

## Connecticut State Department of Education

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Meeting

May 16, 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
- 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)

### Absent:

- Ms. Christina Tietz, English Teacher, Waterbury Public Schools
- Ms. Cristina Kingsbury, Instructional Coach, Naugatuck Public Schools
- Dr. Stephanie Lockhart, Principal, Avon High School, Avon Public Schools

### Facilitator:

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

### Staff Present:

- Irene E. Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education
- Leslie Navarrete, Education Staff Assistant, Connecticut State Department of Education

### I. Welcome and Roll Call

The Council's facilitator Dr. Melissa K. Wlodarczyk Hickey, Director of the Center, CSDE, convened the meeting at 1:03 p.m. and the Council's Clerk called attendance. Dr. Hickey welcomed the Council and reviewed the Council norms.

### II. Acceptance of Minutes from January 17, 2023, and March 21, 2023

Council members reviewed the draft meeting minutes. Council member Lisa Thomas helped identify revisions in the draft March 21, 2023, meeting minutes (Please note: The approved March 21, 2023, meeting minutes that is on the Reading Leadership Implementation Council webpage reflects the Council's revisions).

Being that there were several Council members absent at the March 21st Council meeting, Dr. Hickey opened the floor to facilitate a discussion on Council member Lisa Thomas' comments, which she requested be attached to the March 21, 2023, meeting minutes. Dr. Hickey noted that the majority of the matters enclosed in Council member Lisa Thomas' written comments fall outside of the Center's charges per the reading legislation. The Council was reminded by Council member Steve Hernandez that the Council is an implementation council that is legislated to implement with fidelity the deliverables outlined in the reading legislation that supports the science of reading, and he advised the Council to adhere to the science of reading.

Additionally, Council member Steven Hernandez and Dr. Hickey further explained the role of the Council with respect to supporting Connecticut school districts with the implementation of the science of reading. Council member Kim Healy requested the Council to discuss and consider amendments to the reading legislation as to strengthen the legislation's support for the science of reading without exacerbating school districts [She referenced the waiver process] and reducing their autonomy. Council member Fran R Rabinowitz expressed her concern about the Council being a rubber stamp and requested the Council further discuss its role in the implementation of the reading legislation.

The Council agreed to post Council member Lisa Thomas' comments with the March 21, 2023, meeting minutes. Council member Thomas requested the Council adhere to Robert's Rules of Order when accepting the meeting minutes, and the Council agreed.

### **III. 2023-24 Goals Planning Process**

#### **A. Discuss Council's Legislated Responsibilities**

Dr. Hickey gave an overview of the Council's legislative responsibilities (for further detail, please see the May 16, 2023, PowerPoint Presentation on the Reading Leadership Implementation Council webpage).

#### **B. Review Consensus Decision-Making Process**

Dr. Hickey gave an overview of the Consensus Decision-Making Process and the gradients of agreement (for further detail, please see May 16, 2023, PowerPoint Presentation on the Reading Leadership Implementation Council webpage). She emphasized that all Council members have a voice, and it is not the intent to make any Council member feel like their freedom of speech is being encroached. Additionally, she mentioned that it appears the Council would like to transition to Robert's Rules of Order.

#### **C. Review 2022–23 Council Goals**

Dr. Hickey gave an overview of the 2022–23 Council goals (for further detail, please see the May 16, 2023, PowerPoint Presentation on the Reading Leadership Implementation Council webpage). The Council will have an opportunity to discuss them along with the 2023-24 Council goals.

#### **D. Examine Connecticut's K–3 Strategy and Council's "Why, How, and What"**

Dr. Hickey gave an overview of the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success' "Why, How, and What" (for further detail, please see the May 16, 2023, PowerPoint Presentation on the Reading Leadership Implementation Council webpage).

Some of the breakout session discussions that Council members shared were:

- Identifying support that the Center can provide schools and districts to implement the reading legislation (i.e., support districts with the development of a needs assessment);
- Being part of an ongoing review process for curriculum models that might be added to the list;
- Identifying tools that can guide in the drafting of the 2023-24 Council's goals (i.e., the Hanover survey, can the report be utilized as a diagnostic tool to provide insight on the implementation of reading in districts);
- The possibility of the legislature reviewing the use of mandated school programs with the potential to eliminate them; and
- Expanding the 2022-24 Council's goals while keeping in mind the Center's staff capacity.

Dr. Hickey extended her gratitude to all the education stakeholders that have helped with improving literacy across the state of Connecticut. Dr. Jenkins suggested to the Council to create progress monitoring measures/dashboards for the 2023-24 Council's goals. Council member Thomas shared her support for Dr. Jenkins' suggestion. Dr. Hickey recommended that the Council have a further conversation on that topic.

### **III. New Business**

Director's Update:

- A. Currently interviewing for five associate consultant positions, and two Council members, Dr. Coyne, and Steven Hernandez, are on the interview panel as they fulfill the requirement of being a state employee. Interviews are planned to be completed by the end of May.
- B. Interviews for an administrative assistant are in June.
- C. The CSDE will be opening the application for the ARPA-Right to Read Grant soon. All school districts, including charter schools, are eligible to apply.
- D. The Center is working on utilizing ARPA ESSER as a funding source to support small districts. Dr. Hickey will provide the list of eligible districts to Council members.
- E. Registration for ReadConn, a professional development opportunity, is in June for the fall cohort. Superintendents and local boards of education will be notified.
- F. The Center is waiting on the status of the proposed legislation to extend the reading legislation implementation deadline for districts and local boards of education to two years (originally it was in 2023).
- G. The Center received 86 applications for waivers. The Center is moving forward with the PCG contract. PCG will assist the Center with reviewing the applications. The Center will notify districts on the status of the waiver at the end of June. The Center will offer 30-minute 1:1 support sessions to districts to support them with the waiver. PCG will use information gathered during the process to guide ReadConn and professional learning. Once the review process is finalized and in place, the Center will post detailed information about the waiver's review process on the CSDE website. The legislation does not include an appeal process for the waiver.

### **IV. Council Meeting Calendar for the 2023-24 School Year**

Dr. Hickey requested that the Council review the proposed Council meeting schedule and finalize the schedule during the Council's June meeting.

### **V. Closing/Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.