



Your Career at CREC

Imagining Your Professional Future



Welcome to CREC

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

You are our 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.

Greg J. Florio, Ed.D.
Executive Director

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OUR VISION

CREC's mission, vision, and core values 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.

MISSION

Equity, excellence, and success for all through high-quality educational services

VISION

To become our member districts' primary resource to facilitate collaborative efforts that create equitable and sustainable educational opportunities, assist in maximizing district and regional resources, and advance successful educational practices for all learners at all ages

CORE VALUES

- Expect Excellence
- Act with Courage
- Demand Equity
- Embrace Collaboration

WHO YOU ARE

You have been chosen to represent CREC because you show 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. Our 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. Our 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 close the achievement gap. We build state-of-the-art facilities. We are a leading provider of services that help school districts, businesses, and nonprofits improve their performance.

CREC exists to improve the quality of public education. Our programs are designed to help fulfill our mission. We believe 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. This is rewarding and demanding work. We reward our employees for demonstrating self-efficacy, innovation, and creative risk-taking. Staff members are flexible and 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

This is a place to build a career. Our employees are valued professionals and we are committed to ensuring your professional growth. Your career will advance through ongoing and differentiated learning experiences within a culture that supports personal and professional development.

Our goal is to create a network of professionals who design and employ innovative strategies to solve the most pressing problems in education today. We have support and development opportunities to promote a culture of individual, professional, and collective growth. You will be given the autonomy to establish and pursue your professional objectives.

We believe 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

As you distinguish yourself through demonstrating our core values, we will help you identify leadership roles within the agency. Our 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 our 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

We believe in bottom-up innovation and top-down facilitation. We know that nurturing innovation is essential for your professional growth and job satisfaction. We are dedicated to creating a culture of innovation in each division, department, building, and classroom. We innovate 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 we support your innovation is through our product development office. Our sale-of-service team can help if you have an idea for a product or service. We'll help you take your idea from concept to reality and also help you market it.

The Cultivating Educational Innovation program is an opportunity for educators, students, and employees to develop and test innovative approaches in the classroom. This program provides teachers and their students with the opportunity and support to reimagine learning for the twenty-first century and to become change agents in education. We also award 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

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

You have a responsibility and a voice in sustaining your own professional development. 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, 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

This is a two-year program. Its focus is on professional growth in key leadership skills. It aligns with our core values of excellence, courage, equity, and collaboration. The program is at the core of our talent strategy. It facilitates leadership development by offering rigorous, experiential training and leadership tools.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT AND FIELD STUDY

If you have at least two years of service, you can apply for tuition reimbursement for college or university courses. You are also 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 lets you engage in discourse with colleagues about a specific topic of professional interest. Various divisions host book-study groups throughout the year. You'll read and discuss a selected book, which is guided by the question, "How will this book influence professional practices?"

COACHING

Our 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, they are offered individual coaching in a supportive environment.

MENTORS

All new administrators are mentored during their first year of service. They 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 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. 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

We help you earn a variety of professional certifications, including becoming a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports trainer or Physical & Psychological Management Trainer. Microsoft certification is also available. Teachers can receive special education certification through the Advanced Alternative Route to Certification program. Aspiring school leaders can receive their Intermediate Administrator Certificate through CREC cohorts that enroll in Central Connecticut State University programs.

ONLINE COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS

We encourage collaboration and self-directed learning. You will have the opportunity 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

We offer many 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. Our 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 are seminars for employees who were recently promoted to supervisory positions and for experienced supervisors who want 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

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

We end each conversation with two questions:

1. Is there anything I can do for you?
2. Do you have any advice for me?

We always want to 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.

If you are not doing as well as you had hoped in your 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 here? We recommend that you try the following:

- End each conversation with your colleagues by asking the two questions above. We are lifetime learners. There is always an opportunity to improve.
- Listen reflectively. This means 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 another opportunity, tell your supervisor. We believe 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 yourself, “What if?” and “Why not?”



