



Your Career At CREC

Imagining Your Professional Future



Welcome to CREC

Welcome to the CREC family! CREC is made up of dreamers, builders, protectors, and doers. As a CREC employee, your work will be filled with opportunities to improve the lives of children and families.

You are CREC's greatest resource. The women and men who work for CREC are the measure of what this organization can do. Whether in administration, teaching, support, professional, or clinical services – your abilities, energies, and commitment largely determine what this organization will accomplish.

You have also become part of a community of learners. *Your career at CREC* will bring many opportunities for personal growth and career advancement. This document provides a foundation for your role as a member of this dynamic and growing organization.

Thank you for your commitment. We are happy you are here.

This document was produced under the leadership of CREC's third executive director, Bruce E. Douglas, Ph.D. We are grateful to Bruce for his vision, for his enduring commitment to CREC, and for being a genuine example of what it means to be a mission-driven leader.

Greg J. Florio, Ed.D.
Executive Director

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OUR VISION

CREC's vision, core values, and mission are the foundation for your work with the community and your interactions with other employees. We believe that these principles, in combination with collaborative professional relationships and ample opportunities for growth, help us live out the daily actions, behaviors, and beliefs that are essential to serving the best interests of children and families.

VISION STATEMENT

Every student can and shall learn at high levels and, therefore, must have access to all educational resources within the region through the system of public schools served by CREC.

CORE VALUES

- **TRUST:** Built on personal integrity, and forthright and ethical communication
- **LEADERSHIP:** Born of wisdom, experience, tenacity, and courage
- **DIVERSITY:** Striving to promote social justice through our programs and our actions
- **QUALITY:** Through a culture of continuous improvement
- **COLLABORATION:** By partnering with our 35 member districts, area agencies, and by maintaining collegiality within our divisions and programs and among our staff

MISSION

To work with boards of education of the Capitol Region to improve the quality of public education for all learners. In order to achieve its mission, CREC will:

- Promote cooperation and collaboration with local school districts and other organizations committed to the improved quality of public education
- Provide cost-effective services to member districts and other clients
- Listen and respond to client needs for the improved quality of public education
- Provide leadership in the region through the quality of its services and its ability to identify and share quality services of its member districts and other organizations committed to public education

WHO YOU ARE

You have been chosen to represent CREC, because you have shown an intense commitment to social justice, a high level of intellect, the ability to apply knowledge to your work, and substantial growth potential.

You are now a part of the CREC team. CREC employees are efficient, responsive, and dedicated to serving children, families, and educators. We seek people who find their self worth in helping others and who take pride in their work. CREC's mission demands it.

WHO WE ARE

CREC is a leader in the educational landscape. Our organization has a proven record of developing ground-breaking and cost-effective programs to advance education for children and adults.

We are education innovators. We run schools that are closing the achievement gap, build state-of-the-art facilities, and are a leading provider of services that help school districts, businesses, and non-profits improve their performance.

CREC exists to improve the quality of public education. All our programs have been designed to assist in fulfilling our mission. CREC believes in bottom-up innovation and top-down facilitation. In other words, we know that our experts work in the field, and we listen to our experts.

CREC sets a high standard for excellence. CREC is a rewarding and demanding environment in which to work. We reward our employees for demonstrating self-efficacy, innovation, and creative risk-taking. CREC staff members are flexible, able to adapt to new areas of service, new locations, and new clients.

The CREC model encourages collegiality and collaborative thinking. We believe that a team of committed individuals, given the freedom to build on their strengths, will result in high-quality services and positively impact education in the Hartford region, Connecticut, and beyond.

GROWING AT CREC

CREC is a place to build a career. Our employees are valued professionals, and we are committed to ensuring your professional growth. Within CREC, your career will be advanced through on-going and differentiated learning experiences within a culture that supports personal and professional development.

CREC's goal is to create a network of professionals who design and employ innovative strategies to solve the most pressing problems in education today. CREC has created a system of support and development opportunities to promote a culture of individual and collective growth and to maximize professional capital. CREC promotes a culture that encourages and accelerates professional growth, and you will be given the autonomy to establish and pursue your professional objectives.

CREC believes that your professional development begins with a rigorous hiring process. In your interview, you demonstrated a high degree of self-efficacy, the ability to innovate, and the inclination to take creative risks. You will be provided with opportunities to refine and apply your expertise and to exercise leadership in your programs and the larger agency. You will also be encouraged to grow through guided self-reflection and collaborative planning.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

At CREC, as you distinguish yourself through demonstrating our core values, we will help you identify leadership roles within the agency. CREC's career pathways foster a culture of entrepreneurship, which enables your ideas and strategies to have a wider impact. This helps us retain talented employees while cultivating sound practices and innovative ideas throughout the agency.

Our philosophy of career advancement facilitates your individual interests while further advancing CREC's mission and vision. We ensure that numerous opportunities for career development and professional growth are available to you. Examples of such opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Mentoring peers
- Presenting at New Teachers' Academy
- Engaging in cross-divisional work
- Acting as a committee member
- Seeking a variety of paid (stipend) leadership roles
- Serving as a peer coach, mentor, or complementary evaluator
- Engaging in a cross-divisional think tank
- Becoming a school-based team lead
- Participating in the Internal Leadership Development Program

INNOVATION

At CREC we believe in bottom-up innovation and top-down facilitation. We know that nurturing innovation is essential for your professional growth and job satisfaction. CREC is dedicated to creating a culture of innovation in each division, department, building, and classroom. CREC innovates as a whole, as opposed to single departments, schools, or classrooms. Adhering to the following principles creates an environment that stimulates innovation:

- We don't believe that there are "right" or "wrong" ideas. We want you to have room to think in new ways, try new things, and take creative risks.
- We encourage you to draw upon your diverse experiences and professional training to solve problems and improve practice.
- We promote a nurturing culture where we welcome change, as well as the rigorous self-evaluation that facilitates those changes.

One way CREC supports your innovation is through its **product development office**. CREC's division of Technical Assistance and Brokering Services (TABS) is the place to go if you have an idea for a product or a service. TABS can assist you with the development and marketing of your product or service, enabling you to bring your idea from conception to reality.

The **Cultivating Educational Innovation** program is an opportunity for educators, students, and CREC employees to develop and test innovative approaches in the classroom. This program provides teachers and their students the opportunity and support to re-imagine learning for the twenty-first century and to become change agents in education. CREC awards funding to support teachers as they try new teaching strategies, including supporting students with new materials and aids or introducing new technology to students.

NEVER STOP LEARNING!

CREC is committed to cultivating your talents at every leadership level. We believe in a blended, collaborative approach to professional learning that ensures your development opportunities are on-going, intensive, and connected to practice, agency initiatives, and your individual professional pursuits.

At CREC, you have a responsibility and voice in sustaining your own professional development. CREC's learning opportunities are varied and target your specific needs and interests. You and your manager can select the services that match your skills.

As you advance in your career at CREC, you will step into positions of leadership to facilitate the growth of your peers. This approach builds strong working relationships between you and your colleagues. Below, you will find some examples of how we never stop learning.

INTERNAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (ILD)

CREC's Internal Leadership Development Program is a two-year program focussed on professional growth in key leadership skills. The program aligns with CREC's core values of trust, leadership, diversity, quality, and collaboration. The ILD program is at the core of our talent strategy to facilitate leadership development by offering rigorous, experiential training and the tools to develop leadership skills.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT AND FIELD STUDY

Employees with at least two years of service at CREC may apply for tuition reimbursement for college or university courses. CREC employees also are eligible to receive supervised field experience as a student teacher, social worker, behavior analyst, or in other certification areas.

BOOK STUDY GROUPS

Our professional book study group provides the opportunity for you to engage in discourse with colleagues about a specific topic of professional interest. Individuals commit to reading and discussing the selected book, guided by the question: "How will this book influence professional practices?" Various divisions host book study groups throughout the year.

COACHING

CREC's coaching model encourages you to engage in collegial conversations and strengthen your professional practice. Exceptional employees have the opportunity to model best practices and serve as leaders within their schools or divisions. Through peer coaching, CREC employees are offered individual coaching in a supportive environment.

MENTORS

All new CREC administrators are provided mentors during their first year of service. Mentors and mentees meet regularly to reflect on practice and plan action steps for continued growth. Mentors are also available, as needed, for employees across the agency.

COMPLEMENTARY EVALUATORS

Experienced and highly-rated teachers at CREC have the opportunity to receive extensive training in conducting peer observations and providing verbal and written feedback. As complementary evaluators, these teacher leaders conduct formal observations of other teachers, and the resulting reports are used to inform the principal's final evaluation. In order to serve as a complementary evaluator, teachers must have tenure and a minimum of five years of teaching experience.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

CREC helps employees earn a variety of professional certifications, including becoming a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) trainer or Physical & Psychological Management Trainer (PMT). Microsoft certification is offered through the division of Data Analysis, Research, and Technology (DART); teachers can receive special education certification through the Advanced Alternative Route to Certification program offered by the division of Technical Assistance and Brokering Services (TABS); and aspiring school leaders can receive their Intermediate Administrator Certificate (092), or Superintendent Certificate (093) through CREC's leadership certification programs offered in collaboration with Central Connecticut State University (CCSU).

ONLINE COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS

At CREC, we encourage collaboration and self-directed learning. You will have the opportunity in your division to utilize online platforms that encourage professional discourse and growth. From SharePoint to Schoology, you will have access to a network of talented, innovative, and like-minded peers.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

CREC offers a host of seminars and workshops throughout the year. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. All divisions have a budget for professional learning. Talk with your manager if you see an opportunity that interests you.

ONLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Blended learning involves a combination of online and in-person instruction, enabling you to target specific needs and to learn at your own pace. CREC's online professional learning platforms offer a collective vision for teaching and learning by showcasing highly-effective instructional strategies, sharing common learning tools, and highlighting best practices in a variety of formats and mechanisms.

EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION SERIES

These seminars are designed for employees who were recently promoted into supervisory positions and for experienced supervisors wanting to refresh their skills. The series consists of six half-day sessions on a variety of topics such as effective communication, giving and receiving feedback, diversity, and inclusion.

BECOMING BETTER TOGETHER

At CREC, we end each conversation with two questions: Is there anything I can do for you? And: Do you have any advice for me? This is because we want to always be open to new ideas and better ways of being of service. We consider evaluation a collaborative process where we ask ourselves these same questions.

At CREC, you will have clear and transparent expectations. Your performance review will include regular one-to-one meetings with your supervisor. During these meetings, you will engage in collaborative goal-setting and will have the opportunity to reflect on your performance. Your performance review is designed to assist you in your professional growth by helping you achieve your personal objectives while enhancing CREC's mission. Our culture encourages a "let's be better to do better" mindset.

As an organization, CREC has an intense commitment to its employees. We have created a cycle of goal-setting, feedback, professional learning, and self-reflection that is adaptable to your individual needs, interests, and growth trajectory. If you are not doing as well as you had hoped in your new role, we view it as an opportunity for you to grow and develop into the professional you want to be. If you and your manager feel that you might benefit from additional support, you will create a plan for focused development that you and your evaluator will design together. We know you can excel when your strengths are utilized.

MAKING THE MOST OF EACH OPPORTUNITY

How can you take charge of your professional future at CREC? We recommend you try the following:

- End each conversation with your colleagues by asking, "Is there anything I can do better?" And, "Do you have any advice for me?" We are lifetime learners. There is always an opportunity to improve.
- Listen reflectively. Reflective listening means not listening to respond, but instead finding the nugget of wisdom in what others are saying – even when you disagree.
- Don't wait for your supervisor to give you constructive feedback – ask for it! Take control of your own performance. Let your manager know that you value their opinion.
- Test out new concepts with your coworkers. We know that the next great innovation in education will come from you and your colleagues. Vet your ideas and then pitch them to leadership. We want to develop your ideas.
- Make the first move! If you are interested in an opportunity at CREC, tell your supervisor. CREC believes in internal leadership development and we will support your professional growth.
- Don't be afraid to take a creative risk. We believe that diversity of thought drives innovation and that disruption creates positive change.
- Imagine the possibilities; ask: "What if?" And, "Why not?"



