



Magnet School

Annual Report

2013-2014

CREC Montessori Magnet School



Montessori Magnet School

Name of School

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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.

In addition to the standard recruitment strategies, Montessori Magnet School markets the unique qualities of its curriculum through various events. A video illustrating the school’s distinctive teaching method and general school climate was displayed at recruitment fairs and open houses, and PTA members volunteered to speak to interested parents from their own perspective. “Bring a Friend to School Night” gave an opportunity for current families to bring potential applicants to the school and observe students demonstrating Montessori lessons. On-going Parent Information Nights, open to current and prospective, kept families well-versed on the Montessori method and how it ensures each child is engaged, independent, challenged and intrinsically motivated. The low student attrition rates and the high number of student applicants reflect the commitment of our current families and the continued interest in our school.

Our strong reputation for more than 20 years as a magnet school, coupled with a desirable Montessori theme, allows the Regional School Choice Office to randomly pull from an

applicant pool of over 600 first choice students each year for approximately 50 openings. Families willingly drive significant distances to bring their children to our school and our district-wide bussing initiative ensures that all students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 6 receive free transportation to and from school, making our school an option for a wide range of families.

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

In 2013-2014, we focused on aligning the Montessori curriculum to the Common Core State Standards. Teachers worked with district curriculum specialists to plan pacing and lesson implementation that adhered to the standards. Our teachers also engaged in professional development opportunities focused on how to incorporate Teachers' College Reading and Writing Workshop lessons into the Montessori classroom. In addition, primary teachers attended a workshop on the mechanics of writing, and paraprofessionals took part in a workshop on how to support students who struggle with literacy.

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.

At MMS, innovative instructional strategies are practiced both in and out of the classroom, and technology is embraced in teaching and learning. The Montessori theme allows MMS teachers to be innovative in their approach to teaching and learning. Although the Montessori philosophy and materials are a century old, recent psychological research has validated many of the core principles of the method, including mixed-age grouping, differentiated instruction, looping, inquiry-based research and intrinsic motivation. The materials used are consistent throughout each classroom and offer a continuous concrete schema for student learning as they move from primary to lower elementary to upper elementary classrooms. The concrete materials provide a developmentally appropriate way for students to explore new ideas and solidify concepts and help to transition the students to abstract thinking when they are ready for a deeper understanding of these concepts. The Montessori approach provides optimal settings for students to achieve at high levels and to develop life-long habits of confidence, persistence, critical thinking and a love of learning.

All elementary classrooms are equipped with SMART Boards both for instruction and for interactive student learning, and our school has three iPad carts for student use. Students conduct online discussions about their reading and use Animoto, Powerpoint and Prezi to create presentations. Intervention groups use computer programs for fluency in both reading and math facts. This school year, MMS utilized Schoology, an online learning platform that allows teachers to implement the flipped classroom model and encourages parent-teacher communication. Integrating instruction with technology increases student engagement and prepares them for future endeavors.

In addition to the Montessori approach, MMS teachers employ best practice strategies such as Teachers' College Readers' and Writers' Workshop models, which provide a mini-lesson and independent skill practice time. This allows students to think independently about their own reading and writing and articulate their meta-cognitive processes to their peers. The interdisciplinary and project-based approach integrates writing, reading, and math into social studies, science, and the arts. MMS embraces instruction that works to get students from all backgrounds to achieve at high levels, whether the strategies are a century old or on the frontier of education.

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.

MMS hosts visitors throughout the year who are based in other public schools, including Hartford's Montessori schools at Moylan and Annie Fisher. We also have a partnership with Trinity College, which allows college students interested in teaching to work with our students and learn about best practices in the field of urban education and art education. Students from other area colleges observe in our classrooms on a regular basis as part of their course assignments. In addition, our school has welcomed visitors from national and local organizations who are interested in learning about the Montessori method, public Montessori and the practices at our school in particular.

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.

In 2013-2014, students took the standardized and computer-adaptive STAR Reading, STAR Math and STAR Early Literacy Assessments, and students in grades 3-6 took part in the pilot of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. The adoption of computer-based assessments continues to be a challenge for our students, and teachers are in need of additional professional development on how to best prepare their students for this kind of testing. The purchase of additional iPads and iMacs this year, and the hiring of a technology teacher, eased the transition to computer-based assessment, but there is still much work to do in helping teachers analyze results and better target the skills needed by their students.

A second challenge in meeting student learning goals is the integration of Teachers' College Reading and Writing Workshop lessons into the Montessori classroom. In 2013-2014, teachers were provided many hours of professional development in order to improve their practice and increase the level of rigor in both reading and writing. Teachers also worked with the literacy coach to hone their skills in delivering mini-lessons. Our multi-age classrooms posed a problem in terms of scheduling lessons for the different levels, and our teams worked diligently to come up with a plan to optimize instructional time. This year both veteran and new teachers to our faculty will take part in TC training, and we will continue to come up with innovative ways to deliver both the Montessori and TC curricula to our students and improve student outcomes in reading and writing.

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: 5/28/2014

ED 114

Fiscal Year:	2014				
Grant Name:	CREC	Grantee:	241-000	Funding Status:	Final
Grant Title:	MAGNET SCHOOL OPERATING			Vendor ID:	00241
Project Title:	MONTESSORI MAGNET				
Fund:	11000	SPID:	17057	Year:	2014
		PROG:	82062	CF1:	170031
Grant Period:	7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014			CF2:	SDE00077
Project Code:	SDE000000000002			Authorized Amount:	\$3,571,506

AUTHORIZED AMOUNT BY SOURCE:

LOCAL BALANCE:

CARRYOVER DUE:

CURRENT DUE: \$3,571,506

CODES	DESCRIPTIONS	BUDGET
111A	NON-INSTRUCTIONAL	329,307
111B	INSTRUCTIONAL	1,943,652
112A	EDUCATION AIDES	375,109
112B	CLERICAL	273,840
119	OTHER	139,182
200	PERSONAL SERVICES-EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	355,438
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	
?	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPLIES	
?	OTHER SUPPLIES	
700	PROPERTY	
890	OTHER OBJECTS	
940	INDIRECT COSTS (Prior FY2015)	154,978
	TOTAL	\$3,571,506

Original Request Date: 9/10/2013

This budget was approved by Regina Hopkins on 5/14/2014.

Magnet School Name: Montessori Magnet School: 2013-2014

School Code: 2413114

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	3,603,642	2,646,524	724,487	86,115	114,446	32,069	
1203	2100	Support Services-Students	457,582	277,376	59,025	120,664	517	-	
1204	2200	Improvement of Instructional Services	72,406			72,406		-	
1205	2300	Support Services - General Admin.	234,315			234,315			
1206	2400	School Based Administration	553,952	460,872	93,080				
1207	2600	Operation and Maintenance of Plant Svc.	621,862			621,862	-		
1208	2700	Student Transportation Services	244			244			
1209	2500	Support Services	28,473			19,163	6,395		2,915
	2900		87,096			87,096			
1210	3100	Net Expenditures for Food Services	-			-			
1211	3200	Net Expenditures for Enterprise Operations	-						
1212		Indirect Overhead	238,634						
1213		TOTAL	5,898,205	3,384,772	876,592	1,241,865	121,358	32,069	2,915

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

SCHEDULE 2: Revenues by Source

Include all projected revenues for the school

LINE	CODE DESCRIPTION	Total Revenue (Col. 1)
220	xxxx State Grants**	
	342 students @ \$10,443	3,571,506
	80 PreK students tuition @ \$3,170	253,600
	Summer School	81,000
221	xxxx Federal Grants**	
	Title I	33,659
222	1920 Contributions	1,238
226	xxxx Other Sources of Revenue**	
	Special Ed Services	602,207
	Local Tuition 262 students @ \$3,170	811,128
	Before and Aftercare	34,522
	Care 4 Kids	500
	Fund Balance	508,846
299	Total	5,898,205