

## ■ Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is a Regional Educational Service Center (RESA)?

A RESA is a group of school districts, assembled by region, that work together to provide high-quality, cost-effective educational services for each other, as well as for other organizations and entities.

CREC is one of six RESAs in the state. They were established more than 30 years ago by legislative mandate. For more information, visit [the RESA Alliance website](#).

### 2. What services does CREC provide?

Magnet schools usually come to mind when someone mentions CREC. Managing high-quality magnet schools is only a piece of what CREC does. CREC has more than 10 divisions. Each offer specialized services to school districts, nonprofit organizations, corporations, and professionals in and outside of Connecticut, including:

- Professional development workshops for educators
- High-quality educational programs for students in preschool through grade 12 at 16 interdistrict magnet schools
- Adult education classes, including GED and ELL classes
- Before-and-after care available for students
- Specialized educational programs and facilities for students with hearing impairments, special needs, and a variety of other physical and behavioral challenges
- Customized educational programming for schools and school districts
- Curriculum and assessment development and training
- Construction management, operations, and facilities services
- Cooperative purchasing and other business services
- Innovative partnership programs that help adults develop job-ready skills
- On-site technology services for schools and towns
- Transportation services

For a list of CREC divisions and the services they offer, visit [our Services and Programs page](#).

### 3. How do I apply for a job at CREC?

Visit [our Careers page](#) to view our available employment opportunities and for access to our online employment application.

### 4. How do I enroll my son or daughter in a CREC school?

Families who wish to apply to a CREC magnet school must go through a lottery process managed by the Connecticut State Department of Education's Regional School Choice Office (RSCO). To apply for the lottery, visit [the RSCO website](#).

### 5. Which schools and programs does the RSCO lottery include?

The RSCO lottery includes the Hartford Region Open Choice Program and approximately 45 interdistrict magnet schools, including 16 CREC schools.

**6. How does the lottery system work?**

Families submit a lottery application in the fall for up to five magnet schools, and/or up to five Open Choice districts/schools. In the spring, RSCO randomly selects Hartford and suburban applicants for placement. Students who do not receive an initial placement offer are waitlisted and may receive an offer through the end of September.

**7. Who is eligible to apply to the RSCO lottery?**

Students who reside in Connecticut at the time of application can apply. A Connecticut address (not a P.O. Box) is required to complete the RSCO lottery application.

**8. I applied last year to the RSCO lottery and did not receive a placement. Do I have to apply again this year?**

Yes. You must submit an application every year you wish to be considered for the RSCO lottery. All waitlists expire on October 1.

**9. What is difference between Open Choice and a magnet school?**

The Hartford Region Open Choice Program:

- Students attend a non-magnet, public school outside of their hometown.
- Hartford students may attend a suburban, non-magnet public school in grades Pre-K4 – 10.
- Suburban students may attend a non-magnet, public Hartford district school in grades K – 12.
- Once enrolled into the program, students can attend schools in their new districts until high school graduation.

Interdistrict Magnet Schools:

- Located in Hartford and surrounding towns, have specialized educational themes
- Hartford and suburban residents may apply

**10. How do Open Choice students get to school?**

CREC, on behalf of the Regional School Choice Office, provides transportation to and from school.

**11. How is CREC funded?**

CREC funds come primarily from two sources:

1. Government funds, which include federal and state grants, tuition, and contracts.
2. Business funds, which CREC receives in return for services and products provided to the public, corporations, and other governmental agencies.

A third source of funding comes from local school districts that join CREC with an annual fee of 20 cents per pupil.

**12. Is it possible to receive a placement offer to more than one magnet school or to receive a magnet school placement offer and an Open Choice placement offer?**

No. On the RSCO lottery application, you may select up to five magnet schools, and/or up to five Open Choice districts/schools but your student may only receive one placement offer. If your student is offered a placement in one of the magnet schools selected on your application, he or she will be removed from all remaining magnet school and Open Choice waitlists. If your student receives an Open Choice placement offer, he or she will be removed from all magnet school waitlists.

**13. Is there tuition for prekindergarten (Pre-K)?**

Per General Statutes of Connecticut, families of newly enrolled **prekindergarten students**, whose family income is above 75 percent of the state median income, will be required to pay a tuition fee for the 2018–19 school year. The fee for prekindergarten students will be determined annually, but will not exceed \$4,000 per child. *Families whose income is at or below 75 percent of the state median income will not be required to pay tuition.*

**14. I have a child who already attends a RSCO magnet school or the Open Choice Program. If another of my children applies, is he/she guaranteed a placement?**

No. Your applicant child may receive a preference, if offered, which improves an applicant's chances of being placed through the lottery. A sibling preference is reserved for the sibling of a child already attending the school. RSCO defines a sibling as a brother or sister living in the same house and sharing at least one biological parent or legal guardian. Preferences are not a guarantee of placement.

**15. Does RSCO give preference to twins/multiples applying to magnet schools through the RSCO lottery?**

Yes. Similar to sibling preferences, verified twins/multiples will be considered based on seats available in the magnet schools listed on your applications. The twins' applications must include the same (or identical) magnet schools and grades. Parents should rank the same magnet schools exactly on each twin's lottery application.

**16. What is the difference between a charter school and a magnet school?**

Both charter schools and magnet schools are schools of choice, meaning that families choose to apply for their child to attend these schools. They are both public schools that receive a portion of their funding from the state.

Charter schools operate under a different set of rules and regulations that vary by state. In Connecticut, charter schools receive public funds, but function as autonomous public schools. The rules, structure, and charter authorization for charter schools in Connecticut are established and monitored by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The state must approve the school's "charter," in which it lays out its mission, achievement goals, and methods of teaching and assessment. Charter schools can be managed and/or funded by a variety of institutions. Admissions standards vary from school to school. Most charter schools manage their own enrollment process and lottery.

Magnet schools are public schools that focus on a particular theme, such as the arts, science and technology, liberal arts, etc., with the goal of enrolling a racially diverse student body. Some magnet schools are set up by single districts and only enroll students from that town/city, while others may be set up by regional entities and/or state government and typically serve students from a variety of towns. Magnet schools have integration targets set and monitored by the state. The admissions process at CREC magnet schools is through a lottery managed by the Connecticut State Department of Education's Regional School Choice Office. Other magnet schools in Connecticut may have different admissions processes.