucker. They are supported by Joe Nuñez, CTA Executive Director. Emeritus Staff: Sheila Bell, Steve DePue, Margaret Wallace and Yale Wishnick. Other CTA Staff: Accounting Manager Wei Pan and IPD Manager Justo Robles. CSO liaison: Angela Marese Boyle.

The IFT Board meets in Burlingame every other month during the school year.
Additional Handouts during the IFT Training Session
Local Control Funding Formula:  
An Opportunity to Launch or Expand Parent/Teacher Home Visits

We know home visits are proven, inexpensive and sustainable in California communities. **Now is a great time to start or expand your local home visit program!** The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in California is changing how schools are funded by prioritizing the students and communities in greatest need. The LCFF lifts up parent engagement as one of the eight priorities considered when creating local plans for spending the money most effectively. Actually, home visits impact all eight priority areas by strengthening teaching, improving school climates and connectedness, engaging families and boosting student success.

While the LCFF process assumes that if advisory groups of parents and community advocates give input on the district plan, transparency and accountability will naturally occur. However, in our experience, long term success in partnerships also requires an ongoing relationship, one that is built over time with a mutually beneficial exchange. Luckily, there is a proven model for building high quality relationships between districts, families and communities. If implemented with integrity, this model of doing home visits will help the state implement the Local Control Funding Formula effectively, transparently, with accountability, and in compliance with all 8 state priorities above.

**What makes our model of home visits so effective?**  
Two trained school staff members, including the child’s teacher, visit the child’s family, share hopes and dreams and, relying on their common values, set in motion a plan for action to boost the academic and social success for the student.

**What is the cost of a home visit program?**  
Local plans should include a long-term strategy of home visits and family engagement training. We can help you budget this, and identify appropriate funding. Over the past decade, we have found that schools can conduct and sustain hundreds of homes each year for an average of $15,000.

**What are our non-negotiable principles?**  
Visits are always voluntary, set up in advance, never targeted to “problems,” compensated, and always done in pairs. The teacher uses the strengths they learn about the child and the family to make the child’s education more relevant. The family feels more connection to the teacher and becomes more involved in their child’s school experience.

**Does the PTHVP really meet LCFF Priorities?**  
The state priorities involve teacher credentials and effectiveness, student attendance, school climate and behavior, academic success and family engagement. Hundreds of schools are reporting positive benefits in these areas. Independent evaluations of schools across the US that have implemented home visits have found: 1) increased attendance; 2) decreased behavior problems; 3) increased academic success on standardized tests; 4) increased engagement of parents and grandparents in school; and, 5) increased cultural competency for school staff.

**Won’t teachers be turned off by one more program to add?**  
“Teachers love our program and unions support our model because it works,” says Rose. “Unlike many things we ask of teachers, home visits helps with skills and rewards that relate directly to why they were attracted to teaching in the first place: making a difference to children in the classroom,” she says, pointing out that with new programs and standards to implement, such as the Common Core, visits are a tool they welcome.

**How can I learn more about the project and/or training in our area?**  
Visit [www.pthvp.org](http://www.pthvp.org) or contact Carrie Rose, PTHVP Executive Director (916-752-3206/carrie@pthvp.org.)  
Contact Dick Gale, Manager CTA Institute for Teaching (619-683-3990/Dgale@cta.org) to find out why CTA and NEA strongly support this program.