



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

*Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce*

Robert Weil, Chair  
Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

**QUARTERLY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**DECEMBER 14, 2022**

**CAMDEN COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

<b>Board of Trustees</b>		23-Mar-21	22-Jun-22	21-Sep-22	14-Dec-22
<b>Verney, Matthew (CHAIR)</b>	Truist Bank	X	X	X	
Abusi, Patrick	Railroad Construction Co. of South Jersey	X	X		X
Arthur, Debra	Active Campaign	X	X		
<b>Brahl, Ken (VICE CHAIR)</b>	Ravitz Family Markets, ShopRite	X	X	X	X
Bresch, Jim	I.B.E.W. LU 351		X	X	
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One-Stop Career Center	X	X	X	X
Connors, Kristi	NJ LWD - Employment Services	X	X	X	
Cooper-Vanderlip, Diana	CPAC	X	X	X	
DeBaere, Gregg	Atlantic Coast Communications NJ, Inc.	X	X	X	X
Deitz, Jeffery	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	X		X	
Divis-Ferraro, Kristin	Camden County Regional Chamber of Commerce	X			
Donato, Carl	Wawa Inc.	X	X	X	X
Doran, Ryan	IBEW Local 351				
Figueroa, Victor	Housing Authority of the City of Camden	X		X	
Godorov, Lori	The Work Group	X	X	X	
Green, Elizabeth "Beth"	Senior VP HR Cooper Hospital	X	X	X	
Heintisz, Christine	Board of Social Services	X	X	X	X
Janoff, Carla	Careers USA	X			
Kalitan, Marlyn	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	
Kelly, Sandra	SLK Partners				
Martinez, Rosa N.	WWHS/Veterans Memorial Family School				
Miller, Richard	KeyBank	X		X	
Pugh-Bassett, Lovell	Camden County College		X		X
Regensburger, Robert C.	Lockheed Martin	X	X	X	X
Schiavinato, Robert	Union Organization for Social Services				
Thompson, Ryan	Truist Bank				
Weil, Robert	Conner Strong & Buckelew, Inc.	X	X	X	X
Willmann, Michael	WMSH Marketing Communications	X	X	X	X
Young, Jennifer	Verizon	X	X	X	X
<b>Camden County Workforce Development Board Staff</b>		23-Mar-21	22-Jun-22	21-Sep-22	14-Dec-22
Henderson, Bridget	WDB, Program Monitor				X
Levitt, Alex	WDB, Administrative Assistant	X	X	X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey	WDB, Executive Director	X	X	X	X
Vaughn, Debra	WDB, Administrative Assistant to the Director	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB, Comptroller	X	X	X	X

<b>Committee Members</b>		23-Mar-21	22-Jun-22	21-Sep-22	14-Dec-22
Banks, Evangeline	Juvenile Justice Commission	X		X	X
Barclay, Arthur	Camden County One-Stop				
Forman, Lois	Jewish Family & Children Services	X			X
Lucas, Angela	Jewish Employment and Vocational Services				
McCormick, Carol	Camden County College, Business Services	X	X	X	X
McKelvey, Chris	NJ Dept. Labor and Workforce Development				
Page-Soncrant, Jeanne	LWD, Business Services				X
Peterson, Jyi	Camden County One-Stop			X	X
Sinclair, Nidia	Director, Camden County Career Center	X	X	X	
Waller, Darchelle	Winslow Township High School		X	X	X
Wardlow-Hurley, Rhonda	HACC Youth Build	X	X	X	X
<b>Guest:</b>		23-Mar-21	22-Jun-22	21-Sep-22	14-Dec-22
Abdill, Suzanne	Department of Education	X	X		
Davis, Pastor Keith	Camden Dream Academy				
Eisenmann, Kevin	Camden County One Stop				
Fetty, Brett	Camden County Technical Schools				
Fussell, Imani	Camden County Board of Commissioners				
Fugee, Antoinette	Center for Family Services, Inc.		X		
Guzman, Elizabeth	DVRS				
Hanna, Kaina	Camden County College				
Hill, Lauren	Camden County College	X	X	X	
<b>Guest:</b>		23-Mar-21	22-Jun-22	21-Sep-22	14-Dec-22
Leonetti, Mike	Camden County One-Stop				X
McFarland, Salama	Camden County Board of Social Services	X	X	X	X
McKelvey, Chris	NJ Dept. Labor and Workforce Development			X	
Mendez, Kelly	Camden County Board of Social Services	X			
Quinones, Cris	Wawa		X		X
Robinson, Terrenny	NJ Industry Partnerships				
Schafer, Derena	Camden County College				
Veneziani, Jennifer	DVRS				
Venable, Margo	Camden County College				
Williams, Rev. Michael	Abundant Life Fellowship Church	X	X	X	X
Young, Jonathan	Camden County Board of Commissioners	X			X

## WELCOME

Ken Brahl, WDB Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:31 am, and welcomed attendees to the December Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting.

- Alex Levitt took an official roll call of Board members in attendance.
- Ken led the Pledge of Allegiance and introduced Dr. Lovell Pugh-Bassett, President of Camden County College.

Dr. Pugh-Bassett greeted meeting attendees and provided a brief overview of the college's initiatives:

- Focusing the college's responsiveness to the needs of the local workforce, confirming course offerings and training programs remain relevant to current employer needs.
- Re-establishment of the William Morris Center in Cherry Hill as a hub for business and technology on workforce development, cybersecurity, E Sports and related academic degrees, with the goal in this area to increase the number of workforce certifications, micro credentials and apprenticeship programs.

- Recognition of the importance of creating practical opportunities linking credit and non-credit programs along with reducing the time it takes for programs participants to realize their goals.
  - Meeting the goal to address the local labor demands and facilitate gainful employment in Camden County by creating an alliance of education and workforce development system to further establish solid career pathways that are accessible and affordable.
  - The New Jersey Pathways To Career Opportunities Initiative has established 10 centers of innovation and workforce development. The goal of this collaborative is to develop new curriculum and strengthen existing education and workforce training pathways. These training pathways are aligned with the specific needs of employers, enabling them to build an innovative workforce.
  - Continued collaboration with the Camden County Workforce Development Board and Camden County One-Stop Career Center in the offering of the Incumbent Worker Training Program to support local business and to upskill their workforce to grow their businesses and also to prevent layoffs.
  - Commitment to establishing ways to award credit for career achievement through prior learning assessments, which will expedite the process of earning a valuable industry credential or academic degree for practical work experience.
- Rev. Michael Williams gave the invocation.
  - Ken introduced Commissioner Jonathan Young, who made a brief statement about the commitment to the mission to provide meaningful programs with the end result being to put people to work.

#### BUSINESS MEETING - SUNSHINE LAW

Ken Brahl, Vice Chair, read the following:

In accordance with the Sunshine Law and the public's right to know, we are required to provide adequate advance notice of our meetings. This meeting was advertised on the WDB's website, and in the Courier Post on November 30, 2022. Therefore, the public is welcome to witness the process by which governmental decisions are made and see democracy in action. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the notice of this meeting was emailed to members and previous guest attendees in advance.

#### APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The minutes for the Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting held on September 21, 2022, were sent electronically to the full Board of Trustees for review. Because there was no quorum, the vote to approve the minutes for the September 21, 2022 meeting, was postponed until the quarterly meeting on March 22, 2023.

#### YOUTH ONE-STOP SUCCESS STORY

Jeff Swartz, Executive Director

Jeff introduced Jyi Peterson, Counselor at the Camden County One-Stop, to share a WorkFirst success story of Israel Thomas. With a cohort of 10 participants, Jyi explained that after determining qualified eligibility, the enrolled youth are given a basic skill assessment, a career scope and aptitude assessment to determine their abilities and interests in an expedient way. The Youth Work Experience was added to the program to offer youth the opportunity to gain some paid work experience. To date, of 10 participants, 7 completed the cohort with 5 completing training and 4 of those individuals gaining employment.

Israel Thomas was an adjudicated youth and ex-offender who participated in the cohort. He learned carpentry skills with his assigned employer, Lyons Construction. Israel went on to earn his CDL-A license with HazMat certification and a TWIC card. He is now gainfully employed as a truck driver. Due to his work schedule, Israel was unable to attend the meeting but provided a

video to share his experience at the One-Stop Career Center and his gratitude for the opportunity and the assistance provided to him.

## LITERACY COMMITTEE

Ken Brahl, Chair

Ken discussed the updated Literacy Needs Assessment (LNA) that was provided to meeting attendees for review. The original LNA was done in 2017 using 2010 census data. Eugene Rutzler, a graduate student at Rutgers was hired to use the 2020 census data to update the LNA, compare it to our 2010 census data, and maps were provided by Hopeworks. For the purposes of the LNA, literacy was defined with the focus on getting jobs with the skillset necessary to perform usual duties for entry level employment. Usual duties are considered basic tasks that are regularly performed as part of the employees job description upon being hired. Ken provided these literacy statistics:

- Three out of four people on welfare can't read.
- One in five people read below the level needed to earn a living wage.
- 50% of unemployed between the ages of 16 to 21 cannot read well enough to be considered functionally literate.
- Illiteracy costs the American taxpayers 20 billion dollars annually.

The scoring system used in the LNA indicates each municipality's literacy standings as "notable," which is significantly below State or National average and "bordering," which is slightly below the norm. Points were assigned for each rating to reach a final score and color-coded maps included in the LNA indicated the scoring of the municipality. There were notable increases in some graduation rates.

The updated LNA is published and can be used for grant application purposes. Ken stated the Literacy Committee will continue to work with library partners, to get some programs back together and continue to push the book drives. The data will be shared with the Mayors Association for potential collaboration and is available for review on the WDB website.

<https://www.ccwib.com/literacyneedsassessment.html>

➤ Heidi Daunoras

Heidi spoke of the teaching in a district where all four schools are school-wide "Title One", indicating there is greater than 40% free and reduced lunch. Her district is seeing a growing ELL (English language learners) population and a homeless population. She spoke of the need to recognize the ethnic and religious diversity within communities and creating pathways to foundational skills to literacy and workforce skills. Heidi commented on the value of partnerships with programs that provide services and resources that enable their school to provide a safe space and to meet the needs of the children whether in school or learning virtually, including providing meals for the children while they are at home.

## INTRODUCTION OF FEATURED SPEAKER

Ken introduced a CNN feature video about the BookSmiles organization, founded in 2016 by Larry Abrams, an educator in the Lindenwold School District. BookSmiles collects children's books to promote reading for young people. He distributes the books to teachers, organizations and at community events with the goal to put books in the hands of children.

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2022/09/08/school-new-jersey-book-reading-teacher-cnnheroes.cnn>

<https://www.booksmiles.org/>

➤ Larry Abrams, BookSmiles

Larry introduced himself as an 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher where it is typical to have students reading at a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level. He explained that children who are not read to have low reading skills and those who cannot read well often feel like failures and stated that only 80% of his school's students graduate and 1 in 5 of his school's students drop out. His idea to collect and give away

children's books came about when he asked one of his parenting students if she read to her baby and the student responded that she did not because the baby would not understand. From that interaction, Larry decided to collect baby board books to give away. Larry knew he was on the right track when he witnessed how enthusiastically the donated books were received and BookSmiles was created. He painted and weather-proofed trash cans to serve as book collection receptacles and placed them in public areas for people to deposit their used books and continued to collect and give away books. He mentioned Heidi Daunoras' son, Jacob, who acted as a "BookSmiles Ambassador" by collecting books to donate to BookSmiles to distribute. Larry also collects books for adults to read which he donates to non-profits or to sell to provide needed funds for the organization.

The non-profit organization that began with a classroom full of books is now a 4300 square foot warehouse in Pennsauken, where 45,000 books are reclaimed and upcycled monthly. BookSmiles graduated from a minivan to a 16' box truck with a liftgate and pallet jacks to collect and distribute books to teachers, non-profit organizations and children who live in "book deserts" in NJ and Philadelphia. Collection boxes have been installed in Camden, Mercer, Burlington, and Gloucester County. Through the pandemic, BookSmiles began to palletize their book inventory and deliver them to food banks in numbers from 6,000 to 10,000. To date, BookSmiles has collected 1.1 million books.

Larry stated he was excited to read data provided in the LNA. He stated that as a soon-to-be retired teacher, he will be able to participate in book drives and distribution events all over the area. BookSmiles currently has a small staff but Larry commented that he expects to hire more help, including a CDL-A driver. He looks forward to building partnerships and is looking for corporate sponsors and invited attendees to "like" and "follow" BookSmiles on Facebook.

#### ONE STOP CAREER CENTER UPDATES

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, Camden County Career Center

- The One-Stop's Learning Link now provides HiSET testing certification. GED testing is delayed until physical requirements, cameras to specification for testing observation, are met.
- The Chromebook Loaner Program has been launched, to serve SNAP/TANF clients, as well as participants of the Youth Work Experience with insured equipment to participate in education, training, job searches.
- A new customer flow plan has been implemented for SNAP/TANF clients, ensuring that they are all assisted with One-Stop services to work through their barriers to employment.
- The educational outreach campaign was launched to inform the public of the services available at the One-Stop with advertisements on bus wraps, PATCO trains, social media, radio spots, and printed material. Advertisements include the One-Stop's QR code to direct customers to the website for information.
- The One-Stop's Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) is an upskilling program available to Camden County businesses where their employees will earn certification upon completion of their program, making them eligible for promotion and creating openings for new employees. Two of five cohorts have been completed for a Supermarket Management certification by employees of a conglomerate of ShopRite stores. Carol McCormick and Mike Leonetti are working with Bancroft and Goodwill to create their curriculums for new cohorts.
- The Youth Work Experience training program has been another priority of the One-Stop. With the elimination of one audit exception, the program assists enrolled youth to become engaged in the community, benefiting from work experience and being paid a stipend. In addition to gaining work experience, participants also have an educational component.
- South Jersey Transportation Authority is once again providing shuttle services for customers seeking assistance at the One-Stop and the newly relocated Board of Social Services. The SJTA bus loop includes stops at the Woodcrest PATCO Station, the Voorhees Town Center bus hub and the One-Stop and Board of Social Services offices.

## ADJOURNMENT

Ken Brahl asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Weil made the first motion, seconded by Carl Donato. By a unanimous vote to the affirmative the motion was carried, and the meeting adjourned at 10:25 am.

The next meeting will be in person at Camden County College-Blackwood/Roosevelt Hall, Room 102 on Wednesday, March 22, 2022, at 9:00am.

## **WDB MISSION STATEMENT, AS STATED ON ALL REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

*To create the BEST customer driven delivery system for employment, training and education-related programs and services by providing strategic management, planning, implementation, and evaluation to enhance the regions long term economic success for all citizens and organizations.*

- *To provide leadership in all workforce issues.*
- *To provide a holistic delivery of services.*
- *To continually improve the quality of services for all customers.*
- *To empower customers to make informed choices and take control of their careers.*
- *To provide and guarantee universal access to employment opportunities.*
- *To provide quality workers for all the region's employers.*
- *To create partnerships and collaboration in the government, private and non-profit stakeholders.*

Submitted by,  
Debra Vaughn  
Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director