

Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified

Staff Development

“Staff development” is viewed by the Council as a continuous systematic effort to improve educational programs at CREC through (1) staff involvement in organized program planning, implementation and evaluation efforts, and (2) activities to upgrade the skills, knowledge and ability of educators to improve student learning. CREC complies with all Connecticut statutory requirements for annual educator inservice training.

A Professional Development and Evaluation Committee, consisting of at least one teacher and at least one administrator, selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees; a paraeducator; and such other school personnel as the administration deems appropriate; will be established and meet regularly. The members chosen by the administration to be on the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee shall serve at the pleasure of the administration.

The committee will be responsible for the development, evaluation and annual updating of a comprehensive professional development plan for certified staff, school nurses and nurse practitioners, and paraeducators. The plan will be directly related to the educational goals proposed by the CREC Council pursuant to C.G.S. 10-220(b); and will be developed in full consideration of the priorities and needs related to student social-emotional learning and student academic outcomes, as determined by the State Board of Education.

All employees shall be provided opportunities for the development of increased competence beyond that which they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties.

Staff development may be made available by CREC directly, or through a RESC, a cooperative arrangement with another Board of Education, or through a provider approved by the Education Commissioner. The time and location of professional development activities will be determined by the administration. The administration will prepare an annual professional development program budget for CREC Council approval.

The effectiveness of the professional development program will be assessed on an annual basis. Such assessment must indicate that the professional development activities: a) were planned in response to identified needs; b) were provided by qualified instructional personnel, as appropriate; c) met the requirements for participation in the activity shared with participants before the commencement of the activity; and d) were evaluated in terms of effectiveness and contribution to the attainment of school/program and/or CREC goals.

The Executive Director is to report annually to the Council on the professional development program and its effect with recommendations for changes as needed.

Certified Personnel

Each certified employee shall annually participate in a program of professional development, of not fewer than 18 hours in length, of which a preponderance is in a small group or individual group settings. The professional development program shall:

1. be a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teacher and administrator effectiveness in increasing student knowledge achievement;
2. focus on refining and improving various effective teaching methods that are shared between and among educators;
3. foster collective responsibility for improved student performance;
4. be comprised of professional learning that is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards; is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by principals, coaches, mentors and distinguished educators or other appropriate teachers; occurs frequently on an individual basis or among groups of teachers in a job-embedded process of continuous improvement; and includes a repository or best practices for teaching methods developed by educators within each school that is continuously available to such educators for comment and updating;
5. include training in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice;
6. include training on the laws governing the implementation of planning and placement team meetings and Section 504 plans and an annual update of new state and federal policies recommendations, and best practices concerning special education; and
7. include training for emergency response to students who experience a seizure in a school/program.

The principles and practices of social and emotional learning, school climate and culture, and evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices shall be integrated throughout the components of the professional development program

The principles of play-based learning shall be integrated in the professional development program for teachers in a preschool program or in grades kindergarten to five.

Teachers must constantly review curricular content, teaching methods and materials, educational philosophy and goals, social change and other topics related to education to enhance their capabilities to improve student learning and achievement. Staff development activities should respond directly to the educational needs of the student body, including, (a) content areas such as language arts, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and enacting; math, social studies and science; (b) methodological areas such as motivation, teaching techniques, including the use of computers in the classroom and classroom management; and (c) affective areas of interpersonal relations of students and faculty, student growth and development and staff communication, problem solving, and decision making.

Special effort shall be made to prepare teachers and other school personnel to meet the needs of students of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Planning and implementation of such programs shall be done cooperatively by administration, teachers and parent advisory groups. Special effort shall also be given to administrators and/or supervisors in training pursuant to their obligations in the evaluation of the teacher.

School administrators will communicate to individual educators their responsibility to participate in professional development activities agreed upon in the annual evaluation process. It is the responsibility of each teacher, in collaboration with their administrator, to identify and participate in appropriate professional development activities to address the needs identified in their annual evaluation.

Professional development for principals/program directors and assistant principals/assistant program directors shall include training on the management of school personnel and methods for engaging school personnel with the goals of the school/program.

The Council recognizes that it shares with its certified staff responsibility for the upgrading and updating of teacher performance and attitudes. The Council and teachers' organizations support the principle of continuing training of teachers and the improvement of instruction.

The Executive Director shall provide the staff with opportunities for:

1. Release time and leaves of absence for travel and study.
2. Visits to other classrooms and other schools for purposes of problem solving, experimenting and interacting professionally with colleagues.
3. Conferences involving other personnel from the district, county, state, region and nation for purposes of problem solving, experimenting and interacting professionally with colleagues.
4. Writing of professional journal articles.
5. Opportunities for curriculum development.
6. Further training at, or in cooperation with, institutions of higher learning, as provided by law.
7. A full and up-to-date professional library for the certified staff made available for optimum reference use.
8. Professional educational conferences.

Non-Certified Personnel

Nurses

Each school nurse or nurse practitioner shall complete at least fifteen hours of professional development programs or activities in each two-year period.

Each new school nurse or nurse practitioner shall receive and complete (1) training and instruction in the implementation of individualized education programs and Section 504 plans not later than thirty days after appointment by or entering into a contract with CREC; and (2) an orientation to school health services, developed by an association that represents nurses in the state, not later than six months after appointment by or entering into a contract with CREC.

Paraeducators

Each paraeducator shall complete at least eighteen (18) hours of professional development programs or activities on an annual basis.

Each paraeducator shall annually participate in a program of professional development. Such program shall follow the best practices and guidance issued by the Department of Education in collaboration with the School Paraeducator Advisory Council.

(cf. 4115 - Evaluation)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-212. Nurses and nurse practitioners

10-220a In-Service training, as amended by P.A.24-45, An Act Concerning Education Mandate Relief, School Discipline, and Disconnected Youth; P.A. 24-93, An Act Concerning Various and Assorted Revisions to the Education Statutes. ; .

10-148a Professional development for certified employees.

10-148c Subject matter to be made available to boards of education

10-226g Intergroup relations training for teachers.

46a-170 Trafficking in Persons Council

P.A. 23-167, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education.

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Connecticut General Statutes 10-220a - In-service Training

A. Required In Service Topics for Certified Personnel

1. Nature and the relationships of drugs and alcohol to health and personality development and procedures for discouraging their abuse.
2. Health and mental health risk reduction education including, but not limited to, the prevention of risk-taking behavior by children and the relationship of such behavior to substance abuse, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV-infection and AIDS, violence, teen dating violence, domestic violence, child abuse and youth suicide.
3. School violence prevention, in a manner prescribed by the school security and safety plan; conflict resolution; prevention of and response to youth suicide; and the identification and prevention of and response to bullying.
4. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other emergency life saving procedures, including the use of automatic external defibrillators.
5. The requirements and obligations of mandated reporters.
6. The detection and recognition of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia.
7. Training pertaining to human trafficking, for staff members who have contact with students, as required by state law and developed by the Department of Children and Families (DCF).
8. Culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.
9. The principles and practices of social-emotional learning and restorative practices.
10. The laws governing the implementation of planning and placement team meetings and concerning Section 504 plans.
11. An annual update of the new state and federal policies concerning special education, recommendations and best practices.
12. Emergency response to students who experience a seizure at school, including, but not limited to, the recognition of the signs and symptoms of seizures, the appropriate steps for seizure first aid, information about seizure action plans for students; and, for staff authorized to administer medications, the administration of seizure rescue medication or prescribed electrical stimulation using a Vagus Nerve Stimulator magnet.

B. Optional In-Service Topics for Certified Personnel

- Holocaust and genocide education and awareness
- African-American History
- Puerto Rican history
- Native American history
- Personal financial management
- The historical events surrounding the Great Famine in Ireland
- Mental health first aid training
- Domestic violence and teen dating violence
- Trauma-informed practices for the school setting to enable teachers, administrators and pupil personnel to more adequately respond to students with mental, emotional or behavioral health needs
- Second language acquisition, including, but not limited to, language development and culturally responsive pedagogy

C. Required In Service Topics for Non-Certified Personnel

Nurses

- The implementation of individualized education programs and Section 504 plans
- Orientation to school health services