



Institute for Teaching

Where Teachers Are Building the Future of Education in California

Have you ever seen one of your students struggling and known exactly what he needed to improve? Have you ever had innovative ideas to improve student achievement in your school? Were you allowed to implement those solutions? It's the answers to these questions and the belief that teachers know best that led CTA to create the Institute for Teaching (IFT).

Assisting Schools of Greatest Need

The CTA-IFT supports a community-based planning process to improve student learning. All stakeholders: teachers, parents, principals, community members and business leaders must be involved in the school improvement process.

Reforming high school education: The High School Outreach Program (HSOP) is based on the premise that involving teachers and community stakeholders will facilitate student learning by embracing learning over teaching, choosing collaboration over isolation, and encouraging asset over deficit thinking. Funded by a \$3 million grant the HSOP was piloted in seven high schools in Compton, Hartford, Montebello, Norwalk, Sacramento and Santa Maria.

Reducing High School Dropouts: This CTA-IFT project is targeted at reducing high school dropouts and increasing student retention. The program will use a strength-based design to identify practices and behaviors that significantly increase African American and Latino student retention and reduce the number of high school student dropouts. Through this grant, IFT expects to discover a successful, replicable design that high school communities can utilize to reduce minority student dropouts.

Universal Voluntary Preschool: CTA-IFT has just completed a highly successful program to increase teacher awareness and build community support of universal voluntary preschool. The goal of the program is to show the importance of quality preschool programs and the impact they have on student learning not just at the elementary school level, but throughout a child's education career, including high school and college.

THE IFT GOAL

The Institute for Teaching is a CTA nonprofit organization that is designed to create better teaching and learning conditions in all California public schools and to create teacher-driven solutions to help struggling schools. In order to find innovative solutions for schools, the IFT seeks solutions from the experts: classroom teachers and education professionals.

THE IFT APPROACH

Focusing on Teacher Skills

Unlike elected representatives and policy-makers, classroom teachers face real educational issues each day and are extremely knowledgeable regarding the challenges our schools need to overcome. Teachers are having more and more conversations about initiatives, strategies, and approaches that really work and can make a difference for all students. What makes this most exciting is that when you boil it down, school reform becomes a matter of common sense, conventional wisdom, and good old-fashioned principles and values. It's stuff that teachers have known for generations.

Changing the Direction of School Change

Over the past several years, leading foundations and think tanks have distributed untold sums of money to fix what they considered to be school problems. Only recently have a few enlightened members of the public policy community recognized the value of the knowledge and skills teachers bring to the school change process in focusing on what works in our schools.

Focusing on What Works

Instead of surveying students, teachers, parents and other individuals about what's not working in our schools, the CTA-IFT is more interested in observing and asking questions about programs, structures, teacher and administrator decision-making models, school-family relationships, and teaching and learning strategies that work.

Stay informed about CTA's Institute for Teaching at www.cta.org/community/ift and www.teacherdrivenchange.org