



For Immediate Release

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## **Greg Florio Receives Excellence in Executive Leadership Award**

### **From Association of Educational Service Agencies**

Dr. Greg Florio, Executive Director of the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) in Hartford, CT, has received the 2023 Excellence in Executive Leadership Award from the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs). The award was presented at the AESAs Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA.

The award recognizes contributions through executive leadership in advancing regional educational service agency programs at the regional, state and national levels.

“I am profoundly honored to present this award to Dr. Florio,” said Joan Wade, AESAs Executive Director.

“His courageous approach to a difficult challenge distinguishes excellence in leadership,” she added.

Florio was honored for his efforts to set up the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program (CT-TRP), an initiative designed to recruit, train and retain teachers of color in the wake of the national teacher shortage and especially the lack of teachers of color. CREC funded the pilot program in 2019-20 that set up a model tuition free elementary teacher certification program that paid participants a living wage and benefits for their work in schools and also paid for laptops and books. The program also provided mentor teachers and tutors to help participants with course preparation and completion of the state certification exams. A special education certification program has since been added to the effort.

These elements were specifically set up to address the barriers frequently encountered by people with historically marginalized identities when attempting to become certified educators. Those barriers include the cost of traditional preparation programs, the loss of income during student teaching, and the high stakes certification exam.

The program started with 11 participants in CREC schools and has expanded to 30 regional and statewide districts with an average of 45 residents participating annually.



# AESA

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To support the effort, CREC under Florio's direction established a multi-prong funding approach, seeking grants and state and federal funds. The program recently received \$3 million in funding from the state of Connecticut for the next two years. Florio and CREC also collaborated with the RESC Alliance, a partnership of the six regional education service centers in Connecticut.

"Dr. Florio's courage and determination to provide the seed funding for CT-RTP and his on-going advocacy in expanding the program statewide while actively working with the State Department of Education and the CT General Assembly to influence appropriate funding for the program is a testament to his leadership," said Lydia Tedone, Board Chair of the Capital Region Education Council, who nominated Florio for the award.

Also supporting the nomination were the executive directors of the other 5 members of the RESC Alliance. They called the CT-RTP "a model across the state and one that should be replicated nationally."

"The teacher shortage is a tremendous struggle for school districts and we are grateful for the leadership of Dr. Florio and CREC for creating this model program that addresses all the barriers individuals face in becoming certified teachers," they said.

The Excellence in Executive Leadership Award is bestowed in honor of the late Justus A. Prentice, BOCES Superintendent in New York, recognized as one of the founders of AESA.