



# Magnet School

## Annual Report

### 2013-2014



**Museum Academy**

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Name of School

**PreK-K:** 206 West Newbury Street, Bloomfield, CT 06002

**Grades 1-5:** 10 Targeting Center, Windsor, CT 06095

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Address

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Phone

**sbrown@crec.org**

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E-Mail

**Shandra Brown, Principal**

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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.

- 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.

In addition, PreK teachers engaged in the *Learning Language and Loving It* program. *Learning Language and Loving It* provides early childhood educators with practical, research-based strategies for:

- Promoting every child's language development using natural everyday activities, routines and play
- Becoming attuned to children's interests so you can follow their lead, which is known to foster language development
- Adjusting the way you talk to help children develop more advanced language skills
- Promoting interaction among the children themselves
- Facilitating language-learning in pretend play
- Fostering emergent literacy skills

### **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**

The Museum Learning Process requires students to show evidence of meeting standards by engaging in extended observation, questioning, research, synthesis and analysis, presentation, and reflection. Students apply the knowledge they acquire in their standards-based classes to interdisciplinary units of study, jointly designed by subject teachers and the museum theme coach.

Museum Academy teachers are provided with, and are involved in, a variety of professional development sessions that encourage integrated, theme-based learning. These professional

development opportunities ensure that our units of study and instruction are theme driven. Some of the ongoing professional development opportunities include:

- **Understanding by Design:** Understanding by Design focuses on “backwards design,” a process that looks at instructional outcomes in order to design curricular units, performance assessments, and classroom instruction. Teaching units are collaboratively developed by teachers, coaches, and museum partners to align with content standards. This process supports our theme as teachers look toward the end products produced by students when designing and planning lessons.
- **Project Based Learning:** Project Based Learning is an instructional method that allows students to go through an extended process of inquiry in response to complex questioning and provocation. This process provides students "voice and choice" as they engage in rigorous project building, which is carefully planned, managed, and assessed to enhance student learning. In addition, students continue to create high-quality, authentic products for presentations in school wide museum exhibitions.
- **Visual Thinking Strategies:** Visual Thinking Strategies is an inquiry-based teaching curriculum initiated by teacher-facilitated discussions of art images in order to deepen learning across school disciplines. This process builds on the 21st century skills of creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical and analytical thinking. Visual Thinking Strategies originated in museum studies and methodologies, and enables the school to connect with museum partners and exposes students to a variety of fine art pieces.

Throughout the year, museum professionals provide on-going coaching related to the facilitation process. This job-embedded professional development is implemented to strengthen teaching skills related to school-wide teaching practices. To further enhance the sustainability of the Visual Thinking Strategies approach, Museum Academy’s theme coach is completing a “train the trainer” program. With the completion of this training, the school will acquire an on-staff Visual Thinking Strategies curriculum coach.

**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.**

The CREC Museum Academy theme draws on the splendors of Connecticut’s capitol city and area museums to make history, science, literature, and the arts come alive and to encourage intellectual curiosity about the world. In an age of increased dependence on virtual experiences, CREC Museum Academy students gain hands-on experiences with actual works of art, science and discovery centers, and historical artifacts. At the same time, Museum students gain a sense of artistry by concurrently creating their own exhibits and performances.

Museum Academy collaborates with a number of partners from the Greater Hartford area to design and implement diverse cultural programming. Students participate in once a month museum visits connected to themed units of study to view and experience related artwork,

science exhibits, and historical artifacts that enhance content knowledge. Museum Academy's collaborative programming with Hartford's Artists Collective is one example of how we cultivate multicultural programming within our school.

The collaborative program "Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning Project" is a living laboratory where the Artists Collective, professional teaching artists, and grade level teachers work together to richly infuse the performing and visual arts while emphasizing African, Native American, and Hispanic cultures. Through a variety of artwork and media, drumming, percussion, dance, and vocals relating to current units of study, learning is enhanced through meaningful connections to these rich cultures.

The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is a museum teaching method that centers on open-ended, yet highly structured, discussions of visual art, significantly increasing students' critical thinking, language and literacy skills. Teacher-facilitated discussions of art images ask students three simple questions: What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find? The teacher's role during the discussion is to facilitate by paraphrasing comments neutrally, pointing at the area being discussed, and linking and framing students' comments. VTS discussions ask students to: look carefully at works of art; talk about what they observe; back up their ideas with evidence; listen to and consider the views of others; and discuss many possible interpretations. As a result, students gain key skills aligned to the Common Core State Standards and naturally transfer these skills to all areas of their learning.

In using instructional methods such as project-based learning, understanding by design, guided math, and the museum themed processes of expeditions and exhibitions, students build a broad knowledge base through engagement with a wide range of subject matter. Students develop a deeper understanding of content, produce higher level language to speak to their knowledge, and build on the lifelong skills of presentation, problem solving, and critical and analytical thinking. Museum Academy's educational philosophy allows students to experience a high level of learning, not only in school, but also beyond the classroom walls. Students learn how to think rather than what to think.

**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.

The museum theme is woven throughout the school day in students' daily instruction along with related hands-on artifact creation. The integration begins with planning sessions focused on content lesson connections, artifact building, related expeditions, discrete class programming, and preparation requirements for exhibition nights. These collaborative planning sessions occur between grade level teachers, magnet resource teachers, related arts teachers, visiting partner artists and representatives from partner museums. The visiting artists and museum partners are able to disseminate this approach to area public schools. In addition, the school invites visitors from local districts to learn more about the Museum theme and how Museum methodologies can be implemented into academic learning.

- 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.**

The two greatest challenges facing the Museum Academy are supporting the needs of a diverse group of learners to meet the standards measured by our state assessments and aligning the Museum approach to the Common Core State Standards.

CSDE may best support our attainment of 2014-15 school goals by supporting and extending opportunities for professional learning around state assessments and how these assessments transition into the new Common Core curriculum. In particular, providing training on the scoring of the Smarter Balanced test, enabling more teachers to understand the standards upon which these assessments are built, the scoring of the assessments, and the sharing of anchor sets and best practices for teaching and learning. Secondly, CSDE can continue to provide support in the development of Common Core aligned curricula.

- 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*



Magnet School Name: Museum Academy : 2013-2014

School Code: 2410514

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					Other (Col. 7)	
			Total (Col. 1)	Salaries (Col. 2)	Employee Benefits (Col. 3)	Purchased Services (Col. 4)	Supplies (Col. 5)		Property (Col. 6)
1202	1000	Program Expenditures	3,681,753	2,519,338	661,767	161,404	138,586	200,657	
1203	2100	Support Services-Students	397,894	256,074	63,868	75,671	2,281	-	
1204	2200	Improvement of Instructional Services	30,226			30,226		-	
1205	2300	Support Services - General Admin.	275,865			275,865			
1206	2400	School Based Administration	378,134	315,734	62,400				
1207	2600	Operation and Maintenance of Plant Svc.	803,954			659,242	144,712		
1208	2700	Student Transportation Services	842			842			
1209	2500	Support Services	47,594			23,597	22,426		1,570
	2900		40,210			40,210			
1210	3100	Net Expenditures for Food Services	2,335			2,335			
1211	3200	Net Expenditures for Enterprise Operations	-						
1212		Indirect Overhead	241,604						
1213		<b>TOTAL</b>	5,900,409	3,091,146	788,035	1,269,391	308,005	200,657	1,570

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

Magnet School Name: Museum Academy

School Code: 2418114

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>405 students @ \$10,443</b>	<b>\$4,229,415</b>
	<b>100 PreK students tuition @ \$4,045</b>	<b>404,500</b>
221	<b>xxxx Federal Grants**</b>	
	<b>Title I</b>	<b>54,235</b>
222	<b>1920 Contributions</b>	<b>1,076</b>
226	<b>xxxx Other Sources of Revenue**</b>	
	<b>Special Ed Services</b>	<b>351,381</b>
	<b>Local Tuition 305 students @ \$4,045</b>	<b>1,213,725</b>
	<b>Before and Aftercare</b>	<b>176,513</b>
	<b>Care 4 Kids</b>	<b>705</b>
	<b>Bond Funds</b>	<b>263,260</b>
299	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,694,811</b>