

Pennsylvania Department of Education Reading Leadership Council Professional Development Committee Meeting #1:

Meeting Notes

April 24, 2025

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Professional Development Committee Meeting #1

Meeting Date and Time

The Professional Development Committee met on April 24, 2025, from 9:00–11:00 a.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—Operations Coordinator
 - Ryan Miskell—Senior Research Associate, Literacy
 - Robin Sayers—Research Associate, Literacy

Welcome, Purpose Setting, Sunshine Act

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and WestEd facilitated a meeting of the Professional Development Committee 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 Professional Development Committee's role in advising PDE on professional development training programs. Liaisons, guests, and members of the public were also welcomed.

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.

Public Comment

No members of the public provided comment.

Review of the Approach

A WestEd facilitator provided an overview of Act 135, outlining its purpose, expected deliverables, and implementation timeline. The key elements and considerations for professional development, the focus of this committee, as defined by Act 135, include the following:

Act 135 requirements

- Evidence-based intervention practices on structured literacy
- Explicit and systematic instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness
- The alphabetic principle, decoding, encoding, fluency, and vocabulary
- Reading comprehension and building content knowledge

To meet the goals of Act 135, the Department will follow a structured approach to creating lists of materials that leverage existing educational clearinghouses. Lists will be compiled from multiple clearinghouses (a clearinghouse might include repositories at federally funded centers, private centers, nonprofits, or other agencies, such as state educational agencies) to provide local educational agencies (LEAs) with comprehensive information for decision-making. A set of initial lists and accompanying guidance documents will be posted in June 2025, with the intention that these lists and guidance documents will evolve over the five-year span of the Reading Leadership Council.

The facilitator presented a rubric for the clearinghouse that demonstrated how the key elements and considerations of Act 135 for professional development training programs aligned with the clearinghouse's evaluation tool. In addition, the professional development list highlighted Pennsylvania-specific literacy professional development offerings. WestEd then shared the draft Professional Development Training Program List, which was developed based on the clearinghouse's review findings, along with a draft guidance document designed to assist LEAs in interpreting the information on the list. This draft guidance document included considerations extracted from input from Council members during meeting #1, a summary of the clearinghouse, and the rubric for the clearinghouse.

Committee Input

WestEd invited committee members to share input, considering the following questions:

- What parts of the list stood out to you as being particularly useful? How could the list be improved?
- What parts of the guidance document stood out to you as being particularly useful? How could the guidance document be improved? Are there parts that are unclear or difficult to follow?

Next Steps and Closure

Before closing, WestEd invited final questions and outlined the next steps for the Council. Each committee will meet twice before the next full Council meeting on May 14, at which time members will share updates on their work.