



**Camden County  
Workforce Development Board**  
*Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce*

Gregg T. DeBaere, Chair  
Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS		2-Aug	12-Sep	4-Oct	1-Nov	6-Dec	3-Jan	7-Feb	7-Mar-17
<b>Brahl, Ken CHAIR</b>	Ravitz Family Shoprites		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Barbara	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ		X		X	X		X	
Beach, Patti	Camden County One-Stop		X	X	X	X	X		X
Dann, Carol	Camden County College	X		X		X	X	X	
Kalitan, Marlyn	Kalitan Consulting	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services	X	X		X		X		
Young, Jennifer	Verizon			X		X		X	
Weaver, Thomas	Mayor, Clementon Borough					X			
Goodman, Steve	Volunteers of America, Del Valley					X	X		
Welder, Laura	JEVS				X	X	X		
Walton, Marcie	VOA-Face Forward					X			
Powell, Michelle	Camden County College					X			
Pryor, Regina	DOL-Employment and Training		X	X		X	X	X	X
Desiderio, Daniela	Housing Authority, City of Camden								X
Swartz, Jeffrey S., Exec. Director	WDB	X	X		X	X			X
Stubblefield, Lelia	WDB								
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB		X						
Naroden, Eric	WDB Intern	X	X						
Debbie Friedner	Camden County One-Stop Career Counselor							X	

WELCOME

Ken Brahl called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees and asked for roundtable introductions. Ken welcomed guest Daniela Desidiero, Housing Authority, City of Camden.

- LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE (LNA)

Ken presented and reviewed the completed version of the Literacy Needs Assessment, with attendees. He reviewed its history, vision and purpose, for guests in attendance at the meeting. He said, Carol Dann, Director, Camden County College, Adult Basic Skills, who leads Consortium for Literacy Services, wanted a current assessment that could be used for certain grants. Ken said that once the research began, the Committee realized there were Literacy needs throughout the County. Needs in the county were scored on four key indicators. These indicators are High School graduation rates, percentages of households speaking languages other than English at home, poverty rates and percentage of residents without a High School Diploma or GED. The assessment assigns points, using census data, for every indicator as it relates to each municipality. This is based on the state average of 88%. The sum of those scores indicates when a community is falling below the state average and which communities would be considered “Bordering” or “Notable.” Ken said the maps shown in the LNA show a visual summary of the notable areas where assistance may be needed.

Ken thanked members of the Literacy Committee who met regularly to guide the process of putting together the LNA. Ken asked the committee to review the final document. Ken also thanked Marlyn Kalitan for her careful review of the LNA for grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Kathleen Varallo, WDB Administrative Assistant, said that Leslie Williams, WDB Comptroller, took the file and worked with the maps to enlarge them, as requested by the Committee. She said that Leslie was able to accomplish this task and saved the file in PDF format. The LNA opens nicely when viewing it electronically as a PDF. Marlyn asked if Leslie could make a few additional changes to the map legends and titles. Kathleen brought the changes to Leslie's attention. Leslie was able to make the changes and return a new copy of the LNA to the committee members in attendance.

The Committee reviewed the document and approved it for release. Having no further concerns, Ken said the LNA will be published on the WDB website and will be utilized by the Committee for community outreach. <http://ccwib.com/literacyneedsassessment.html>. Ken said he will be presenting this final, approved version of the LNA to the Board Members at the next Quarterly Meeting on Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Camden County College, Blackwood Campus.

Ken noted that findings of the LNA pointed to a notable area in the southern part of the County that would benefit by additional literacy programs. Those municipalities being Lindenwold, Bellmawr and Clementon. He said that the Literacy Committee was lucky to have the support of Mayor Thomas Weaver. He has unused space in his local Clementon library and agreed to host some additional literacy services there.

Jeffrey S. Swartz, WDB Executive Director said that he and Ken plan to set up an appointment to present the LNA to Freeholder Jonathon Young. He will surely help move along the efforts of the Committee to communicate the findings of the LNA and promote it at the Freeholder level. He also said that the Camden County Mayor's Association meets regularly. Jeff made presentations to this Association in his former position. There may be an opportunity, with Freeholder Young's help, to make a presentation at one of their meetings. Jeff cautioned that the committee should handle the presentation diplomatically and create an action plan that would fall in line with the LNA's findings. He suggested that the committee should approach the County with a well thought out program that could be adapted in every municipality within the county.

Ken said that Mayor Thomas Weaver is already considering hosting a Literacy Day event at the local library in Clementon. He thinks that by using Clementon's example, other local elected officials will welcome the chance to use the LNA for funding opportunities that would support Literacy programs in their respective communities. It was decided that the event would be geared toward adults through a book give-away to their children along with an awareness of programs that would encourage them to get additional literacy skills. Jeff suggested contacting Linda Devlin, Camden County Library. The event could be coordinated with one of Camden's eight libraries as well as the library in Clementon or make it a county-wide event. Jeff said there are additional independent Libraries located in the county to be contacted as well.

Regina Pryor, Department of Labor Employment and Training gave Mayor Weaver some information about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Library Initiatives. She said that it might be a good idea

to highlight the programs of libraries, in the county, who have applied and received funding from this initiative. Jeff noted that the Camden County Library received a grant to purchase a culinary cart that focuses on Food Literacy.

Camden County Library has introduced a Books and Cooks initiative, designed to promote Food Literacy. The library won a grant from the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development based on its proposal to develop and implement a food literacy program. A centerpiece of the program is a mobile kitchen complemented by a collection of books about nutrition, healthy eating and consumer literacy with iPads and a mobile hotspot available. The kitchen can be transported to any of the library's eight branches and other locations to demonstrate cooking techniques and recipes, as needed. More information can be found at the following link <http://www.camdencountylibrary.org/books-and-cooks>

Regina said she spoke with Scholastic Books. They do not work with Libraries. She also found out about a Pizza Hut Program called "BOOK IT". She contacted the local Pizza Hut and they said they would work with the library. Kids can earn a Reading Award Certificate for a free one-topping Personal Pan Pizza® once they have read and filled out an official "Passport to Reading". More information can be found at the following link: <http://www.bookitprogram.com/readinggiveaway/default.asp>

Ken suggested that the committee consider assisting Mayor Weaver to host an event at the Clementon Borough Library and achieve a small success before rolling it out as a county-wide event. The committee agreed it would be best to achieve a successful smaller event and measure the turn out and outcomes.

Kathleen Varallo, WDB Administrative Assistant contacted a local PNC branch manager about the "Ready to Read" bi-lingual book give-away program. The manager told her to bring in a sample of the book she received from another event and he would research availability of a give-away. Daniela Desidiero said she had a connection with McGraw Hill Books and would reach out to her contact for a donation of books.

Ken summarized the next steps for the LNA;

The LNA will be presented to the Board at the quarterly meeting. Next, he and Jeff will present the LNA to Freeholder Young. Once his support is promised and suggestions are received, we will send a letter with the LNA to the Mayors in the county. The Literacy Committee will assist Mayor Weaver with a Literacy Day at the library in Clementon. Once the committee has shown a success, it will be easier to present a county-wide event. The event will include awareness of adult programs, however the purpose of the event will be to promote parent-child reading. The committee will include representatives from consortium partners who are involved with Literacy programs at the event.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next Literacy Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30am at the CCWDB office. There will be a joint meeting with the Abilities Committee on Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00am.

Submitted by,

*Kathleen Varallo*, Administrative Assistant, Camden County Workforce Development Board