



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2018

ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		9-May-17	6-Jun-17	11-Jul-17	8-Aug-17	13-Sep-17	10-Oct-17	14-Nov-17	3-Jan-18	6-Feb-18
Brahl, Ken CHAIR	Ravitz Family Shoprites	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Barbara	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ	X	X		X		X			
Dann, Carol	Camden County College			X			X			
Del Vale, Jennifer	Hispanic Family Center						X			
Goodman, Steve	Volunteers of America			X	X	X		X	X	X
Hale, Dawn	The Arc of Camden County			X	X	X	X	X		
Kalitan, Marilyn	Kalitan Consulting	X	X		X		X		X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services	X			X	X	X	X		X
Maguire, Laurie	Camden County One-Stop, Workforce Learning Link	X				X				X
Martinez, Dr. Marilyn	Intrum Dean, CCC									X
Page-Soncrant, Jeanne	Business Service Rep, LWD									X
Peters, Annie	Sambulance							X		
Pryor, Regina	DOL-Employment and Training		X		X	X	X			
Rimby, Donna	Clementon Memorial Library					X	X			
Strobl, Holly	Council Women, Clementon Borough			X	X		X			
Young, Jennifer	Verizon		X							
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB, Executive Director	X		X	X		X	X	X	
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB, Admin Assistant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB, Comptroller									

WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Literacy Chair called the meeting to order at 8:36 am, welcomed attendees and asked for round table introductions. He welcomed Jeanne Paige-Soncrant, LWD, Business Service Representative for Camden County. He referred to the meeting minutes and reviewed the 2018 goals, set by the committee, at the last meeting on January 3rd, 2018. Ken summarized the goals and objectives of the Literacy Committee for 2018 as follows;

- Host two Literacy events that tie in with other County Community Programs
 - Spring- Plan an event in the Berlin area.
 - Fall – Family Literacy Day at the Clementon Memorial Library. The event will be scheduled in conjunction with Fire Prevention Day (October)

Ken gave a brief explanation of the Family Literacy Day for guests of the meeting. It was decided, by the committee to create a family friendly event that would bring children and parents together with the idea that reading to a child can help increase literacy skills. Each child receives one or more free books and activities while the parents are given information about job readiness and literacy help that are offered in the local area.

Ken said we chose to host a new event in the Berlin Township area because it was cited as an area of concern in our Literacy Needs Assessment.

- Meet with Adult Basic Skills Consortium Members
 - Offer assistance of the WDB
 - Encourage linkage to the One-Stop

Ken said that we met with Consortium partners a few years ago. We will meet with them again during this year re-establish the partnership and get updates about new programs they may be offering. Consortium partners include Literacy Volunteers of Camden County, the Hispanic Family of Southern New Jersey, The Housing Authority of the City of Camden, Camden City Public Schools and the Camden County College.

- Build a better resource guide for literacy help in Camden County
 - Identify literacy programs outside of consortium in the County
 - Report county links to State literacy site
 - Connect literacy offerings in the county with Career Connections

Ken said that once we have gathered this information, we will create a literacy resource guide on CCWDB website and include links to online resources. We will also pass this information on to the state for posting on Career Connections and other State websites that pertain to literacy.

- Develop sponsorships and or donations for community events or ongoing literacy help programs
 - PNC “Growing UP Great” and financial literacy
 - Pizza Hut
 - TD Bank
 - Connect Libraries to possible State Library Grants
 - Bags of Book

We will be aligning with sponsors and event partners to obtain participation in our Literacy events.

- LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE (LNA)

The LNA is posted to the WDB website. <http://ccwib.com/literacynneedsassessment.html>. Kathleen Varallo, WDB, Administrative Assistant said she sent the LNA to Family Success Centers in Camden County.

- CONSORTIUM OUTREACH

Kathleen reported that Jeffrey S. Swartz, WDB Executive Director, and One-Stop Staff have been meeting with Dr. Marilyn Martinez, Interim Dean, Camden County College. She has been named acting Director of the college’s Adult Basic Skills Consortium upon the retirement of Carol Dann, former Director. She is assessing the Consortium and looking for ways to improve services and referrals to and from the One-Stop. Laurie Maguire, One-Stop Manager, Information Systems and Learning Link, said that we are working to get more referrals because we have funds in place to pay for GED or HiSET Testing. Ken said that the Ravitz Family Foundation had provided some funding toward this type of testing in the past. Now that the One-Stop is able to pay for this testing, he will look to see if the Foundation funds can be diverted to another program that

might help Adult literacy. Laurie said the TABE Test is being changed to match the HiSET or GED Test. This change will make it harder to achieve. The State ordered the change to "TABE 11-12" in order to match current high school equivalency standards.

Kathleen asked Laurie to explain for new members of the committee, how the Learning Link serves individuals. Laurie said that every customer who applies to get employment training goes through an orientation to explain the process. A customer may be looking for Literacy skills help, to obtain a GED or obtain a training grant. We then determine eligibility and assess their skill levels. All participants take a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Test. If it is found that they need additional help, we assign them to the Learning Link to raise their basic skill levels in reading, writing and math. In order to qualify for a training grant, they must test at a ninth grade reading level. Some customers do not know they need help until they take the TABE Test. Learning Link is a web based program. It is generally manned by Learning Link Counselors who are trained to assist participants. They get up to eleven hours of skills training before taking or re-taking the TABE. The One-Stop pays for the license to offer this program. The state will be sending an educator to monitor our Learning Link and make recommendations for improvements.

Kathleen also made calls to the Family Success Centers discussed at the last meeting. She said that Literacy programs offered at these centers are geared mostly toward children. Some have run grant funded Adult programs in the past but when the funding runs out the program ends. Both centers she spoke to would be interested in running some type of program and confirmed the need.

Kathleen contacted Mimi Lee, Diversity and Literacy Consultant, New Jersey State Literacy, and sent her the LNA. She is willing to attend our meeting on Tuesday, March 6th to present information about state resources and opportunities.

Dr. Marilyn Martinez, Interim Dean entered the meeting. Ken asked for round table introductions. He re-stated the goal of meeting with the Adult Basic Skills Consortium. Dr. Martinez said that she has been working to identify the partners of the Consortium particularly with the Adult Basic Skills Program to define what they do and what we each can offer. We want to identify the expertise each partner has so we can maximize services to our participants. She is supportive of all efforts toward offering better services to our students as well as their families. The clarity for the work of our partners will greatly help all our efforts.

Dick Knopf gave Dr. Martinez a brief overview of the Bookmates Program where volunteers read to children ages 1-5. He asked if the College runs any book fairs. He said, we see that as a bridge to get Adults involved with reading. Dr. Martinez said her background is in pre-school education and language acquisition. She has always considered student performance and how it is connected to getting parents and guardians to understand the importance of Literacy. Dick said that he sees the smart phone as an additional barrier to the importance of Adult Literacy. Dr. Martinez agreed that children are learning to "code" really well and it is taking away from the efforts to master reading skills. She said we can never forget the differentiated learning styles. There are students who require having the experience of reading and or being read to. It's really about getting together to discuss best practices and how we can maximize resources to address current literacy concerns. Online books are more cost effective but the same learning styles apply to Adults. Not everyone learns the same way.

Marlyn Kalitan, Kalitan Consulting, asked if the college is going to replicate the Camden Family Day. She thought it was a good program that brought families together for a day of learning. She felt the event could be marketed differently. Dr. Martinez said there is much to learn from the outcomes and what needs to improve. The college is considering it. She will convene a meeting to find out who is on board and then we can talk about how we can improve upon what was done. The committee discussed the Camden Family Day and some of the improvements they would like to see.

- HIRE – ONE

Ken reported on a discussion he had with Jeanne Paige-Soncrant, LWD, Business Service Representative for Camden County, about doing another Hire-One Event. The original Hire-One Program was an outreach to area employers where we asked them to take a chance and hire at least one person that may have been a previous offender, a veteran or disabled person with abilities to high level functions on the job. Our focus was on the employer who has never taken that chance. There were some benefits offered in the way of recognition for participating in the program.

Jeanne said that she is working with Nidia Sinclair, Director, CCOS Career Center, to target a population of ex-offenders. Dick suggested that a Mentor be assigned to each individual. Steve Goodman, Volunteers of America, said that Volunteers of America has an on-the-job training program specifically designed for ex-offenders. We have a grant that will incentivize an employer to give training to these individuals. These individuals are monitored along the way of the program. Jeanne said that many employers are not aware of the supportive services that may accompany these individuals. Employers also do not know about the Bonding Program. The State will bond an employee before they are hired. It only takes a day or two notice to receive a bond. The bond is an insurance policy that protects an employer from liability due to an act of the employee. The employer is covered for a year or more with this bond. She has commitments from State Representatives who are willing to explain the bonding program and other benefits to employers. Dr. Martinez said there are studies that prove a direct correlation between literacy levels or reading levels and the propensity toward youth crimes. They have studied second and third graders as a predictor toward risks. She said that jails are built based on education levels. She wants to create a program specifically focused on individuals who are coming out of incarceration. She has a few students transitioning from half way houses and VOA programs.

Dr. Martinez talked about other programs the college runs including a Gateway to College Program that introduces at risk Youth to the possibilities of college. She would like to create programs that include decision making, self-leadership and include life coaching and literacy for living such as managing personal finance.

Jeanne said the One-Stop will be organizing the program and will invite State Representatives, prepare successful candidates to speak, and target Employers who want to learn more about the incentives of the Hire-One Program

Ken said the committee will be willing to help and asked Jeanne to provide updates.

NEXT MEETING: The Literacy Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 6th, 2018 at 8:30am the WDB office.

Submitted by

Kathleen Varallo,

Administrative Assistant