

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Meeting  
December 16, 2025  
Meeting Minutes

**Connecticut Department of Education**

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Virtual Meeting

450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT

December 16, 2025

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

**Present:**

- Dr. Margie Gillis, Founder and President, Literacy How, Inc.
- Steven Hernández, Esq., Executive Director, CONNCAN
- Dr. Melissa K. Wlodarczyk Hickey, Director of the Center for Literacy Research & Reading Success (Center), Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)
- Gary Highsmith, Superintendent, Hamden Public Schools
- Yasmin Ithier-Vicenty, Teacher, Hartford Public Schools
- Dr. Tamu Lucero, Superintendent, Stamford Public Schools
- Dr. Ashley Oldham, Assistant Professor of Education, Department of Special Education, University of Saint Joseph
- Shandra Scott-Brown, Principal CREC Museum Academy
- Dr. James Zavodjancik, Chief Academy Officer, Fairfield Public Schools

**Facilitator:**

Dr. Ellen Stoltz, Educational Leadership Consultant, ImproveYourSchools

**I. Welcome and Roll Call**

E. Stoltz convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

**II. Minutes from October 14, 2025**

E. Stoltz opened the floor and made a motion for approval of the minutes from October 14, 2025. A. Oldham approved the motion and M. Gillis seconded.

**III. Council Member Comments and Insights**

No action or discussion occurred under this agenda item as Council members did not request to share comments or insights.

**IV. *Bridging Plans to Practice: A Process to Self-Assess Full Implementation of CT Approved K-3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs Curriculum***

Dr. Hickey shared with the Council the Mandated Implementation Review Process which included three drafted steps pertaining to the randomized site visits. Dr. Hickey shared that M. Conway mentioned Derby was willing to pilot the drafted review process. The floor was

open for discussion. G. Highsmith wondered what role the Board of Education would have in this, are they involved in the process. T. Lucero asked if there was an opportunity to opt into the process if not randomly selected. A. Oldham asked about the self-assessment pertaining to dialogue and rubrics.

**V. Connecticut State Department of Education’s K-12 Model Curriculum**

Irene Parisi, Dr. Joanne White, and Paul Castiglione discussed the K-12 Model Curriculum with the Council and shared [GoOpen CT](#) which is where the curricula is housed.

**VI. Meeting Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

The next Council meeting will be held virtually on February 24, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. –2:30 p.m.