

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Meeting
March 18, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Connecticut Department of Education

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Virtual Meeting

450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT

March 18, 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
- Kim Healy, Selectwoman, Wilton, CT
- 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
- 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 February 25, 2025

Dr. Stoltz opened the floor and made a motion for approval of February 25, 2025, minutes. M Conway approved the motion and K. Healy seconded. Meetings will now be held using a different Teams platform and new links. Ms. Rivera will be sending replacement invitations to all Council members for the remaining Council meetings.

III. Council Member Comments and Insights

K. Healy shared her comments from different states with the Council on the following: Assessments, Waiver process, and Assessment tool. K. Healy shared her feelings regarding the Amira learning not meeting requirements but is still on the list of approved CSDE assessments and wondered if it would be pulled or reevaluated. K. Healy questioned the use of data during the Waiver process and wondered how the Center will be gauging if a program is working. On the assessment tool K. Healy asked about the baseline data.

Dr. Hickey shared that the data submission on the waiver process was legislated. Dr. Hickey shared that the process of assessments is not handled by the Center, but by the CSDE Performance Office. M. Hickey asked if the Council would like to have Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan come to a future meeting to share.

IV. Reflection on February Districts Implantation Journey Presentations

Dr. Stoltz opened the floor to Council members who would like to share their thoughts.

S. Hernandez shared how it is the Council's responsibility to help districts in meeting their needs where they are.

Dr. Stoltz asked if any of the Council members who are districts would like to share their implementation journey. M. Conway shared how all are experiencing the same challenges expressed by the presenting districts. G. Highsmith echoed M. Conway concerns adding the uncertainties around funding when districts start buying materials in the fall. He also shared that the strategy needs to be expanded to include grades 4-6.

Dr. Hickey asked the Council, "What can the Council do to help the Center move districts move to full implementation?"

V. Action Item: 2024-26 Goals of the Council

Dr. Hickey shared with the Council the drafted 2024-26 Reading Leadership Implementation Council Goals. Discussion ensued. Dr. Hickey shared the Literacy Plan with the Council. The Council reached consensus on the following 2024-26 Reading Leadership Implementation Council Goal:

The overarching goal of the Reading Leadership Implementation Council is to support and inform the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success (Center) regarding the implementation of all elements of the Right to Read Legislation. This includes:

- Communicating to the Council and Center feedback regarding successes and challenges related to the implementation of the Right to Read Legislation and the provision of technical assistance to those districts whose Waiver of Connecticut Approved K-3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs was not approved.
- Identifying ways to expand Connecticut's K-3 Literacy Strategy to include Birth-3 and grades 4-12.
- Ensuring decisions regarding Connecticut's Approved K-3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs are grounded in evidence-based literacy strategies and effective reading instructional practices.

As a result, 100 percent of Connecticut districts and Charter Schools will deliver evidence-based, comprehensive, core literacy instruction to promote success for all students.

VI. Action Item: Guest Speaker Request Form

The Council reviewed the speaker request form that was submitted by K. Healy. Discussion ensued. The Council agreed to have Dr. Rachel Gabriel speak at the next Council meeting.

VIII. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

The next Council meeting will be held virtually on May 20, 2025, from 2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.