



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Keith M. Norton  
Chief Strategic Planning Officer *Keith M. Norton*

DATE: March 19, 2026

SUBJECT: Launch of the CSDE Industry Recognized Credential (IRC) Application!

Connecticut's Five-Year Comprehensive Plan for Education 2023-28 (the "State Board Plan") emphasizes the development of coordinated and rigorous programs in partnership with higher education and local employers, to ensure every student has the opportunity to explore diverse career options. In support of the State Board Plan, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) recently published the [CSDE Credential Registry](#) (the "Registry"), which is a curated list of Industry Recognized Credentials (IRC) aligned to 14 career clusters. **CSDE is now introducing a process for districts to submit applications for new IRCs to be added to the Registry.**

An IRC is a certification that validates an individual's knowledge, skills, and competencies within a specific industry. Developed, offered, or endorsed by nationally or regionally recognized industry associations or organizations representing a substantial portion of the industry sector, IRCs set industry standards and serve as benchmarks for employers. IRCs also enhance employability and support professional growth.

District staff are encouraged to explore the Registry to identify all available IRCs. If an IRC is not listed on the Registry, the superintendent or their designee should complete and submit the [CSDE IRC Application](#) to request the **new** IRC to be added.

**Applications for new IRCs must be completed and submitted by April 30, 2026.** An industry-led review committee will evaluate applications, and the Registry will be updated with newly accepted IRCs at the beginning of each school year.

The CSDE encourages districts to collaborate with community members to gather insights on credentials that meet the needs of students, educators, and industry. For questions or assistance, reach out to [SDE.IRC@ct.gov](mailto:SDE.IRC@ct.gov).

Your commitment to enhancing students' employability and skill development is crucial to align Connecticut's education and workforce goals. Together, we can create a strong education-to-career pipeline. Thank you for your attention and cooperation.