



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023
ZOOM MEETING

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE									
NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE MEMBER							
			14-Jun-22	5-Jul-22	6-Sep-22	4-Oct-22	6-Dec-22	3-Jan-23	
Brahl, Ken CHAIR	Ravitz Family ShopRites	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Larry	BookSmiles								X
Beach, Patti	Goodwill		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chisolm, Victoria	Literacy Volunteers of America		X				X		
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	x	X			X	X	X	
Dann, Carol	HopeWorks Camden		X			X	X		
Daunoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District		X	X		X	X	x	
Druce, Jennifer	Camden County Library								
Egrie, Gabrielle	Watermark Communities		X			X	X		
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill						X		
Fugee, Antoinette	Cooper Healthcare								X
Hill, Lauren Dr.	Camden County College		X			X	x	X	X
Kalitan, Marlyn Vice Chair	Kalitan Consulting	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mauro, Jennifer	Goodwill			X	X	X	X	X	X
McKelvey, Christopher	Councilman, Clementon Borough		X						X
Norman, Tahja	Orchards Family Success Center								
Rutzler, Eugene	Literacy Needs Assessment Intern		X	X	X		X		
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County One-Stop					X			
Soira, Lizette	Orchards Family Success Center								
Strobl, Holly	Councilwoman, Clementon Borough								
Young, Jennifer	Verizon		X			X			
Wilmann, Michael	WMSH								X
Levitt, Alex	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vaughn, Debra	WDB				X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Chair, greeted the attendees and opened the meeting at 8:30am. He thanked everyone who attended the quarterly board meeting and participated in the presentation of the Literacy Needs Assessment. He thanked Larry Abrams for his contributions to the board meeting program and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2022 meeting. Motion was made by Heidi Daunoras, seconded by Marlyn Kalitan. By unanimous vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the minutes for December 6, 2022 were approved.

LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT (LNA)/BookSmiles

- Being newly retired from teaching, Larry Abrams stated his goal for the BookSmiles organization is to be a facility that upcycles one million books into the hands of children. He mentioned that he shared the LNA with his staff and noted that BookSmiles has the means to provide 45,000 books per month,
- Larry commented that he would be happy to partner with Marlyn Kalitan on behalf of the Friends of the Cherry Hill Library and share the books donated to his organization that are not appropriate for children with the library for its fundraising book sale.
- Ken and Heidi commented on giving attention to “book deserts” indicated by LNA data with book drives and distribution. Larry stated that BookSmiles is able to provide books to “book desert” areas in Camden County, and also to non-profits agencies, churches, and daycare centers that can effectively distribute the books, including gently used baby board books.

- Heidi commented that book tables from “National Night Out” as well as the holiday food and gift basket drive, serving 100 to 160 families in her community, were very well received.
- Antoinette Fugee will provide Larry with Center for Family Services contact information for Darron Thompson, CFS Program Manager of PowerCorps to assist with labor for sorting and packing books for pick-up or distribution, and Andrew Adams, CFS School Resource Manager for Camden City’s middle and high school students.
 - Larry commented that non-profits, churches and daycare centers could arrange pick-ups for books. Dick Knopf suggested reaching out to the Spanish-speaking and sanctuary churches.
 - Jennifer Mauro offered that the Goodwill-Stratford location has a parking lot and training facility that could host a book distribution.
 - Jeff Swartz suggested holding the event on the grounds of the Clementon Library to serve the area (Pine Hill/Clementon/Lindenwold) to provide reading materials in time for summer, and then branch out for distribution in other areas. Clementon Councilman Chris McKelvey was receptive to the event being held in Clementon.
 - Larry commented that a personal appearance by a local professional athlete or entertainer could be a big draw for attendance. Haason Reddick of the Philadelphia Eagles and members of the Philadelphia Flyers were mentioned as prospects. Heidi suggested inviting a local author.
 - Jennifer suggested the proposed event be more of a literacy event, with tables for service providers to promote their programs for children, adults and ESL.
 - The proposed literacy event will take place in late April on the Clementon Library grounds from 3 pm to 6 pm. Appearances by local athletes and authors and other details will be explored during the February meeting.

ONE-STOP & LEARNING LINK UPDATES

Frank Cirii, Camden County One-Stop Career Center, Local Area Operations Director

- Due to the Health Department’s decree that COVID rates are on the rise, the COVID protocol will be adopted for several weeks as a preventive measure for the post-holiday uptick in possible exposures and infections. Social distancing of 6 feet will be in effect and masks will be required for contact within 6 feet. Virtual meetings will be utilized as much as possible.
- On December 28, 2022, the DOL released the new benefit rates for 2023. In general, the rates covering unemployment, workers compensation and temporary disability increased approximately \$30 per week. Employee deductions for temporary disability and family leave decreased by .06%. Detailed information will be distributed to the committee via email after the meeting.
- The One-Stop will seek a more cohesive relationship with its partners for referral processes and services, and more sub-committee interaction with non-profits, business owners and community leaders. Outreach to the business community will include interaction with organizations like the Southern NJ Chamber of Commerce. Jeff mentioned that Tri-State SHRM, the human resource directors in the SJ region, is another prospect for One-Stop to build a relationship with. Frank noted that the county library system will be creating “incubators” offering services and use of equipment to small businesses.
- Antoinette Fugee, who recently joined Cooper Health Care as a Workforce Development Consultant, commented that she would be eager to connect with the One-Stop to create career ladders for entry-level employees.

COMMITTEE UPDATES/COMMENTS

Michael Willman, WMSH

- With respect to the LNA, Michael posed two questions around the percentage of people struggling with English as a second language (ESL) and what other underlying factors are affecting the people who are struggling with literacy issues. He asked if there is an organization or a national clearinghouse

for literacy information or if there has been any information collected about successful literacy programs around the country.

- Jeff responded to Michael's questions by saying, the LNA focuses attention on the areas in greatest need of assistance for access to books and services. Jeff pointed out that some additional causal information may be confidential or fall under HIPAA rules, so the committee can only utilize information provided by schools, census and available public information.
- Larry responded that Mighty Writers has a strong presence in NJ and that "book banks" are tangible methods to serve communities. Heidi proposed establishing a vision/mission statement, and specific goals that are attainable and measurable over time.

Jeff Swartz, Workforce Development Board

- The processes of regional and local planning are in progress. The regional plan will be written first, followed by the local plan. Some literacy comments will likely be included in the local plan because it is an issue the committee has addressed over the years.

Ken Brahl, Committee Chair

- The Literacy Committee will hold an event in late April on the grounds of the Clementon Library, which will include book distribution and services, and possibly with a local sports figure or author in attendance. The February meeting agenda will include literacy event planning and exploring other literacy organizations.

ADJOURNMENT

Ken asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Michael Willman, seconded by Heidi Daunoras. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:25am.

NEXT MEETING

The next Literacy Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 8:30am via Zoom. Meeting materials and Zoom conferencing information will be distributed prior to the meeting.

Submitted by:

Debra Vaughn

Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director