

Pennsylvania Department of Education Reading Leadership Council Meeting

Meeting Notes

December 11, 2025

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Reading Leadership Council Meeting

Meeting Date and Time

The Reading Leadership Council met on December 11, 2025, from 12 to 1 p.m.

Attendees

- Kate Bacher, Structured Literacy Advisor, Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Jennifer Wicht, English Language Arts Education Advisor, Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Council members, liaisons, and invited guests
- WestEd staff
 - Amaal Awadalla, Program Manager, Literacy
 - Julie Colton, Program Coordinator
 - Katie Grogan, Senior Research Manager, Literacy
 - Amanda Nabors, Research Associate, Literacy
 - Robin Sayers, Research Associate, Literacy
 - Elizabeth Zagata, Program Manager, Special Education

Welcome, Purpose Setting, and the Sunshine Act

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and WestEd facilitated a meeting of the Reading Leadership Council to discuss implementation of **Act 135: Structured Literacy—Literacy Achievement for All Pennsylvanians**. The Act aims to expand access to Structured Literacy and improve literacy outcomes statewide. WestEd provided an overview of the Act, which requires PDE to publish lists of professional development training programs, reading universal screeners, reading instruction curriculum materials, and literacy intervention materials and approaches with the advisement of a Reading Leadership Council.

Liaisons, guests, and members of the public were also welcomed. Liaisons represent the following groups:

- Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)
- Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)
- Evidence Resource Center (ERC)
- National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL)

The meeting addressed Pennsylvania’s Sunshine Act, highlighting that public attendees are observers and that public comment periods are not intended for discussion with the Council or PDE representatives.

Act 135 Professional Development Guidance

An overview of Act 135 was shared, outlining Pennsylvania’s commitment to strengthening literacy instruction through expanded access to Structured Literacy. The Act focuses on three main goals:

- expanding access to Structured Literacy to boost reading achievement for all students;
- preparing educators to provide high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction and targeted interventions; and
- supporting schools in offering professional development focused on foundational reading skills and Structured Literacy practices.

The facilitator noted that professional development training programs are one of the four key focus areas of Act 135.

PDE Updates

The Pennsylvania Department of Education shared updates relevant to the Council's ongoing work, including notification of published lists and guidance documents. PDE also provided an overview of Pennsylvania Act 47 of 2025, highlighting key requirements for local educational agencies (LEAs). In addition, PDE shared that LEA webinars are being developed to support LEAs in meeting the requirements of Acts 135 and 47, along with a train-the-trainer model to assist with the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction curricula.

Themes from October 16 RLC Meeting

The WestEd facilitator shared the synthesized themes from the previous meeting to capture Council input across each focus area. As part of the discussion, the facilitator presented the following four themes for review and feedback:

Identified Themes

- **Theme 1:** Shared Vision and System Alignment
- **Theme 2:** High-Quality and Sustained Professional Learning
- **Theme 3:** Empowered Educators and Collaborative Culture
- **Theme 4:** Partnerships, Communication, and Knowledge Sharing

Council members were invited to provide feedback on the themes by considering the following guiding questions:

- Do these themes accurately reflect what you intended to communicate in October?
- What important ideas from the October discussion are missing or underrepresented?
- After reviewing these themes, did any additional ideas or priorities surface that you believe are essential for an effective professional learning system?

Public Comment

One member of the public provided comment.

Next Steps and Closure

The Council was provided with an opportunity to offer feedback on the Structured Literacy Glossary by the February 12 Council meeting. The purpose of the glossary is to promote consistent, practitioner-friendly terminology and establish common language across the state.

Future meetings are planned as follows:

- February 12, 2026
- April 9, 2026
- June 11, 2026
- August 13, 2026
- October 15, 2026
- December 10, 2026

PDE staff thanked the WestEd facilitators and Council members for their work and attendance today and closed the meeting.