



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children



# Connecticut's Comprehensive Reading Plan

## The Cost of Reading Failure

- Students who cannot read by Grade 3 are four times more likely to drop out of school than those who can read.
- Two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of Grade 4 will end up in jail or on welfare.
- 43% of those with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty and 70% have no job.
- More than \$60 billion is lost annually in American business productivity due to employees' lack of basic reading skills.
- Connecticut has one of the worst reading achievement gaps in the United States.

## Connecticut's Comprehensive Reading Plan

*The achievement gap in reading in Connecticut is a problem that can be solved. Research shows that reading is teachable to 95% of our children. A plan needed to be developed to assure reading success for all young students.*

- The Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, in partnership with the State Department of Education, the Commission on Children, The University of Connecticut, Literacy How, and the Grossman Family Foundation, sought to pilot, learn from, and grow an intentional set of literacy reforms in order to narrow the literacy achievement gap.
- **Connecticut's K-3 Reading Model, which differs from typical reading reform efforts** in its comprehensiveness and alignment with scientific reading research, includes:
  - A school-wide reading improvement plan;
  - School literacy leadership team;
  - A comprehensive literacy assessment system;
  - High-quality classroom instruction for all students;
  - Evidence-based, intensive interventions for students reading below grade level;
  - Embedded coaching and ongoing professional development;
  - Aligned summer school intervention support; and
  - A parent engagement program.

- Connecticut’s K-3 Reading Model focuses resources on the 50% of children who are not reading at the state’s proficiency levels, including students of color and/or lower economic status who are disproportionately impacted. The state legislature and Gov. Dannel Malloy included the Reading Model in the state’s comprehensive reading reform legislation of 2012, at urging of the Black & Puerto Rican Caucus.
- **Connecticut’s K-3 Reading Model was created through the combination of the findings and lessons from two critical piloting phases.**
- **Phase One: Led by Literacy How**
  - Use of alternative and proven instruments to assess children’s reading level
  - Building leadership capacity of principals in the oversight of reading excellence
  - Building additional skills and knowledge in the science of reading for all teachers
  - External mentors for teachers and classrooms
  - Parental engagement in how to participate in school-home reading partnerships
- **Phase Two: Led by University of Connecticut’s Neag School of Education, in collaboration with Literacy How and HILL for Literacy**
  - Created individualized reading intervention plans for each student not meeting proficiency in targeted schools
  - Piloted a model in select elementary schools in Hartford, New Haven, East Hartford, and Windham.
  - Informed an expansion of the model to 25 schools across the state
- **A reading forum, hosted by the legislature’s Black & Puerto Rican Caucus and the Commission on Children, was held in Hartford on April 21, 2015, focusing on the statewide reading plan and pilot outcome data. The forum demonstrated that children in schools with Connecticut’s K-3 Reading Model have shown substantial growth in early literacy skills.**

## The Results

- **The results have been stunning.** In addition to showing greater growth in early literacy skills, participating children in the pilot schools have met important literacy benchmarks earlier than their peers.
- **The effects are cumulative over time;** children who participate for longer periods (over multiple years) demonstrate greater literacy achievement than those who participate for shorter periods.
- **In Phase One, phonemic awareness (an essential early literacy skill) showed a 35% improvement** over the baseline scores in 1st and 2nd grade and 18% over baseline in 3rd grade. Word reading improved 19% over baseline in 1st grade and 18% over baseline in 2nd grade.
- **Also in Phase One, the ability to read grade-level text increased** 14% over baseline in 1st grade and 10% over baseline in 2nd grade.

## A Sampling of Success

- **East Hartford:** One school began with 36 kindergarten students at or above grade-level literacy, nearly doubling to 69 students after the interventions. In another school, the STAR Early Literacy Scaled Score improved from only 25% of the students at or above benchmark in the fall to 75% by the winter.
- **Waterbury:** Reading scores improved 19 percentage points within two years.
- **Naugatuck:** 16% improvement in the number of students meeting grade level after just one season of intervention.
- **The pass rate of pre-service teachers of the Foundations of Reading Test has grown from 65% in 2009-2010 to 81% in 2013-2014, demonstrating changes in higher education's teaching and training of pre-service teachers.** The training of pre-service teachers in the science of reading instruction is taking root in higher education. Since 2009, all prospective Pre-K through Grade 6 teachers in Connecticut have had to pass this test which evaluates one's knowledge of research-based reading instruction.

View PowerPoint presentations and other documents from the forum at:  
[www.cga.ct.gov/coc/reading\\_forum\\_2015.htm](http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/reading_forum_2015.htm).