



# Magnet School

## Annual Report

### 2013-2014

#### CREC Discovery Academy



**Discovery Academy**

Name of School

**417 Franklin Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06114**

Address

**860-296-2090**

Phone

**ltooper@crec.org**

E-Mail

**Dr. Lynn C. Toper, Principal**

Director or Principal

**Participating (formally) School Districts**

All districts are eligible.

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*Information for Statewide Policymakers*

2013-14 continued to be a year of unprecedented inquiry into statewide interdistrict magnet schools by a range of policy groups and those holding the ultimate legislative and budgetary authority over our statewide program. The Connecticut General Assembly continues to require the CSDE to produce a Results-based Accountability template for determining program effectiveness and a comprehensive magnet school plan with specific recommendations for supporting and sustaining the program. In order for the CSDE to be able to answer specific questions to ensure the program’s long-term viability, we request information on the following objectives:

- 1) Describe the methods used to ensure recruitment and retention of a diverse student body, and how the demand for your program translates into sustained interest in the school. Please include any specific efforts in reaching families that may not yet be familiar with school choice programs. (Note: not applicable for those schools who were required to submit an enrollment management plan in the spring of 2014 due to non-compliance)**

CREC employed a diversified and aggressive marketing strategy to increase the number of students applying for CREC schools. This targeted marketing plan included specific strategies for Hartford families, suburban families, and communities for which we have not had a significant applicant pool in past lotteries. Through an intensive community outreach campaign, we were able to reach a number of applicants from families where English is their second language. This year’s marketing campaign included direct mail, advertising through social media, radio and television commercials, community events, application events, and various other outreach opportunities through our community partners. In addition to the district-wide marketing strategies, each CREC magnet school offered open houses and in-school events, presentations at magnet school fairs, and direct outreach to parents and students in both Hartford and suburban district public schools. As in previous years, CREC continued to see an increase in the number of applicants to a CREC school.

Discovery Academy also implemented a targeted Facebook marketing plan for Hartford families to increase awareness of the open seats for the 2014-15 school year. Further, our theme coach recruited area fire department personnel and grocery merchants to promote the school via flyers and signs.

- 2) Describe your school’s professional development priorities for 2013-14. Be specific as to activities that support your special magnet theme.**

Professional development for staff at the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) is designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of its educators so that they can improve student learning. The year’s sessions focused on providing teachers with the tools needed to implement new national and state standards into all curricula, grades PreK-12.

### **Teachers' Academy**

CREC identifies and delivers essential professional development for its new teachers at the start of each school year through its Teachers' Academy. This three-day event provides participants with the unique knowledge and skills that are essential for success as an instructor in our theme-based interdistrict magnet schools. While all certified educators who are in their first three years of employment with CREC are required to participate, returning teachers are also encouraged to register for sessions of interest. Over eighty workshops were offered in August of 2013. Topics included "Effective Strategies for Close Reading," "Flipped Learning," "Including Primary Sources into the Social Studies Classroom," "How to Use Manipulatives in the Mathematics Classroom," and "Strategies to Support Young Learners." Over 350 staff members attended CREC's Teachers' Academy this year.

### **Teachers' College Reading & Writing Workshop Project**

CREC's schools continued to work with Columbia University's Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) in an effort to build our capacity to meet the expectations of the Common Core State Standards. Staff developers from Teachers' College divide their time during professional development days by demonstrating strategies related to writing, reading and content-area literacy by coaching teachers, providing them with feedback and next-step goals, helping them to use and learn performance assessments, and preparing them for upcoming units of study.

### **Common Core State Standards**

CREC Schools continued to implement Common Core Standards across all schools. Ongoing professional development was offered throughout the year to ensure fidelity of implementation.

### **Shared Inquiry Training**

CREC Schools continued its work with the Great Books Foundation to support the teachers' use of the shared inquiry approach within its classrooms. The "shared inquiry" approach for reading and discussing literature engages students in higher-order thinking and collaborative problem-solving by emphasizing questioning, text-based support and student discourse. While new teachers to CREC received the initial training, returning educators used the continued work with Great Books to receive feedback on how to maximize the quality of student discourse that takes place in their classroom.

### **Academic Rigor and Instruction**

CREC Schools continued to use tools for rigor, relevance and relationships developed by the International Center on Leadership in Education for grades K-12. We began adapting and using rubrics from Ed Leader21, specifically to assess communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. In addition, modules on Academic Rigor and Shared Inquiry were offered through the Blended Solutions grant.

### **Monthly Book Study Groups**

The district's curriculum leaders facilitated monthly book study groups throughout the school year for all teachers. Book study groups promote conversations among teachers and school staff that lead to the application of new ideas and strategies in classrooms. Teachers had the opportunity to share insights, ask questions of the text and each other, and learn from the

perspectives of other teachers across the district. Facilitated discussions on strategies that can be applied directly in the classroom, the potential obstacles to implementation, and what can be done to overcome these obstacles take place each month. *Maximizing Professional Capital* was one of the books discussed in the monthly study groups.

### **Next Generation Science Standards**

While Connecticut has not yet adopted the Next Generation Science Standards, CREC's teachers began conversations about how the *Framework* and NGSS standards may be implemented. Following the recommendations from the Connecticut State Department of Education, CREC's staff examined the eight Science and Engineering Practices described in the Framework for K-12 Science Education, learned about the knowledge components inherent in each of the eight Practices, explored how students' abilities to use the Practices with specific content increases in complexity across the grades, and learned to design instructional outcomes that integrate all 3 Dimensions by combining one of the Practices with a science concept and a crosscutting theme.

### **Early Childhood**

Professional development for CREC's early childhood teachers centered on becoming familiar with the Connecticut's new Early Learning and Development Standards, which were released this past school year. Our teachers had the opportunity to attend a series of Dine and Discuss sessions, which followed the Office of Early Childhood's roll out model. CREC PreK teachers continued to enhance instructional methods through professional development sessions aligned to early language and literacy using the *Literacy Beginnings: A Prekindergarten Handbook* by Fountas and Pinnell. This handbook, along with new standards, provided the foundation for school based professional development and PLCs.

### **Positive Behavior Support System (PBIS)**

All CREC schools have implemented a PBIS system in their schools. District wide training of teams and coaches took place throughout the year.

### **Theme-based Professional Development**

Teachers meet weekly with the Literacy and STEM Coaches for support, professional development and planning to ensure learning is differentiated to meet the needs of our students. During these meetings, new instructional strategies or practices are also rolled out with exemplars. Additionally, six teachers have been involved in an 18 month graduate level professional development course, "Cultivating Young Scientists," sponsored by the Education Resource Center. These teachers, in turn, have provided building-based professional development on the inquiry-based model for their colleagues. After school seminars are held to support teachers' use of technology based upon their specific requests. Further, district technology training is embedded into three days of support during the school year. Math support is provided weekly to teachers from the district math specialist on the Common Core, math practices, effective math stations, data driven decision making, flexible groups, and academic rigor.

- 3) What does your school do uniquely well (related to your magnet theme) that you think other regular public schools may replicate on the local level or in other public schools.**

Since its inception in 2011, Discovery Academy has focused on developing a STEM curricula fully integrated with the Common Core State Standards using an inquiry-based model. With three years of strong student data, this integration has proven to be very successful. We know that the 5E model of inquiry, based in large part on students' interests and questions, provides a platform for highly engaging learning experiences.

In addition, we welcomed second graders for the first time this year. Our eldest students were immersed in reading nonfiction books on topics of their choice, conducting experiments and research, and writing about their findings. They created inventions, documented their efforts to create a new or modified product, and presented their findings at the state-wide Invention Convention.

**4) Describe the manner in which you promote replication of your school's best practices with regular public schools.**

CREC has developed the Blended Solutions website to share best practices with their colleagues in the Hartford Public Schools. Blended Solutions offers a continuum of professional development for Hartford and CREC teachers through a mixture of online and face-to-face sessions that are aligned to Connecticut Common Core Standards, the Common Core Teaching Domains and the State Board of Education's Position Statement on Culturally Responsive Education. The site includes a library of resources, as well as videos that demonstrate CREC teachers providing high quality, research-based instruction within highly effective magnet school classrooms. Currently there are eight modules for professional learning available and over forty videos.

With three years of successful operation and professional development on the inquiry model, our teachers are well-poised to be strong presenters at elementary or STEM-related conferences at the regional, state, national and international levels. This year, our faculty presented at the National Science Teacher Association's Annual Conference and the Magnet Schools of America Annual Conference. Further, our STEM and literacy coaches presented to colleagues at a district-wide professional development day. Through this venue, they shared the planning process for an integrated curriculum and provided exemplars of units.

**5) Describe your school's two greatest challenges/obstacles to meeting or exceeding the school-wide student learning goals in 2014-15. Please include ways in which the CSDE may support our school in meeting these challenges through enhanced professional development opportunities or specific technical assistance on matters needing close attention.**

Our confined space continues to be a challenge for us and has necessitated a move for part of our teaching staff to a separate facility across town for the 2014-2015 school year. This dual location scenario proposes certain challenges, including communication, shared and equitable resources, and maintaining a sense of community.

We continue to expand by one new grade level each year, with third grade being added for the 2014-15 school year. Each time this occurs, all new state standards, assessments, materials, and resources need to be successfully implemented to ensure positive student outcomes. Additionally, new teachers need to be indoctrinated into the Readers', Writers' and Math Workshop Models and the 5E Model as well as be trained to use technology to support instruction.

**6) Provide the number of applications received by grade and town of residence; as of date of lottery.**

**\*NOTE:** The above information is managed by the SDE and can be obtained through the Department of Education and the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO).

**7) Provide the number of students on wait list/pool by grade, race and residence; as of October 1, 2013, (see note)**

**\*NOTE:** The above information is managed by the SDE and can be obtained through the Department of Education and the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO).

Note: Wait list/pool refers to those students not enrolled in your school or another interdistrict magnet school who applied for admission to your school for the 2013-14 year. Example: any student who entered a lottery for admission to your school as a first choice that ultimately not placed in any interdistrict magnet school.



***Financial Information***

DIRECTIONS: Provide, as attachments, Schedules 1 and 2 from the attached expenditures and revenues document. These should reflect *actual expenditures and revenues* by the close of 2013-14, and not merely the budgeted amounts from the onset of the school year submitted in your grant application.



**Basic Checklist for Title IX and 504/ADA Compliance**

Both Title IX (34 CFR § 106.9) and Section 504 (34 CFR § 104.8) require that educational entities that receive federal funds must have a policy on nondiscrimination and a published statement. The publication of this statement notifies applicants, students, employees and parents that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. Schools and educational agencies that receive federal funds must list the Coordinators of Section 504 and Title IX with their name/title, address and phone number in the notice of nondiscrimination.

The following checklist was prepared to assist you in meeting some minimum requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is not an exhaustive checklist and therefore should not be used as a substitute for careful reading of the regulations themselves.

**§ 106.8 Designation of responsible employee and adoption of grievance procedures.**

- 1.  At least one Title IX coordinator has been designated at the district or school level to coordinate efforts to comply with Title IX, including investigations of any complaints.
- 2.  At least one Section 504/ADA coordinator has been designated at the district or school level to coordinate efforts to comply with Section 504/ADA requirements, including investigations of any complaints.
- 3.  All students and employees have been notified of the name(s), office address(es), and telephone number(s) of the coordinator(s).
- 4.  Grievance procedures for students have been adopted and published.
- 5.  Grievance procedures for employees have been adopted and published.

(Authority: Secs. 901, 902, Education Amendments of 1972, 86 Stat. 373, 374; 20 U.S.C. 1681, 1682)

**§ 106.9 Dissemination of policy.**

- 6. The following been notified of a policy of nondiscrimination.
  - applicants for admission and employment
  - students and parents of students
  - employees
  - sources of referral of applicants
  - unions, professional organizations
- 7. Notification of a policy of nondiscrimination has been placed in one or more of the following:
  - local newspapers
  - school newspapers and magazines
  - memoranda's or other written communications distributed annually to each student and employee
  - announcements, bulletins, catalogs, student and faculty handbooks
  - application forms
- 8.  The above-listed school publications are free of text and illustrations suggesting differential treatment on the basis of sex or disability.
- 9.  Admission and recruitment representatives (including counselors or student advisors and personnel officers) have been advised of the nondiscrimination policy and requirements for adherence to the policy.

(Authority: Secs. 901, 902, Education Amendments of 1972, 86 Stat. 373, 374; 20 U.S.C. 1681, 1682); [45 FR 30955, May 9, 1980, as amended at 65 FR 68056, Nov. 13, 2000]



*Financial Attachments*

# BUDGET FORM

Created On: 5/7/2014

## ED 114

Fiscal Year: 2014  
Grant Name: CREC Grantee: 241-000  
Grant Title: MAGNET SCHOOL OPERATING  
Project Title: DISCOVERY ACADEMY  
Fund: 11000 SPID: 17057 Year: 2014 PROG: 82062 CF1: 170031 CF2: SDE00171  
Grant Period: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014 Authorized Amount: \$2,944,926  
Project Code: SDE000000000002

Funding Status: Final  
Vendor ID: 00241

### AUTHORIZED AMOUNT BY SOURCE:

LOCAL BALANCE:

CARRYOVER DUE:

CURRENT DUE: \$2,944,926

CODES	DESCRIPTIONS	BUDGET
111A	NON-INSTRUCTIONAL	246,069
111B	INSTRUCTIONAL	1,377,386
112A	EDUCATION AIDES	227,449
112B	CLERICAL	264,974
119	OTHER	245,343
200	PERSONAL SERVICES-EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	455,307
321	TUTORS	
322	IN SERVICE	
323	PUPIL SERVICES	
324	FIELD TRIPS	
325	PARENT ACTIVITIES	
330	EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	
510	STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	
530	COMMUNICATIONS	
560	TUITION	
580	TRAVEL	
590	OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES	
611	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES	
7	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPLIES	
890	OTHER SUPPLIES	
700	PROPERTY	
890	OTHER OBJECTS	
940	INDIRECT COSTS (Prior FY2015)	128,398
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,944,926</b>

Original Request Date: 9/10/2013

This budget was approved by Regina Hopkins on 5/6/2014.

Magnet School Name: Discovery Academy : 2013-2014

School Code: 2418114

SCHEDULE 1: Total Current Expenditures from All Sources by Function and Object

Report All Cash Expenditures and Encumbrances from All Sources Regular and Special Education. \*

LINE	CODE	FUNCTION (Program Area)	OBJECT						
			Total	Salaries	Employee Benefits	Purchased Services	Supplies	Property	Other
			(Col. 1)	(Col. 2)	(Col. 3)	(Col. 4)	(Col. 5)	(Col. 6)	(Col. 7)
1202	1000	Program Expenditures	2,914,718	1,973,428	550,248	70,783	122,690	197,569	
1203	2100	Support Services-Students	350,175	243,366	68,209	37,015	1,586	-	
1204	2200	Improvement of Instructional Services	95,647			95,647		-	
1205	2300	Support Services - General Admin.	192,084			192,084			
1206	2400	School Based Administration	389,888	326,536	63,352				
1207	2600	Operation and Maintenance of Plant Svc.	1,571,591			1,489,959	81,633		
1208	2700	Student Transportation Services	6,035			6,035			
1209	2500	Support Services	35,778			17,028	18,056		694
	2900		42,020			42,020			
1210	3100	Net Expenditures for Food Services	(478)			(478)			
1211	3200	Net Expenditures for Enterprise Operations	-						
1212		Indirect Overhead	200,092						
1213		<b>TOTAL</b>	5,797,552	2,543,330	681,808	1,950,094	223,965	197,569	694

\* Do not include transportation costs associated with home to school and back home or the excess cost of special education services.

2013-2014

**SCHEDULE 2: Revenues by Source****Include all projected revenues for the school**

<b>LINE</b>	<b>CODE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Total Revenue (Col. 1)</b>
220	<b>xxxx State Grants**</b>	
	<b>282 students @ \$10,443</b>	<b>\$2,944,926</b>
	<b>117 PreK students tuition @ \$4,045</b>	<b>473,265</b>
	<b>Summer School</b>	<b>61,070</b>
221	<b>xxxx Federal Grants**</b>	
	<b>Title I</b>	<b>18,900</b>
222	<b>1920 Contributions</b>	<b>2,245</b>
226	<b>xxxx Other Sources of Revenue**</b>	
	<b>Special Ed Services</b>	<b>319,397</b>
	<b>Local Tuition 165 students @ \$4,045</b>	<b>648,014</b>
	<b>Before and Aftercare</b>	<b>156,779</b>
	<b>Care 4 Kids</b>	<b>10,213</b>
	<b>Bond Funds</b>	<b>1,156,707</b>
	<b>Fund Balance</b>	<b>6,036</b>
299	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,797,552</b>