

CREC
Council Annual Meeting
6/21/2023
11:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Via Zoom ONLY

COUNCIL MEMBERS:	CREC ATTENDEES:
John Vecchitto	Greg Florio
Leonard Lockhart	Jeff Ivory
Patrice McCarthy (CABE)	Sandy Cruz-Serrano
Meg Scata	Tim Sullivan
Janice DiRoberts	Mason Thrall
Kim Oliver	Amy Karwan
Lydia Tedone	Carlos Figueroa
Miriam Underwood	Heather Tartaglia
Maureen Sattan	Debra Borrero

I. CALL TO ORDER and APPROVAL of MINUTES

6/21/2023 Council Meeting at 11:43 a.m. by Lydia Tedone, Chairperson.

A. 5/17/23 Annual Council Meeting

MOTION: A Motion to approve the May 17, 2023 annual meeting minutes was made by Leonard Lockhart, seconded by Meg Scata, and passed unanimously. Kim Oliver and John Vecchitto abstained.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

III. PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

None

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Early childhood meeting was cancelled. Policy did not meet. Legislative report later during the meeting.

Meg talked about the Finance Committee Meeting. Legislative update. Finance and Audit Committee met on June 15th. CREC staff, review the June council exhibits. Questions and details about the document as well as this year's timing and transport issues for the schools and programs. Document was sent to everyone for approval – comprehensive and important.

Lydia asked Tim Sullivan about any end of year challenges. CREC had a challenging year with respect to staffing. The 2nd part of the school year was better than the 1st not because we had more staff, but because we were able to figure out how to make it work. We also got back to normal in terms of events such as spirit week, outings and field trips. Teacher and student attendance got stronger as the year went on so we are heading in the right direction.

We have summer initiatives in place for summer school but have lots of work to do to get ready for the next school year. We have to do teacher evaluations, training and work to do to prepare. CREC has adopted a new curriculum using the Science of Reading, new materials for reading and expeditionary learning.

Heather Tartaglia offered that a few programs have ended for the year, but River Street is still in session and will start summer programming shortly thereafter.

There are 2 major projects at head start locations – North End of Hartford and Windsor. Schools will be ready to open in the fall. There are smaller projects going on – floor replacements, painting, cosmetic upgrades, etc.

Carlos Figueroa reported that we are busy with hiring for the next school year. CREC is training 168 middle managers and we are focused on talent management, performance evaluations and hiring. There will be information sessions and career fairs.

Amy stated that we are wrapping up a very busy year and next year looks to be the same. Recently made an offer to someone to become new managing director for related services.

Sandy stated that Jeff Ivory is retiring next June after 25 years at CREC. Brian Greenleaf will be taking over Jeff's position. Her department is in the midst of a restructuring so there is a lot going on.

V. CONSENT AGENDA**A. General Item**

- 1) Authorization to Sign Checks (Attachment A)
- 2) Authorization to Sign Contracts (Attachment B)
- 3) Wolcott School Renovation (Attachment B1)

B. 2022-2023 Revised Programs

- 1) Student Services Office (Attachment C)
- 2) River Street School (Attachment D)
- 3) Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center (Attachment E)
- 4) Central Office Facility Cost Center (Attachment F)
- 5) Learning Corridor Campus (Attachment G)
- 6) The CREC Preschool at Progress Drive (Attachment H)
- 7) CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (Attachment I)
- 8) CREC Academy of Computer Science & Engineering (Attachment J)
- 9) CREC Academy of Computer Science & Engineering Middle School (Exhibit K)
- 10) CREC Academy of International Studies (Attachment L)
- 11) CREC Academy of Science and Innovation (Attachment M)
- 12) CREC Ana Grace Academy of the Arts Elementary Magnet School (Attach N)
- 13) CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Magnet Middle School (Attach O)

C. 2022-2023 New Program

- 1) Wallace Foundation: Closing Opportunity Gaps for Adolescents (Attachment P)

D. 2023-2024 Continuing Programs

- 1) Ana Grace Academy of the Arts (Attachment Q)
- 2) River Street School (Attachment R)
- 3) Integrated Program Models (IPM) (Attachment S)
- 4) Project Prevent (Attachment T)
- 5) Wallace Foundation: Closing Opportunity Gaps for Adolescents (Attachment U)
- 6) Magnet School Assistance Program (Attachment V)
- 7) Montessori Training Center Northeast (Attachment W)
- 8) Hartford Region Open Choice Program (Attachment X)
- 9) Open Choice Early Beginnings Grant (Attachment Y)
- 10) Community Education Services (Attachment Z)
- 11) CT Teacher Residency Program (Attachment AA)

- 12) Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)(Attachment BB)
- 13) CREC Magnet School Office (Attachment CC)
- 14) CREC Montessori Magnet School (Attachment DD)
- 15) Glastonbury-East Hartford Elementary Magnet School (Attachment EE)
- 16) CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (Attachment FF)
- 17) CREC Museum Academy (Attachment GG)
- 18) CREC Academy of International Studies (Attachment HH)
- 19) CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts (GHAA) Magnet School (Attachment II)
- 20) CREC University of Hartford Magnet School (UHMS)(Attachment JJ)
- 21) CREC Academy of Computer Science & Engineering (Attachment KK)
- 22) CREC Academy of Computer Science & Engineering Middle School (Attach LL)
- 23) CREC Academy of International Studies (Attachment MM)
- 24) CREC Reggio Magnet School of the Arts (Attachment NN)
- 25) CREC Academy of Science and Innovation (Attachment OO)
- 26) CREC Discovery Academy (Attachment PP)
- 27) CREC Ana Grace Academy of the Arts Elementary Magnet School (Attach QQ)
- 28) CREC Ana Grace Academy of the Arts Magnet Middle School (Attachment RR)
- 29) CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering Elementary Magnet School (Attachment SS)
- 30) The CREC Preschool at Progress Drive (Attachment TT)

E. 2023-2024 New Program

- 1) Office of Early Childhood: Infant and Toddler Classrooms (Attachment UU)

MOTION - A motion was made by Leonard Lockhart and seconded by Meg Scata. Abstaining were Kim Oliver and John Vecchitto and passed unanimously to approve Attachments A-UU.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Florio spoke about the end of year celebrations that happened throughout various schools and programs, such as the teachers and paras. CREC also celebrated their annual longevity employees, including Ed Greene, who has been with CREC for 45 years. John Allison, CREC's founder, visited CREC Central and we had a nice luncheon with him. As a district, CREC did very well with their 4 year graduation rate. Dr. Florio also thanked Lydia Tedone for her leadership and many years of staunch support for what CREC does.

Mason Thrall mentioned Nakisha Strickland, who is the Director of Transportation. She was elevated as V.P. of CSTA (Connecticut State Transportation Association) – represents all public and private school carriers. Highly influential group. She is the first Person of Color to hold such a high position in that organization.

VII. COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

Simsbury has completed their school year. They are starting summer programs, filling some positions and getting ready for next school year.

Lydia spoke about the NSBA seminar in August in St. Lake City. Both Leonard and she are members and they will talk about at September's meeting. The NSBA sponsors CUBE. Their annual conference is in Chicago in September – open to any board members within the State. This is one of the main conferences, about 800 attendees. The seminar are at a very high level. CREC is a CUBE member district.

VIII. DELIBERATED ACTION

A. New Business

- 1) Proposed 2023-2024 Council meeting dates (Attachment VV)

MOTION - A motion was made by Meg Scata and seconded by John Vecchitto and passed unanimously **WITH THE UNDERSTANDING** that the June 19, 2024 meeting (Juneteenth) would be rescheduled to June 12, 2024.

IX. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Deb Borrero reported that it was an interesting session. There were bills that were passed and then passed again so they were retroactive. Good news is that we received \$1.5 million annually for the teacher residency program. HB 5003 in its initial form did not pass. We did receive the education reform for \$150 million of which \$40 million is specifically for RESC magnets. There is a tuition cap but we will work with the State because it's a good start.

Patrice McCarthy spoke about the 837 page budget – Section 309 that would have created a tax credit for donors making donations to private school scholarships. That is not something we wanted the legislature to do and we did quick advocacy when amendment came out, it struck Section 209. Legislature created a working group to review education mandates and CUBE is charged with convening that group which they will be doing shortly – reporting deadline is not until January 2025. CUBE did legislative wrap-up workshop last week. Patrice thanked the council for their advocacy.

Lydia asked about the start date for Kindergarten start date as they have been trying to change legislation for that. Tim Sullivan reported that it is based upon a Dec. 31st age date. Next year CREC will have Pre-K student, about 25% that will not be eligible for Kindergarten the following year. CREC does not have the space to house those student so we need the State office to change the lottery date from Dec. 31st to Sept. 1st. That way, going forward, ages will be in

line with classes. If a parent requests that the child enter before they turn 5 in December and an admin assessment shows that the child is developmentally ready, they can issue the waiver for them to start K earlier. This can become problematic because it may disadvantage some families that do not know their way around the system or cannot advocate for their children.

Sandy spoke about the Wallace Foundation, which is a program from our Youth and Services Division and is part of the magnet school system. It provides services to students who are struggling. There are 4 schools partnered with 2 community-based organizations. The Wallace Foundation is notoriously difficult as to awarding help.

X. REPORTS

A. Financial Report (Attachment WW)

Jeff spoke about the Financial Report, specifically Column 3 of the last page. As of the last council meeting, there is \$402.3 million of which \$2.9 million is for school construction leaving a balance of \$399.4 million. As of the results of the council's approval of today's consent agenda for fiscal year 2022-2023, the new total is \$416 million of which \$413.1 million is for CREC programs.

We are working to get our transportation balance of \$17.1 million paid to us within the next two weeks. This is an ongoing problem and although it's a lot of money, it has actually gotten better. We are trying to improve the payment structure so we do not have such a large balance. We will continue to work on it.

XI. COUNCIL COMMENTS

John Vecchitto's request is for administration to share the data of student outcomes with council so we are understanding how our schools are doing (i.e., what continued improvements are taking place in CREC schools, compared outcomes, what are the weaknesses and strengths, etc.). He states it should be an annual report.

Dr. Florio offered an annual report from CREC in response to same.

Kim Oliver – Nothing significant – graduations are done – there is a change in the district CFO. Outside of that, things are moving forward and looking forward to summer and getting all programming together in Hartford.

Leonard – quiet in Windsor – last meeting yesterday – high spikes in natural gas costs – double or triple costs – something they have to review because it was not budgeted – they are going to be running a deficit if it continues into the winter – checking on better pricing – busy summer.

Maureen – Suffield is looking for a new business manager which is stressful. They have a quiet summer ahead.

Miriam – great graduation – looking forward to spending \$3.5M improving 3 schools – Ellington got funding for that – looking for new Business and Finance Director.

Janice – great graduation. Have had a very tough budget year – finalized on Tuesday night after Town Council slashed it – doing the best they can – not going to be an easy year all around – teachers are amazing people – they are hoping they can count on the teachers again this year. Looking to get going again with a school building referendum. Having their regular summer school programs. They have an intro to Kindergarten program that last 4 days, one for high school and one for middle school.

Lydia discussed their transgender policy at their end of year meeting – has caused some conflict in her district – it seems to extend on social media. Caught them off guard. Several boards and districts have had rough meetings. Important things that need to be shared collectively. Affects all of our kids and all of our districts.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION - A motion was made by Leonard Lockhart, seconded by Maureen Sattan and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:44 p.m.