

Capitol Region Education Council

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State Served: CT

Connecticut's Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), a regional education service center and non-profit agency in Hartford, Connecticut submits this proposal for funding for the development of a Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC). CREC has a long-standing and demonstrated history of effectiveness providing training, technical assistance and direct services to local education agencies (LEAs), schools, families and students throughout Connecticut in the area of family engagement.

In addition to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE, the SEA for Connecticut), CREC's primary partners in this proposal are: The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC), a statewide nonprofit organization that offers information and support to families of children with disabilities; The African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP), an organization which trains and supports linguistically and culturally diverse parents and youth to become active in their educational communities, as well as advocates for policy and program reform; and the State Education Resource Center (SERC), a quasi-public agency of the state of Connecticut, that provides professional development and information dissemination in the latest research and best practices to educators, service providers, and families throughout the state, as well as on-site, embedded technical assistance and training within schools, programs, and districts.

The partner agencies have capacity to: identify and develop evidence-based family engagement strategies and practices; design systems of technical assistance to ensure sustainability of effective engagement practices in educational systems; provide direct services and support to families, including families from linguistically and culturally diverse communities and families that are economically disadvantaged; provide support for dual-capacity building whereby the skills and mindset of both families and educators, as partners in the engagement practices, are addressed.

The proposed project consists of three main components: 1) A comprehensive, responsive research-based system of direct service provision to families, including parent education programs; 2) a dual-capacity building infrastructure, designed to ensure that there will be a network of support for both families and professionals working in school settings to implement effective, evidence-based family engagement strategies; and 3) a virtual resource repository, including practice guides, training modules and other supports and services, which will be accessible to all stakeholders (families, educators, advocates, students, policy-makers and training and technical assistance providers) involved in family engagement work throughout the state of Connecticut.

The final design and implementation of each of the three components of the SFEC model will be informed by a stakeholder advisory committee. To ensure that the majority of the proposed project activities will provide direct support for disadvantaged families, preferential access to SFEC supports and services will be offered to the 33 lowest performing LEAs in Connecticut, currently categorized by the CSDE as Alliance Districts, which serve a disproportionate number of disadvantaged students.