

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Meeting  
May 19, 2026  
Meeting Minutes

**Connecticut Department of Education**

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Virtual Meeting

450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT

May 19, 2026

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

**Present:**

- Dr. Matthew Conway, Professor, Superintendent Derby Public Schools
- Dr. Michael Coyne, Professor, Neag School of Education the University of Connecticut
- Dr. Margie Gillis, Founder and President, Literacy How, Inc.
- 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**

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

**II. Minutes from April 28, 2026**

E. Stoltz opened the floor and made a motion for approval of the minutes from April 28, 2026. A. Oldham approved the motion and M. Conway 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. Center Goal Reflection**

E. Stoltz reviewed with Council the 2024-26 Reading Leadership Implementation Council Goals. Council members reviewed and reflected on the goals set during their term. Discussion ensued. M. Hickey shared with members how she has reached out to their appointees. M. Coyne shared how he would like to see broader verbiage or expanding on how

the Center has been organizing and sharing their work. T. Lucero commented that it would be helpful for new members joining to have a pre-meeting, read the legislation, receive some background on how the Council was created, and be directed to links to meetings.

**V. Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities Updates**

Lisa Gianni and Kristin Allen, Associate Education Consultants in the CSDE's Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (ODRD) shared information regarding various ODRD projects including the Connecticut Educator Competencies, Connecticut Higher Education Faculty Collaborative, and in-service structured literacy and Dyslexia professional learning. Discussion ensued.

**VI. Meeting Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

The next Council meeting will be held virtually on June 16, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.