Desi Nesmith
Executive Director
Capitol Region Education Council
111 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

**CREC**
Council Meeting
9/16/2026
11:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
In-Person and via Teams (Link in Calendar Invite)

| COUNCIL MEMBERS | CREC ATTENDEES |
|---|---|
| Leonard Lockhart | Desi Nesmith |
| Miriam Underwood | Julia Winer |
| Bobbie Granato | Sasha Douglas |
| Lou Daniels | Heather Tartaglia |
| Steven Tatum | Aura Alvarado |
| Betsy LeBorious | Debra Borrero |
| Christopher Campbell | Carol Dewey |
| | Amy Karwan |
| | Eddie Miranda |
| | Mason Thrall |

## I. CALL TO ORDER and APPROVAL of MINUTES

A. 5/20/2026 Annual Council Meeting

**MOTION:** A Motion to approve the May 20, 2026 minutes was made by Miriam Underwood and seconded by Bobbie Granato. The vote was passed with seven votes. Betsy LeBorious abstained.

## II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

NONE

## III. UPDATES to COUNCIL

Heather Tartaglia provided highlights on the start of the school year for Birth 2 Three, Head Start, River Street School, River Street Autism Program, Polaris, Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center, University Pathways (newer program), STRIVE, CREC Resource Group and Community Education.

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Dr. Douglas talked about the start of school, first day visits and shared a video of those visits. She also discussed the documents provided to council for review (Magnet School Staff Attrition 2025-2026, Support Services and Workforce Development).

## IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Audit Committee Report given by Eddie Miranda. The 2026-27 General Fund is $414,465,397, the Special Revenue Fund is $38,253,219 and the Enterprise Fund is $86,53,470 without construction totaling $461,372,086.

## V. CONSENT AGENDA

### A. General Items

1. Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center – Authorize Application for Regional Performance Incentive Program (**Attachment A**)

### B. 2026-2027 Approved Operation Budgets (Attachment B)

MOTION: A Motion to approve Attachments A and B of the Consent Agenda was made by Bobbie Granato and seconded by Miriam Underwood. The motion passed unanimously.

## VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Nesmith highlighted several events that took place over the spring and summer at CREC. He also announced the return of Sandy Cruz-Serrano as Interim Chief Administrative Officer and the hiring of Julia Winer as CREC's Chief of Staff. Listed below are the highlights since the annual meeting in May 2026.

1. Teacher of the Year – Kevin Maski from Glastonbury-E.H. Magnet School

2. Paraeducator of the Year – Schmica Castella-Lewis from University of Hartford Magnet School

3. Longevity – CREC acknowledges and celebrates employees that have been with the organization starting at ten years. This year CREC had 126 employees as part of our annual longevity event, seven of which have been with CREC for 30 years and two that have been with CREC for 40 years.

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4. Open Choice Program Superintendent Convening – this is an annual collaborative forum hosted by Hartford Region Open Choice in partnership with CT State Department of Education and Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) to receive important information, updates, strengthen shared understanding, identify challenges and share best practices.

5. Back to School Block Party – this is CREC's 12th year distributing backpacks filled with schools supplies to area students. There were over 1,800 pre-registered and over 1,300 backpacks given out. Hartford Mayor Arunan Arulampalam, Senator Chris Murphy, Rep. Amy Morrin Bello from Wethersfield, Rep. Kerry Wood from Rocky Hill and Wethersfield were in attendance and several CREC council members were in attendance.

6. Fallstaff 60 – this is CREC's annual convocation where all CREC employees come together to celebrate the past year, welcome the new school year, mingle and show CREC spirit. This year CREC celebrated its 60th year with a look back at CREC's history, milestones, and successes. The keynote speaker this year was Steve Pemberton, an author and motivational speaker.

## VII. COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lockhart welcomed everyone back for a new year and expressed gratitude for the work that the council does. He spoke about attending CREC's Back to School Block Party and Fallstaff60, where he gave an impassioned speech about the organization, its mission and the amazing employees that make CREC the success it is.

He reiterated the council's focus to work to make CREC successful in its quest to educate all children, regardless of background or circumstance and to continue CREC's legacy.

## VIII. DELIBERATED ACTION

NONE

## IX. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Debra Borrero gave the legislative report. This year will be a long legislative session and although we have numerous goals, the most important one is to continue to fight for additional and sustained magnet school funding. She spoke about the importance of reaching out to local legislators in the "off season" due to a quieter legislative schedule and that our work has to continue year-round.

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The Blue Ribbon Commission was discussed and a few council members asked for information regarding hearings and accessing information regarding same. Elba sent out the link to the Blue Ribbon Commission to council members.

## X. REPORTS

NONE

## XI. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Bobbie Granato spoke about attending FallStaff 60 and how amazing the atmosphere was and how much the event's energy inspired her for the upcoming year. She made a point to talk about how diverse CREC is and how wonderful it is to see people from various backgrounds coming together with a common goal.

## XII. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION**: CREC council chair, Leonard Lockhart adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

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