

# California Teachers Association Foundation for Teaching and Learning

## CTA Institute for Teaching

### High School PD Demonstration Project to Reduce Dropouts *Participating High School Application*

**Overview:** A grant has been received from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to pioneer the use of an inquiry-based reform process, Positive Deviance (PD), in reducing the number of high school dropouts.

California's high schools will be invited to participate in this grant. One or two high school communities will be selected by the Institute for Teaching (IFT) Board. The selected high schools will serve as demonstration sites for using the PD Approach in schools to reduce student dropout rates.

<p><b>Applications must be received by the CTA IFT on or before 5:00 pm on September 30, 2008. Applicants will be notified on or before October 31, 2008.</b></p>
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#### **What is Positive Deviance?**

Positive Deviance (PD) is a development approach that is based on the premise that solutions to community problems already exist within the community. The positive deviance approach thus differs from traditional "needs based" or problem-solving approaches in that it does not focus primarily on identification of needs and the external inputs necessary to meet those needs or solve problems. Instead it seeks to identify and optimize existing resources and solutions within the community to solve community problems.

#### **What does it mean to be a Demonstration Site?**

One or two schools will be selected to participate. Participating schools will implement their own PD processes at their school sites with the support of CTA-IFT.

A general information meeting will be held with the teachers, administrators and staff from each of the selected participating high schools. The purpose of this meeting is to explain and answer questions about this grant proposal and the Positive Deviance approach.

Similar meetings will be held with students and parents. From each of these meetings representatives will volunteer to be part of the high school PD Team. Two individuals from each of the teams will be selected as the key facilitators for their respective groups. The High School Team will work closely with the IFT Positive Deviance Statewide Team. Other required commitments from high school teams include:

1. Provide full and timely support for implementation of the PD process.
2. Participate in all learning activities among the High school teams – monthly conference calls, face-to-face meetings, and online interactions.
3. Share lessons learned in PD implementation efforts with other high schools and the Positive Deviance Statewide Team.

4. Welcome visits from representatives of other interested high school communities to learn about the PD implementation experience.
5. Help plan for evaluation of the PD results and provide required data in a timely fashion to assess the impact of the initiative on reducing high school dropouts, including facilitating the availability of staff for discussions with researchers and writers.

### **Training and Technical Assistance**

Participating high schools will receive onsite learning and facilitation support on the PD process for a team of teachers, administrators, students and parents. It will cover the PD process, guidance on how it can be applied to the reduction of high school dropouts, and how best to involve an increasing number of school community stakeholders in the PD Approach to reduce high school dropouts. This support will be overseen by individuals experienced in the PD Approach. On average, five day-long on-site facilitation and training sessions and regular phone consultations for each high school team will take place.

Continual interaction - through monthly conference calls, online resources, and face-to-face meetings - will also be facilitated among high school teams to allow stakeholders to learn from each other's experiences in implementing the PD approach and, ultimately, in discovering new strategies that make it possible to reduce high school dropouts.

The education and facilitation assistance provided each high school team will cover the basic PD steps:

1. **Conducting Community Orientation:** Team members from all high school sites will learn about the PD approach and implementation process. Orientation includes hands-on practice with the specific PD design steps.
2. **Situation Assessment and Analysis:** Team members will learn how to use and implement focus group discussions and key stakeholder interviews to document current practices related to retaining students.
3. **PD Inquiry:** Team members will use quality indicator data, results of surveys, and focus group discussions to identify and learn from the positive deviants in their communities. The PD Inquiry will uncover the uncommon, but demonstrably successful behaviors and strategies that enable high school students to remain in school.
4. **Community Feedback with Action Planning and Implementation:** Team members will learn how to analyze the PD behaviors/strategies, share the findings with community stakeholders, and design and implement initiatives that enable everyone in the community to begin to practice the PD behaviors/strategies.

### **CTA-IFT Funding**

Each participating high school will be provided \$12,000.00 for teacher release time to participate in the five day training. This funding is based on the following formula: 12 participating teachers X \$200.00 for substitute teachers X 5 days = \$12,000.00. Schools can request additional funds to provide teacher release time for participation in the implementation of the PD approach at the school. Each high school may also supplement IFT funding to increase the number of participating teachers.

### **How will schools be selected?**

In order to serve as a demonstration site, high schools must apply to participate prior to September 30, 2008 and agree to participate in a school site visit if they are selected as a finalist (see "School Visitation

Process" below). Demonstration sites will be chosen based on demonstrated need for the project and commitment by administrators, certificated staff, and other key stakeholders (as evidenced in the application and school site visit). Schools must also have the approval and support of their school district superintendent, school principal, and CTA local chapter president.

## **School Visitation Process**

Finalists will participate in a one-day school site visit as part of the application process. The school site visit will occur in October. Schools will be asked to schedule the following for the visit:

1. Meetings with the school principal and other school administrators as appropriate;
2. A school tour;
3. Group meeting with key teacher leaders (e.g., department chairs, instructional leads); and
4. A meeting open to all certificated staff at the school to introduce them to the demonstration project and gauge their support (Note: at least 70% of your certificated staff must demonstrate commitment to the project in order to be selected as a demonstration site).

Additional information about the school visit will be provided to finalists prior to the school visit.

**High School PD Demonstration Project to Reduce Dropouts  
Participating High School Application**

*Directions: This application must be completed in full. All responses should be typed or printed clearly. If you have any questions contact the CTA IFT at [IFT@cta.org](mailto:IFT@cta.org) or phone 916-212-9297.*

Name of the person that is completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

High School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

CTA Chapter Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**School Information**

Number of students served: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of certificated staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Percent of students who receive free/reduced lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

2007-2008 API Ranking: \_\_\_\_\_ 2007-2008 Similar Schools Ranking: \_\_\_\_\_

Current freshman retention rate: \_\_\_\_\_

Current dropout rate (all students): \_\_\_\_\_

2008 CAHSEE pass rate: \_\_\_\_\_

2008 graduation rate: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your student population (e.g., ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status).



4. Please list other reforms, initiatives, or interventions that your school is currently engaged in.

**SIGNATURES OF SUPPORT**

I fully support this application to the CTA IFT to participate in the PD Grant to reduce high school dropouts

CTA Local Chapter President: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

School Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

District Superintendent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**Application is due on or before 5:00 pm on September 30, 2008**

Please submit to Yale Wishnick, Ed.D., Department Manager, CTA IFT, via email or regular mail.

Email: [IFT@cta.org](mailto:IFT@cta.org)

Mail: Dr. Yale S. Wishnick  
CTA/IFT  
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Sacramento, CA 95834