



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021
ZOOM MEETING AT THE WDB OFFICE, IIII MARLKRESS ROAD, CHERRY HILL, NJ

ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

| MEMBERS | | 2-Mar-21 | 4-Apr-21 | 4-May-21 | 1-Jun-21 | 6-Jul-21 | 3-Aug-21 |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Brahl, Ken CHAIR | Ravitz Family Shoprites | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Patti Beach | Learning Link, Camden County One-Stop Career Center | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Cirii, Frank | Local Area Operations Director, Camden County One Stop | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Dann, Carol | Hopeworks Camden | | | X | | | X |
| Daunoras, Heidi | Pine Hill School District | x | X | | X | X | X |
| Druce, Jennifer | Camden County Library | X | | | X | | |
| Fugee, Antoinette | Center for Family Services, Inc. | X | | | | | |
| Hill, Lauren Dr. | Camden County College | X | X | | | X | X |
| Kalitan, Marlyn Vice Chair | Kalitan Consulting | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Knopf, Dick | Marketing Professional Services | | X | X | | X | |
| Martin, John | Rotary Club | | | | | | X |
| Mitchell, Danielle | RobinsNest Inc | | | | | | |
| Strobl, Holly | Council Women, Clementon Borough | | | | | X | X |
| Walker, Eric | RobinsNest Inc | | X | X | | X | X |
| Young, Jennifer | Verizon | | | | | X | |
| Levitt, Alex | WDB | | | | | X | X |
| Swartz, Jeffrey S. | WDB | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Varallo, Kathleen | WDB | X | X | X | X | X | X |

WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:46am. He welcomed attendees and members attending the National Night Out in Clementon Borough on Monday August 2nd discussed good outcomes.

Ken asked the committee to review the minutes dated Tuesday, July 6 2021. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes pending review by Marlyn Kalitan, Vice Chair, for any grammatical corrections. Heidi Daunoras made the first motion; Marlyn Kalitan made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative, the motion was carried, and the minutes July 6th were approved.

ONE-STOP & LEARNING LINK UPDATES

Patti Beach, Counselor, Learning Link, reported the One-Stop re-opened to public access on Monday, July 12th. She said all is going well and there are no new updates other than a few new customers are being scheduled for testing, and learning link services. Customers are scheduled be appointment and given an instruction sheet with direct contacts to partner services such as Employment Services, Unemployment and other state divisions not yet back in the facility. All

services can be accessed virtually or by appointment. Follow this link to the Camden County One-Stop Career Center -Virtual Services Directory:

<https://www.camdencounty.com/service/employment/job-training-placement/>

Ken asked Patti if masks are being mandated for staff again. Patti said staff is not required to wear masks if they have been fully vaccinated. They must wear a mask when interacting with customers entering the building. Customers are given mask if they do not have one. Ken said staffs at Ravitz Family Market-Shoprite stores, are going back to the mask mandates. Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, reported the State is discussing a return to work starting August 19th but he did not see any confirmations coming that this is a viable date. There are several key issues that need to be worked out such as security and the other is a system of scheduling appointments. The State may be using the County's QLess scheduling system as discussed in other meetings or the system used by Motor Vehicle. He said procurement and implementation may take more than a few weeks. Jeff also noted concerns about an influx of customers once the state unemployment and federal stimulus benefits expire in early September. No one really knows but the One-Stops will need to be prepared with proper security. He said the Camden One-Stop is in good shape with security but it will be a concern when customers show up wanting help with their unemployment claims. The Unemployment (UI) will not be providing in-person services. All UI claims will continue to be addressed by phone or by the State's digital access. Jeff said he has had several discussions with Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, and is confident that the local area will be well staffed and prepared for September.

Ken asked if state unemployment extensions will expire along with the federal stimulus. Jeff said customers can extend state benefits if they enroll in a training program but the federal stimulus will not be extended. Ken asked and Jeff confirmed there could be an influx of customers in late August or early September. Jeff said it is a strong possibility and that will have a positive effect on our performance measures. Jeff said WDB Directors are composing an email, letting customers know that training may be available to them. Customers registered in the system will be notified via email of this opportunity. Many customers may not be aware of training options and they will have to apply in advance of their expiration of UI benefits. Ken said employers are counting on seeing more job applicants once the federal stimulus ends in September. He said employers are fighting for the limited number of job applicants who are actively seeking work. It is driving up the cost of employment, goods and services. Jeff said employers are offering sign-on bonuses and higher wages now so it would behoove jobseekers to not wait until September because these incentives may go away. This is another message that needs to be shared. The Committee discussed and agreed the main message is to get people back to work and now is the time to do it.

NJ SkillUp

Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB, reported the WDB is continuing to promote the NJ SkillUp program within the committees and on social media platforms. The WDB is also using the program in the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and has assigned work-readiness courses in 2.5 hours segments per week of paid learning. This was a state requirement of the SYEP for this season. The WDB is including a flyer with outreach materials given out at National Nights Out.

Kathleen said each course contains a pre-test and provides a certificate of completion after passing a quiz at its end. She said there are many courses available on the site and some employers are considering signing staff up for refresher courses in Quick Books and other office applications. Registration is easy and users are assigned a user name and password which they can change once they are in the program. Follow this link to the NJ Career Services Website: <https://www.nj.gov/labor/career-services/education-training/skillup-nj/index.shtml>

LITERACY LIBRARY RESOURCE GUIDE & OUTREACH

Jeff reported he and Ken attended the National Night Out in Clementon Borough on Monday August 2nd. He thanked Holly Strobl, Councilwomen, for the invite and reserving a table so they could distribute information about One-Stop services and the Library Recourse Guide. The event was very well organized and attended by local residents. He and Ken were able to speak with attendees and signed up about 11 participants for information about the upcoming Atlantic City Electric (ACE) Training Initiative. It was a great night and the weather was good. Jeff said the actual date National Night Out is being hosted tonight, August 3rd in other locations around the County. He said Bob Weil, Chair, Business Services and Outreach Team will be attending the event hosted in Voorhees at the Town Center. He encouraged other committee members to stop by events in their local area.

Ken asked Holly if the Literacy Family Day could be scheduled in October at the Clementon Memorial Library. Holly said the library is not yet opened to public access. They are re-organizing voluntary participation. She called and sent an email asking for updates as to when they are expected to be open. It is her understanding there are updates that must be made to the interior air filtration system to meet state standards before they can re-open. She will update the committee with more information as soon as it is received. Ken said the committee can finalize details of the event and or make a decision at their September 7th meeting. Jeff asked and Holly confirmed that the event could be scheduled on the same day as a possible fire prevention event in that local area. Carol Dann, HopeWorks, Camden, asked if it would be possible to host an outdoor tent at the fire prevention event even if the library did not open. Holly said the community center or the fire hall may provide another possible option for outreach. Carol asked

if the library is providing digital services. Holly said they are not but the County is offering free access to digital services for all residents through the end of the year 2021.

Ken asked Eric Walker, Orchards Family Success Center, about their Back-to-School Backpack event. It was mentioned at the last meeting, the committee might attend that event. Eric said the event will take place on Thursday, August 19th. 5-7pm. The center obtained 100-150 school backpacks and will be giving them out to local youth. They received a grant to help with that effort. They will also be setting up a COVID vaccination site at that event. An outside space at the center has been approved for vendor tables to provide information about services around the county. Youth will be given a backpack and then visit the tables to pick up School supplies and other informational materials. Jeff asked Eric to reserve a table for the WDB to distribute One-Stop and Literacy information. Jeff said he and WDB staff will attend.

Ken thanked the Haddonfield Rotary Club for their donation to support the printing of the Library Resource Guide. Kathleen noted that Leslie Williams, Comptroller, WDB, helped to tweak the design of the guide and incorporate suggested edits by the committee. She said the guide is posted to the WDB Website. John Martin, Haddonfield Rotary Club, reported the Scott Tourtellotte, Current President is finalizing this year's club project which is to distribute books in Clementon and Pine Hill to children who have been identified as being underserved. They are still waiting for grant approval from the Rotary 'District Foundation to purchase the books. They will be connecting with children, under grade 3, in those areas to engage them and encourage them toward literacy and reading. There is a member-committee formed to work out the details once the grant is approved. Heidi Daunoras, Director of Curriculum, Pine Hill Schools, noted there are programs in the local areas designed around similar efforts the club is thinking about. She also noted the Holly Strobl is an English Teacher and could help with the club project. She said they would be happy to meet with John Martin and the club committee to help further the project and identify the children and families. She gave John some examples of reading programs in the Pine Hill school district including book distribution during the pandemic to help students build home libraries. She local volunteers and organizations helped them distribute over 6000 books to families over the last year. Pine Hill is focusing on those younger and pre-school grades that match the goals of the club. She said the Pine Hill national night out was scaled back this year due to continuing COVID response efforts, but did include a book give-away centered on bedtime stories. She said there are lots of ideas for serving true literacy needs in the Pine Hill and Clementon area. She again encouraged John to connect her with the club committee. John thanked Heidi for the information and they will exchange contact information. Ken said one of the best things to come out of conducting the Literacy Needs Assessment in Camden County was to discover the needs in the lower part of the county and connect with Heidi and Holly. He thanked them and the rest of the committee for their continued time and dedication to Literacy in Camden County. Kathleen noted that reports from

the Operations Committee show Pine Hill and Clementon Zip Codes are the second highest volume tracked of customers checking in for services at the One-Stop since the move to the new location in Cherry Hill.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM WORKSHOPS

Jeff reported the Summer Youth Employment Program is progressing and youth interns are working at their assigned worksites. He said Kathleen is doing a great job scheduling member volunteers to provide work-readiness presentation on the Friday virtual workshops. He thanked Ken for Ravitz Family Market contributions to health, customer service and serving as a worksite for youth. He thanked Kristi Connors, Manager Employment Service, DOL, for resume writing and Ryan Bennett, Truist Bank for hosting a program on Financial Literacy. Some of the youth are actively pursuing the NJ SkillUp courses assigned to them as part of the program. He said participation was lower this year than expected. The State's \$12.00 hourly wage was lower this year and COVID conditions are still affecting participation. The program was completing with higher wage offerings from local employers. Kathleen said Operation reports also show more youth participation in the program from the southern part of the county. She encouraged committee members to share the program with employers in that area for possible participation next year. She said a few youth dropped out due to transportation challenges. Carol asked and Jeff confirmed there was more employer interest this year. There were about 21 employers who signed up to host youth. Not all employers ended up receiving youth because of age restrictions. Youth ages ranged from 16-17 this year. Jeff said the youth were placed in nice experiences for their age group like summer camps and sports activities.

Ken thanked everyone for attending. He said it was nice to see some committee members at the National Night out. He has hoped to schedule an in-person meeting in September, but with COVID variants circulating, meetings will continue virtually. Jeff said the September meeting will conflict with the Jewish Holiday. The Committee discussed and agreed to hold the next meeting on Tuesday, September 14th. Ken asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Heidi Danauras made the first motion; Dr. Lauren Hill, Director, Adult Basic Skills, Camden County College, made the second motion. By unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried and meeting adjourned at 9:20am.

NEXT MEETING: The next Literacy Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14th, 2021 at 8:30am. The WDB will send out meeting materials and Zoom conferencing information prior to the meeting.

Submitted by

Kathleen Varallo,

Administrative Assistant