

**ReadConn: K-3 Reading Skills Professional Development Series
Frequently Asked Questions**

What is the “ReadConn: K-3 Reading Skills Professional Development Series”?

The ReadConn: K-3 Reading Skills Professional Development Series is a state funded effort focused on identifying students' needs related to critical early literacy skills and delivering explicit instruction regardless of reading approach or program. This series will increase teachers' expertise in identifying necessary foundational skills, spotting student skills gaps, and monitoring students' progress to create a rock solid foundation in early literacy skills. In its second year, the program will consist of 150 five-person teams that include one school-based administrator, one literacy leader (school-based individual with a formal literacy role and is responsible for supporting K-3 teachers in their professional learning in reading skills and knowledge), and three teachers (K-3 inclusive, and may include teachers of K-3 special education and English learners). Cohorts are involved for one year in this multi-year program.

What's the purpose?

The goal of this program is to respond to the needs of Connecticut K-3 literacy teachers and literacy leaders around foundational reading skills by providing professional learning that encompasses the Reading Foundational Skills of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) in English Language Arts. The learning series aims to support teachers in their understanding and implementation of the components of effective, comprehensive reading instruction regardless of instructional approach or framework used by districts and schools, and build capacity in teachers, literacy leaders, and administrators that can be sustained and expanded.

What role do classroom teachers play?

Over the course of the school year, teachers will develop a strong understanding of the Foundational Reading Standards and engage in regular opportunities to apply their learning in the classroom, ensuring the program is practical and responsive to on-the-ground realities in the state. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) expects teachers will fully engage in our learning series, attending the regional workshop sessions and the Capstone event with their team. With guidance from their school-based literacy leaders, teachers will also enhance their skills through self-paced online modules.

The self-paced online modules are designed to complement any reading curriculum in use by a school or district, supporting teachers to make strategic decisions about what foundational literacy instruction they should implement. Teachers and their teams will determine what is the right areas of focus for their school when engaging with each module. As they go through the module, each teacher will capture what they are trying out in their classroom as an artifact and upload it to the module platform. All of their artifacts from the program will make up their ReadConn portfolio. At the ReadConn Capstone event, each teacher will share out one artifact, including additional reflection and learning to benefit the community.

What role do literacy leaders play?

Literacy leaders will expand their content, pedagogical knowledge and effective practices for supporting classroom teachers in foundational literacy. The CSDE expects literacy leaders will fully engage in our learning series, attending every session and participating in all virtual learning opportunities. They will participate in face-to-face workshops, collaborate with other Connecticut literacy leaders, and engage in four online self-paced modules. Literacy leaders will help their team determine the right areas of focus for their school when engaging with each module. In addition, literacy leaders will support their teachers as they work to capture reflections on implementation in their artifacts for each module. This is NOT a Trainer of Trainers model of professional development.

As a literacy leader, what are my responsibilities to my school, LEA or district?

Literacy leaders and their school and district leaders should discuss any expectations before, during and after participation so that literacy leaders can make informed decisions about their role. Literacy leaders who already hold school or district leadership roles have a professional responsibility to support K-3 teachers in their professional learning in reading skills and knowledge.

What role do principals and district administrators play?

District administrators and principals will help school teams determine their areas of focus as they move through the program. They will also help create time and space for their school teams to engage in the program throughout the year. Principals will augment their knowledge base for supporting literacy leaders and teachers in effective foundational literacy instruction. They will take part in the ReadConn Kick-off, Mid-year, and Capstone events – as well as virtual interactive workshops focused on their role in supporting teachers and literacy leaders. District administrators will develop a clear understanding of the relationships between components of the program, and how they can support optimal implementation across their district.

With whom is the CSDE collaborating on this project?

The CCS K-3 System of Professional Learning is brought to you through a partnership with Public Consulting Group (PCG) of Boston, MA and LearnZillion of Washington, D.C.

How do I register?

Principals are responsible for registering teams for the program. To register, principals should:

- 1) direct their internet browser to: <http://surveys.pcgus.com/s3/READCONN-Registration>;
- 2) select “*Register Team*”;
- 3) input their information: District, School Name, and Team Details including one literacy leader, and three teachers (K-3 inclusive, and may include teachers of K-3 special education and English learners); and
- 4) choose “*next*,” and within one business day, principals and team members will receive an e-mail from Melissa Pierce at PCG Education with instructions on how to register for the appropriate sessions.

District administrators can also register for the ReadConn Kick-off by directing their internet browsers to: <http://surveys.pcgus.com/s3/READCONN-Registration> and selecting “*Register an Administrator.*” They, too, will receive an email confirmation from Melissa Pierce at PCG with instructions on how to complete the registration process for the event.

What is the difference between the ReadConn events and the regional Workshops?

The ReadConn events establish and nurture the whole community of school-based literacy leaders across the state to enable them to learn from each other’s experiences and challenges. ReadConn is a safe space for them to master new content and effective skills for supporting adult learning back at their schools. The ReadConn events are a pillar in the ReadConn program that ensure the transfer of foundational skills instruction into the classroom with a positive impact on student outcomes. After the in-person ReadConn events, support continues via online coaching groups that connect regularly to study student work, work through challenges and celebrate successes.

The regional workshops are quarterly and are offered multiple times across the state. Teams are expected to sign-up and attend each of the four workshops together. This training introduces the content and activities of the online modules. Teams will have the additional opportunity to share and discuss key takeaways from trying out what they’ve learned in their schools.

What will teachers experience during the ReadConn Capstone event?

The Capstone event is aimed at sparking collegial discussion, supporting the exchange of ideas through the sharing of the products that teachers created over the course of the year. School-based teams will engage in structured planning during which they will collaborate to create an action plan and next steps for bringing back key takeaways and insights from the year to share with their school communities. Finally, participants will be recognized for their hard work and deep engagement over the course of the year.

What are the characteristics of literacy leaders and teachers who participate?

| <p style="text-align: center;">Literacy Leader 1 per school</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Teacher 3 per school</p> |
|---|---|
| <p>A school-based individual with a formal literacy role and responsible for supporting K-3 teachers in their professional learning in reading skills and knowledge. <i>A literacy leader who is:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passionate about using effective coaching and leadership practices to enhance teachers' instruction and grow student results. ● Committed to deepening their understanding of how to support teachers and employ digital collaboration tools. ● Eager to learn more about literacy practices for teachers and students within the context of the CCS. | <p>K-3 inclusive, and may include teachers of K-3 special education and English language learners. <i>A teacher who is:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passionate about providing learners with opportunities to practice and master foundational literacy skills and strategies. ● Embracing a growth mindset about improving instructional and foundational literacy practices. ● Eager to collaborate with a community of teachers from across the state and build leadership skills. ● Energized about helping colleagues explore and apply new approaches to instruction so that all teachers are supported in teaching the new standards. |

What are the responsibilities of literacy leaders and teachers who participate?

| <p style="text-align: center;">Literacy Leader 1 per school</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Teacher 3 per school</p> |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in 7 in-person workshops throughout the year — including 3 ReadConn events and 4 regional workshops. ● Complete 4 virtual modules. ● Determine with their team the right “bite size” for their school when engaging with each module. ● Virtually collaborate with a team comprised of fellow literacy leaders and facilitated by a LearnZillion literacy specialist to analyze student work and decide how to best support teachers in making informed instructional decisions. ● Have the opportunity to lead a school-based team of 3 teacher leaders in an ongoing PLC. ● Have the opportunity to foster learning communities to support all teachers in teaching the CCS and use tools learned through ReadConn work. | <p><i>Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in 5 in-person workshops throughout the year — including 4 regional workshops and the ReadConn Capstone. ● Complete 4 virtual modules. ● For each module, each teacher is responsible for capturing one artifact. ● Learn the components of comprehensive literacy instruction: learn-by-doing, and immediately integrate new content into lesson planning for upcoming classroom instruction. ● Collaborate with school-based team (fellow teacher leaders and literacy leader) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice new approaches in classrooms while meeting new standards. ○ Respond to students’ needs. ○ Support the development of learning communities at school. |

When do the different elements of the program occur?

| FALL 2017 | | WINTER 2017-2018 | | SPRING 2018 | | SUMMER 2018 | |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Ongoing Literacy Leader Virtual Collaboration | | | | | | | |
| ReadConn Kickoff | Regional Workshops | | ReadConn Mid-Year | Regional Workshops | | ReadConn Capstone | |
| | Online Modules 1 & 2 | | | Online Modules 3 & 4 | | | |
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Principals will also participate in two webinars focused on their role in supporting teachers and literacy leaders.

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|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| LITERACY LEADERS | TEACHERS | PRINCIPALS | DISTRICT ADMINS |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|

| Event | Participants |
|---|---|
| ReadConn Kickoff | Literacy Leaders, Principals |
| Virtual Interactive Workshop Webinar | Literacy Leaders, Principals |
| Regional Workshop Setting the Stage for K-3 Reading: Phonological and Phonemic Awareness | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| Online Module 1: Phonological and Phonemic Awareness | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| Regional Workshop Setting the Stage for K-3 Reading: Phonics | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| Online Module 2: Phonics | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| ReadConn: Mid-year | Literacy Leaders, Principals |
| Regional Workshop Setting the Stage for K-3 Reading: Advanced Word Recognition and Fluency | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| Online Module 3: Advanced Word Recognition and Fluency | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| Virtual Interactive Workshop Webinar | Literacy Leaders, Principals |
| Regional Workshop Setting the Stage for K-3 Reading: Comprehension and Vocabulary | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| Online Module 4: Comprehension and Vocabulary | Teachers, Literacy Leaders |
| ReadConn: Capstone | Teachers, Literacy Leaders, Principals, District Administrators |