

Update on Implementation of Connecticut's RIGHT TO READ Legislation



OCTOBER 2022

About Right to Read:

Connecticut's "Right to Read" legislation systematizes a statewide response to early literacy—based on the Science of Reading. Under the supervision of the newly formed Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success (the Center) it requires the state to oversee all related efforts, including:

- Setting reading curriculum requirements for districts;
- Establishing approved reading assessments to track progress;
- Providing professional development to districts on implementing CT's Intensive Reading Intervention Strategy and Tiered Reading Supports;
- Hiring external literacy coaches to support Alliance Districts; and
- Coordinating with teacher preparation programs.

Recap of the Legislative Process:

- Introduced by the Education Committee – March 2021
- Public Hearing – March 2021
- Joint Favorable Vote – March 2021
- Sent to Appropriations Committee – April 2021
- Joint Favorable Vote – April 2021
- Placed on House Calendar – May 2021
- Incorporated into SB 1202, Biennial Budget – June 2021
- Discussed by the Full Legislature – June 2021
- Signed by the Governor – July 2021

Update on Implementation:

- ☒ **Step 1: Establish the Center** in the Connecticut State Department of Education, under the leadership of Interim Director Melissa Wlodarczyk Hickey
- ☒ **Step 2: Establish the Reading Leadership Implementation Council** to consult with the director of the Center
- ☒ **Step 3: Select Approved Early Literacy Curricula**, in accordance with the Right to Read legislation. Districts will be required to implement a program from among this list in the 2023-24 school year. During the curriculum review process, the Center oversaw:
 - 9 publicly broadcast meetings of the Connecticut Reading Leadership Implementation Council;
 - Development of a rubric for vetting early literacy curricula and programs and assessments;
 - A period of open review during which districts submitted over 50 early literacy curricula or programs;
 - Review of each submission at least 2x by a 16-member team using the rubric;
 - An audit of the data collected; and
 - A formal release of [state-approved early literacy curricula](#) in September 2022.

Next Steps:

The Center to provide professional development on implementing CT's Intensive Reading Intervention Strategy (Ongoing)

The Center to release a waiver process that will require any other reading curriculum or program to be: (a) Evidence-based and scientifically-based; and (b) Focused on competency in the following areas of reading: Oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, rapid automatic name or letter name fluency and reading comprehension.

All Districts to notify the Center about which of the approved curricula they will implement (Dec.16, 2022)

The Center to develop a coordinated state-wide reading plan for K-3 (Jan. 2023)

Districts to begin using approved reading curricula (School Year Commencing July, 2023)

Oct., 2022

Nov., 2022

Dec., 2022

Jan., 2023

July, 2023

About the Waiver Application:

The waiver process will also require any applying district to provide: (a) reading **assessment data, disaggregated** by race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced priced lunches, English Learner status, students with disabilities; and (b) a strategy to address **achievement gaps in reading**.

Why "The Science of Reading?"

There is broad consensus among cognitive scientists and reading experts about how to teach early literacy in a manner that will benefit most students. That process emphasizes the following key areas of reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral skills, and reading comprehension.

However, most CT schools simply aren't using this research-based approach yet. And the model that they do use isn't working for enough students. On Connecticut's most recent statewide test, only 46.7% of students met or exceeded expectations in English Language Arts.

To give students a firm foundation at the start of their academic careers, we need to use the most up-to-date practices in our classrooms and provide teachers with aligned professional development. That's why Connecticut is committed to the Science of Reading.



About the Right to Read CT Coalition:

Connecticut students are facing unprecedented academic challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and inequity is on the rise for students most in need. However, all students have a right to read, and there's a right way to teach them. The Right to Read CT coalition has been established to raise awareness and build support for this critical agenda.

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