

ReadConn: A K-3 Reading Skills Professional Learning Series

Frequently Asked Questions

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- [What is the “ReadConn Professional Learning Series”?](#)

The ReadConn Professional Learning Series is focused on identifying students’ needs related to critical early literacy skills and delivering explicit instruction regardless of reading approach or program. The learning content is designed specifically to support K-3 general education teachers, including teachers of English learners, and K-3 special education teachers who serve students with disabilities. This series will increase teachers’ expertise in identifying necessary foundational skills, spotting student skills gaps, and monitoring students’ progress to create a solid foundation in early literacy skills. The program consists of school teams that include one school-based administrator, one literacy leader (school-based individual with a formal literacy role, responsible for supporting K-3 teachers in their professional learning in reading skills and knowledge), and at least three teachers currently teaching Grades K-3. Cohorts are involved for one school year.

- [What is the purpose of the series?](#)

The goal of this series is to respond to the needs of Connecticut K-3 teachers and literacy leaders around foundational reading skills by providing professional learning that encompasses the Reading Foundational Skills of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) in English Language Arts. This program aims to build capacity in teachers, literacy leaders, and school and district leaders that can be sustained and expanded.

- [What role do teachers play?](#)

With guidance from their school-based literacy leaders, teachers will enhance their skills through self-paced online modules and action-oriented “plays” for applying learning in the classroom. Over the course of the school year, teachers will develop a strong understanding of the Foundational Reading Standards and engage in regular opportunities to apply their learning in the classroom, ensuring their learning is responsive to on-the-ground realities of their classrooms.

- [What role do literacy leaders play?](#)

Literacy leaders will expand their content, pedagogical knowledge, and effective practices for supporting special education and general education teachers in foundational literacy. Literacy leaders will fully engage in the learning series, supporting their school team through professional learning opportunities, collaborating with other Connecticut literacy leaders, and participating in virtual coaching with a PCG Executive Coach. This is *NOT* a Trainer of Trainers model of professional development.

- [As a literacy leader, what are my responsibilities to my school or district?](#)

Potential school-based literacy leaders and their school and district leaders should discuss any expectations before, during, and after participation so that literacy leaders can make informed decisions about their role. Literacy leaders who already hold school or district leadership roles have a professional responsibility to provide guidance and share their learning with others.

- [As a literacy leader, will I receive training beforehand?](#)

Literacy leaders will be grouped into cohorts and will be supported by PCG Executive Coaches in leading their school teams through the program. Literacy leaders will receive training on the online systems and facilitation techniques prior to beginning this work.

- What role do principals play?

Principals will augment their knowledge base for supporting literacy leaders, and special education and general education teachers in effective foundational literacy instruction.

- What are the characteristics of literacy leaders and teachers who participate?

Literacy Leader Characteristics 1 per school	Teacher Characteristics 3 or more per school
<p>A school-based individual with a formal literacy role, responsible for supporting K-3 teachers in their professional learning in reading skills and knowledge. A literacy leader is:</p>	<p>Special and general education teachers currently teaching Grades K-3 and may include teachers of English learners. A teacher is:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate about using effective coaching and leadership practices to enhance teachers’ instruction and grow student results. • Committed to deepening their understanding of how to support teachers and employ digital collaboration tools. • Eager to learn more about literacy practices for teachers and students within the context of the CCS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate about providing learners with opportunities to practice and master foundational literacy skills and strategies. • Someone who embraces a growth mindset about improving instructional and foundational literacy practices. • Eager to collaborate with a community of teachers from across the state and build leadership skills. • Energized about helping colleagues explore and apply new approaches to instruction so that all teachers are supported in teaching the CCS.

- What are the responsibilities of literacy leaders and teachers who participate?

Literacy Leader Responsibilities 1 per school	Teacher Responsibilities 3 or more per school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead your school team through 4 virtual modules and associated “plays” that apply learning and reflection from classroom implementation. • Virtually collaborate with a team comprised of fellow literacy leaders and facilitated by a PCG Executive Coach on how to best support teachers in making informed instructional decisions. • Foster learning communities to support all teachers in teaching the CCS and use tools learned through ReadConn work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 4 virtual module and associated “plays” that apply learning and reflection from classroom implementation. • Learn the components of comprehensive literacy instruction: learn-by-doing, and immediately integrate new content into lesson planning for upcoming instruction. • Collaborate with school-based team (fellow teacher leaders and literacy leader) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice new approaches in classrooms while meeting the CCS. ○ Respond to students’ needs. ○ Support the development of learning communities at school.

- **With whom is the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) collaborating on this project?**

ReadConn is brought to you through a partnership with Public Consulting Group (PCG) of Boston, MA. PCG and CSDE have collaborated in the development of the scope and sequence of this program. The program was developed in 2016 and has evolved over the years based on participant feedback. The CSDE maintains oversight over the PCG-run program.

- **When do the different elements of the program occur?**

School teams have agency in deciding the pacing of how they move through the program. The general arc of the program is:

- Literacy leaders attend regular coaching meetings with a cohort of peers and PCG executive coach
- School teams complete the sequence of 4 modules followed by “plays” (e.g., complete online module; complete application activity; reflect with team; repeat)

Options include:

- Completing the online modules either individually or as a PLC
- Compressing or extending the length of time it takes to complete an online module and associated “plays”

- **How do I register?**

Principals are responsible for registering teams for the program. To register, principals should:

- 1) direct internet browser to: <http://surveys.pcgus.com/s3/2021-READCONN-Team-Registration-Site>
- 2) input district, school, and team members (first name, last name, e-mail address, role, grade level, and primary population served)
- 3) choose “*next*,” and within one business day, principals and team members will receive a confirmation e-mail from PCG with additional information.

- **Does registration close? Is there a way to do a district sign up if we have multiple schools?**

Registration will close after the kick-off of the program (early September 2021). Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis. A district may sign up multiple school teams. If you have several teams you would like to enroll, please email readconn@pcgus.com to discuss a potential bulk registration (vs. filling out the online form multiple times).

- **What if we do not have school-based literacy leaders?**

Consider a grade-level leader. Alternately, a teacher can step in and fill this capacity if they commit to developing their coaching skills and leading their school team through the program. To sustain the momentum, we strongly recommend the role of literacy leader be filled and ask administrators to make a recommendation.

- **Is there a fee associated? If so, what is it?**

This training is FREE to Connecticut educators.

- Can teams change members depending on the module work, or should the team stay consistent through all four modules?

Your team should remain consistent throughout the school year and throughout the modules.

- Will participation in ReadConn exempt teachers from the Foundations of Reading Survey?

This professional learning opportunity does not exempt teachers from the Foundations of Reading Survey requirement.

- About how many hours should be dedicated to each module? In addition, what is the school-year timeline for completing the modules?

Each self-paced online module takes approximately 4-6 hours to complete. “Plays” and the corresponding classroom application/coaching/reflection process will take place over the course of two to four weeks following each online module. The program will begin in September 2021. As described throughout the FAQ, the pace of completing the modules will be guided but largely dependent on what works for participating school teams.

- Can individual teachers participate on their own? I work in a very small school and there is not a literacy coach currently. I am a special education teacher and I think I may be the only one with interest in this opportunity at this time.

In the past, some smaller districts have created cross-school teams to attend the program together. It is important to at least have a designated literacy leader to participate in coaching and champion the work for their team. If you are unable to assemble a team and still want to participate in the program, please email readconn@pcgus.com and describe your specific circumstances. We will work with CSDE to accommodate as many participants as possible, even if you don't fit the recommended profile.

- I heard you recommend allowing two to four weeks for each “play.” Can you define what that might look like? For example, should teams schedule two to four meetings, one-hour in length within the two to four weeks? What about independent learning time?

Teachers and literacy leaders will be expected to apply their learning from the online modules in the classroom. The content will be differentiated for teachers of K-1 and 2-3, as well as literacy leaders. “Plays” are intended to go deeper into a specific aspect of the online module and follow a structure of learn; implement; reflect; and monitor. The effort involved will vary based on the concept, the team's expectations, and the individual teacher (for example, “embed comprehension strategies in lesson planning”). With the coaching of the team literacy leader, teachers will apply the concepts they are learning in the classroom and reflect on that application.

- Are all the meetings virtual?

In the past, ReadConn was a blend of in-person and virtual learning experiences. For the 2021-22 school year, given the COVID-19 pandemic, the program is going 100% virtual, but with a variety of formats to foster engagement.

- Are the modules recorded so that we can view them on our own schedule?

The modules are entirely self-paced and available 24/7.

- [Is there a limit to the number of teachers who can participate?](#)

We recommend a minimum of three teachers, but the maximum should be based on how many teachers a literacy leader can comfortably engage in coaching. Schools may sign up more than one team if they have many teachers who want to participate and can identify more than one literacy leader.

- [I am a Middle School Coach. Could a Middle School Team join?](#)

Middle school teams have participated in ReadConn in the past to support teachers in accelerating learning for students who are reading below grade level. If you want to enroll an atypical team, please email readconn@pcgus.com and describe your specific circumstances.

- [Is it possible for multiple small schools to band together and be one team, or have a central facilitator for a few schools?](#)

In the past, some smaller districts have created cross-school teams to attend the program together. It is important to at least have a designated school-based literacy leader to participate in coaching and champion the work for their team. If you are unable to assemble a team and still want to participate in the program, please email readconn@pcgus.com and describe your specific circumstances. We will work with CSDE to accommodate as many participants as possible, even if you don't fit the recommended profile.