Reading Leadership Implementation Council Meeting
October 20, 2026
Meeting Minutes

Connecticut Department of Education

Reading Leadership Implementation Council Virtual Meeting

450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT

October 20, 2026

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Present:

- Dr. Matthew Conway, Superintendent, Derby Public Schools
- Dr. Michael Coyne, Professor, Neag School of Education the University of Connecticut
- Amy Dowell, Partner, Good Policy Partners
- 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
- Melvette Hill, Executive Director Connecticut General Assembly's Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity
- Yasmin Ithier-Vicenty, Teacher, Hartford Public Schools
- Dr. Ashley Oldham, Associate Professor of Education, Department Chair, University of Saint Joseph
- Shandra Scott-Brown, Principal, CREC Museum Academy

Facilitator:

Dr. Ellen Stoltz, Educational Leadership Consultant, ImproveYourSchools

I. Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions

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

II. Minutes from June 16, 2026, and September 22, 2026

E. Stoltz opened the floor and made a motion for approval of the minutes from June 16, 2026. M. Gillis approved the motion and S. Hernández seconded. E. Stoltz made another motion for approval of the minutes from September 22, 2026. M. Conway approved the motion and A. Oldham 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. Crucial Conversations in Action: 2026-28 Goals of the Council

Dr. Hickey and E. Stoltz reviewed the Council's 2023–2024 and 2024–2026 goals. E. Stoltz introduced Crucial Conversations strategies to support Council members in developing goals for

the 2026–2028 term. Council members engaged in discussion. E. Stoltz and M. Hickey will refine the draft goals based on the discussion and present revised draft at the November meeting.

V. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

The next Council meeting will be held virtually on November 17, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

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