

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Meeting  
June 17, 2025  
Meeting Minutes

**Connecticut Department of Education**

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Virtual Meeting

450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT

June 17, 2025

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

**Present:**

- Dr. Matthew Conway, Superintendent Derby Public Schools
- Dr. Michael Coyne, Professor, Neag School of Education the University of Connecticut
- Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, ConnCAN
- Dr. Melissa K. Wlodarczyk Hickey, Director of the Center for Literacy Research & Reading Success (Center), Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)
- 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**

Dr. Stoltz convened the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

**II. Robert's Rules to Accept Minutes from May 20, 2025**

Dr. Stoltz opened the floor and made a motion for approval of the minutes from May 20, 2025. A. Oldham approved the motion and S. Hernandez seconded. No discussion ensued and minutes were accepted as presented.

**III. Revised Menu of K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments**

Guest speaker Ajit Gopalakrishnan shared information with the Council on Universal Screening Assessments. Discussion ensued with Council members.

**IV. 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.

**V. Director's Updates Regarding *The K-3 Literacy Plan for the Center for Literacy Reading and Research Success***

Dr. Hickey shared with the Council updates on the following:

- Funding Assistance with ARPA Right to Read Grant (\$20 Million) and ARP-ESSER Small Town Right to Read Grant (\$4.5 Million)
- RESC Literacy Affinity Groups and 1:1 Coaching
- Fostering Collaborative Networks
- Providing support through TNTP to assist with building systems and structure

The floor was open for discussion. S. Hernandez shared how Connecticut is ahead of other states. He was wondering how the Council can be engaged and help with partnering with communities and families on a local level. Dr. Hickey shared the work that the Center has been doing with SERC for parent engagement. SERC is creating content and workshops on literacy for parents. Another is LiteracyHow, they have been working with schools and districts to train schools on providing reading nights. Those schools will then train other schools.

#### **VI. Next Steps Connecticut's K-3 Literacy Strategy Expansion to Include Grades 4-12**

Dr. Stoltz raised questions to the Council members based on May 2025 meeting with guest speaker Dr. Gabriel regarding: How does the Council view disciplinary literacy? How does the Council see this informing our work moving forward? The floor was open for discussion. S. Brown shared that the information was insightful, helping her take a closer look at the bridge from grades three to four. Dr. Hickey shared about ReadConn 2.0, it's updated to include K-12, both in person and online. S. Hernandez shared how spreading through higher grades helps with continuing the work that's being done on the dyslexia spectrum, new arrival students, MLs, no one gets left behind.

Dr. Hickey asked Council members for volunteers interested in expanding the K-3 strategy to grades 4-12. Council members M. Conway, S. Hernandez, A. Oldham, and J. Zavodjancik volunteered to collaborate this summer to draft the 4-12 strategy expansion.

#### **VII. Council Meeting Schedule for 2025-2026 School Year**

The Council approved the following 2025-2026 meeting dates:

- August 19, 2025
- October 14, 2025
- December 16, 2025
- February 24, 2026
- March 17, 2026
- May 19, 2026
- June 16, 2026

#### **VIII. Meeting Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.