

Connecticut State Department of Education

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Meeting

June 20, 2023

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Present:

- Dr. Maureen Brummett, Superintendent, Newington Public Schools
- Dr. Michael Coyne, Department Head Educational Psychology and Co-Director for the Center for Behavioral Education and Research (CBER), NEAG School of Education, UCONN
- Ms. Kim Healy, Wilton, CT
- Dr. Melissa Jenkins, Chief Academic Officer, Bridgeport Public Schools
- Dr. Stephanie Lockhart, Principal, Avon High School, Avon Public Schools
- Ms. Lisa Thomas, Retired Educator
- Mr. Steven Hernandez Esq., Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO)
- Dr. Margie Gillis, Founder and President, Literacy How, Inc.
- Ms. Frances Rabinowitz, Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)

Facilitator:

Dr. Melissa K. Wlodarczyk Hickey, Director of the Center for Literacy Research & Reading Success (Center), Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

Staff Present:

Leslie Navarrete, Education Staff Assistant, Connecticut State Department of Education

I. Welcome and Roll Call

The Council's facilitator Dr. Hickey, Director of the Center, CSDE, convened the meeting at 1:04 p.m. and the Council's Clerk called attendance. Dr. Hickey welcomed the Council.

II. Discussion of Minutes from May 16, 2023

Draft minutes were tabled to review at the next meeting. Per council member Thomas' request, the Council shall now adhere to Robert's Rules of Order.

III. Revised "Why"

Council unanimously approved the change of the "Why" from: *Every Connecticut student has the right to read at or above grade level by the end of third grade* to *Every Connecticut student has the right to read at or above grade level independently and proficiently by the end of third grade*.

IV. Discussion of 2023-24 Draft Goals

A. Reviewed Council's Legislated Responsibilities

Dr. Hickey provided a review of the Council's legislated responsibilities.

B. Reviewed 2023-24 Draft Council Goals

Dr. Hickey gave an overview of the draft 2023-24 Council goals and opened the floor for discussion of members' draft goal feedback. Dr. Jenkins provided feedback including expanding the draft goals include data to communicate the success of closing gaps especially in the areas of special education and multilingual learners, metrics in training educators in the science of reading, and transparency

with funding and communication of funding. Executive Director Rabinowitz stated she is “not a fan of the mandated programs” and the state “needs a literacy curriculum” as there is inequity. She stated the need for additional funding to support districts.

The Council discussed the approved K-3 Connecticut core comprehensive literacy curriculum models and programs and how the core programs are to be used as a base. Dr. Hickey reminded the Council that the Council did define curriculum and program. The Council discussed measuring the use of the core curriculum models and programs and how to assist when schools and districts are using the core curriculum models and programs differently. Ms. Thomas shared funding is required to support districts with the science of reading and help with financial and human resource capital. The suggestion was made to include more educators on the Council.

Dr. Hickey proposed creating a working group of the Council to meet in the summer to further develop draft goals to present to the Council in the fall. The group can work from the goals developed to date.

Ms. Healy would like more information available to families and parents on the science of reading (e.g., informational session) to increase their knowledge and understanding of the science of reading. Dr. Gillis gave an overview of family engagement literacy work occurring in the Connecticut Literacy Model Work with districts. Dr. Brummett requested the crafting of communication regarding the waiver application process feedback to districts so that families are not given the impression that their children were not taught correctly. Dr. Coyne stated that the focus of the goals for the Council needs to be around the legislated work.

Dr. Brummett, Dr. Coyne, Dr. Jenkins and Executive Director Rabinowitz volunteered to join the work group to create draft goals to share at the September 19, 2023, Council meeting.

V. Finalize Meeting Dates and Times for 2023–24

Dr. Hickey made a motion to approve dates and times for 2023–24. Executive Director Rabinowitz seconded. All approved. Ms. Navarette shall send calendar invitations to all Council members. The first meeting shall be virtual.

VI. Director’s Update

- A.** PCG is assisting the CSDE with reviewing the Waiver of Connecticut Approved K-3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs (waiver) applications. PCG has started to review content, not to grant or deny a waiver request. The Center will provide two virtual opportunities for districts to meet with the PCG reviewers. This will extend the approval process. Dr. Hickey noted that most of the waiver applicants were missing information required for the waiver, so the CSDE had to expand the approval process timeline to gather this information from districts. Dr. Gillis spoke to the legislated requirement of the data in the waiver application. She wanted on record that “still have a gap that is obstinate and whoever is reading waiver is taking that piece seriously.”
- B.** Funding is available to support all districts with purchasing Connecticut approved K-3 literacy assessments, curriculum models, and programs. The Center was allocated over \$24 million in ARPA funds and over \$20 million of that was granted to districts. The rest of these funds will be utilized for professional learning to support districts. The CSDE is finalizing a grant to support small districts- the ARP ESSER Small Town Right to Read grant.
- C.** Candidates were interviewed for the Center’s five associate education consultant positions. The CSDE continues to work with the Department of Administrative Services, SmART Human Resources Unit on hiring.

VII. Closing/Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 2:24 p.m.