



CREC
 Council Meeting
 4/22/2026
 11:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
 In-Person and ZOOM Meeting (Link in Calendar Invite)

COUNCIL MEMBERS	CREC ATTENDEES
Leonard Lockhart	Desi Nesmith
Meg Scata	Heather Tartaglia
Joan Pina	Carol Dewey
Bobbie Granato	Mason Thrall
Dr. Sharon Goulet	Debra Borrero
Steven Tatum	Carlos Figueroa
Lou Daniels	Eddie Miranda
Miriam Underwood	Amy Karwan
Patrice McCarthy, CABA	Sasha Douglas
	Aura Alvarado

I. CALL TO ORDER and APPROVAL of MINUTES

4/22/2026 Council Meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m.

A. 3/18/2026 Council Meeting

MOTION: A Motion to approve the March 18, 2026 minutes was made by Meg Scata and seconded by Bobbie Granato. Council voted in favor of approving the March 18, 2026 minutes with Joan Pina voting in absentia.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

III. STUDENT LIAISON PARTICIPATION

None



Desi Nesmith
Executive Director
Capitol Region Education Council

IV. PRESENTATIONS to COUNCIL

Heather Tartaglia presented on the University Pathways Program in which CREC and Central Connecticut State University are partnering. This program was modeled after the one that EdAdvance and Post University have in place.

The goal was to make the program completely immersive. This is a program for special education students and can be utilized regardless of whether student chooses to attend college.

Services are determined by a student's IEP so that the services given are personally tailored for each student. Timing will vary as there are different pathways for different students.

If there are Extended School Year students, the program will begin on July 1, 2026. If not, the program will begin on August 1, 2026.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Meg Scata gave the finance and audit committee report.


The finance & audit committee met on April 8 and received a detailed review of the proposed 2027 budget and two mid-year revisions. There was a line-by-line discussion of Attachments A and B and proposed budgets Attachments C through M.

The committee approved a \$3000 revision due to the grant award from Educational Credit Management Grant Scholars Program. This revision resulted in a total of \$1,570,978.

We approved a revision of \$185,000 because of carryover funds related to the CT Family School Partnership (CFSP) grant in fiscal year 2025 to be used for (SFEC) program budget for a total of \$1,182,199 with additional revenue of \$185,000 as set forth above.

Key requests include \$70.85 million for transportation and \$7.61 million for CRG, the latter reflecting a 6.84% decrease from Fiscal Year 2026.

Discussion focused on the causes of several budget reductions and the flexibility to revise budgets during Fiscal Year 2027. Staff confirmed that adjustments can be made during the year and emphasized a conservative budgeting approach due to uncertainty at the state level. Transportation funding assumptions were revisited due to a recent State Department meeting that improved outlook, and members discussed advocacy efforts to restore a \$12 million magnet funding line.

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Desi Nesmith committed to providing a council update and flagged action on the ECS Foundation within the next four weeks as the most immediate risk.

The meeting concluded with a review of third-quarter financials, namely that the adopted fiscal year budget stands at \$467.3 million, with \$323 million in revenues received and \$274.6 million in expenditures, indicating the fiscal year is about 59% complete.

Staff noted that previously approved revisions are already reflected in these totals, while the two revisions discussed today are pending full council approval.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. 2025-2026 Revised Programs

- 1) Hartford Region Open Choice Program (Attachment A)
- 2) Statewide Family Engagement Center (Attachment B)

B. 2026-2027 New Programs

- 1) Central Office Facility Cost Center (Attachment C)
- 2) Learning Corridor Campus (Attachment D)
- 3) Transportation Services (Attachment E)
- 4) Project Prevent (Attachment F)
- 5) Hartford Region Open Choice Program (Attachment G)
- 6) Open Choice Early Beginnings Grant (Attachment H)

- 7) Polaris Center (Attachment I)
- 8) Community Education Services (Attachment J)
- 9) CT Teacher Residence Program (Attachment K)
- 10) Statewide Family Engagement Center (Attachment L)
- 11) CREC Resource Group (Attachment M)

C. 2025-2026 Approved Operation Budgets (Attachment N)

MOTION: Motion to approve Attachments A through N of the Consent Agenda was made by Meg Scata and seconded by Joan Pina. The motion passed unanimously.



Desi Nesmith
Executive Director
Capitol Region Education Council

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Nesmith gave an update with respect to the events and meetings he attended since the council meeting in March.

Mr. Nesmith attended MetroHartford Alliance's Breakfast with the Mayor, Mayor Arulampalam at Dunkin Park in Hartford. He also met with Hector Rivera, CEO of Our Piece of the Pie to further foster and strengthen the relationship between OPP and CREC. Mr. Nesmith attended a meeting at the Connecticut State Department of Education to discuss legislative issues. CREC is still strongly lobbying and advocating for the \$12M magnet school funding to be restored.

With respect to community engagement, Mr. Nesmith attended the Community Education International Day, and the girls' championship game at Mohegan Sun, where the girls' basketball team from Innovation played. Although we did not win, they played with heart and gave it their all. The team was honored at the State Capitol on April 23rd.

Mr. Nesmith attended the NSBA 2026 Annual Conference in San Antonio to celebrate CREC Council Chair, Leonard Lockhart's appointment as NSBA's new President. CAFE will be celebrating Mr. Lockhart's appointment at the local level on April 30th in Windsor.

Together with Dr. Sasha Douglas, Mr. Nesmith was a guest on MetroHartford Alliance's podcast, Pulse of the Region and the podcast will be shared with council members.

CREC's annual meeting will be held on May 20th at the Bushnell Theater. CREC is celebrating 60 years, and this will be a special event. Invitations will be shared via email. There will be presentations of CREC throughout the years, scholarships awarded to area students and special accolades.

VIII. COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lockhart spoke about his experience at the NSBA 2026 Annual Conference. There are 50 million students across the country who do not have basic educational needs, and we must continue to advocate to make sure that all students have a quality education, regardless of background, location, or circumstance. We must remain encouraged and do the behind the scenes work necessary to make sure that every student has a fair chance at a good and solid education.



Desi Nesmith
Executive Director
Capitol Region Education Council

IX. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Nesmith began the update with respect to the efforts CREC is continually making to preserve the \$12M magnet school funding. The funding language for TRP was revised so that the funding is going directly and solely to RESC Alliance TRP programs across the state.

Patrice McCarthy of CABE reported that the next two weeks is crucial and full of uncertainty, as they are the final two weeks of the 2026 Legislative Session. There are several bills being reviewed and voted on including Just Cause language for teacher terminations, electric school buses, homeschooling and the cell phone ban.

The Governor will be announcing the members of his Blue Ribbon panel later this week.

X. REPORTS

None

XI. COUNCIL COMMENTS

None

XII. ADJOURNMENT MOTION: A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Leonard Lockhart, Council Chair. The council voted on the motion, and it passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 p.m.

