



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020
MEETING AT CAMDEN COUNTY ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER

ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		5-Mar-19	2-Apr-19	7-May-19	2-Jul-19	3-Sep-19	1-Oct-19	3-Dec-19	7-Jan-20	4-Feb-20
Brahl, Ken CHAIR	Ravitz Family Shoprites	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Patti Beach	Learning Link, Camden County One-Stop Career Center								X	X
Cirii, Frank	Local Area Operations Director, Camden County One	X		X	X		X		X	X
Dann, Carol	Hopeworks Camden		X	X	X			X	X	
Daunoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District			X				X	X	X
De, Shyamoli	Camden County Library				X		X		X	X
Hill, Lauren Dr.	Camden County College	X	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
Lisa, David	Camden County Library System									
Mitchell, Danielle	RobinsNest Inc		X	X			X		X	
Pettyford, Shawneeq	Hopeworks								X	
Sayles, Keith	Camden County College, Camden City Campus					X	X	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, Administrative Assistant	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Literacy Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:45am, welcomed attendees and asked for round table introductions. He welcomed Dr. Lauren Hill back to the committee, now representing Camden County College in her new position as Director, Adult Basic Skills. He invited the committee to stay after the meeting for a tour of the One-Stop.

LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE.

Ken directed the committee’s attention to the draft of the Literacy Needs Assessment (LNA) Update, prepared by Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB. Ken asked Kathleen to further explain the draft. Kathleen reported that as the committee awaits the findings or data from the 2020 Census to update the LNA, it was suggested by the committee to do a follow up. The update includes actions taken by the committee as a result of the findings in the original LNA. The update includes meetings, events, outreach and presentation made by the Committee in the community. The Committee reviewed the update and made some additional edits. Kathleen also reported that she drafted a letter to the mayors of Lindenwold, Pine Hill, and Clementon. The three mayors were invited to meet with the Literacy Committee at an informal spaghetti dinner and discussion on March 12, 2019. The letter will serve as an update to actions that were taken by the committee to further create the awareness and development of literacy programs in their local municipalities. She will send the letter to the mayors along with the update and a One-Stop work flow report that shows that residents of their local

area are being served by the One-Stop now that it is located closer. The update represents the accomplishments of the Literacy Committee since the development of the LNA released in April of 2017. Jeffrey Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, said there was talk about engaging another Master's Student Intern, Rutgers, to help re-do the LNA, but it was agreed, by the Committee, to wait until fresh Census data is released later this year. Kathleen used the template she created for the annual update presented at the WDB Quarterly Meeting, in September 2019, at Camden County College. Jeff said the Work Flow report is showing that 10-11% of customers currently visiting the One-Stop are coming from the zip codes in the southern part of the county. He said we can say with some certainty that the efforts of the committee have created an awareness about the One-Stop services and customers from that area are taking advantage of them. The meeting with the Mayors, the Literacy Day events, the outreach to the schools and national nights out have made an impact on that part of the county. Kathleen said that one of the big accomplishments of the committee was serving as a model for the State Library Commission. Ken Brahl, Literacy Chair and Marlyn Kalitan, made a presentation at the State Library Commission Meeting in March, 2019 about the WDB and One-Stops working more closely with the local library system. She said the SETC recently made a presentation about the same idea based on a study put out by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. Jeff said he would like to send the letter to the mayors and maybe plan another dinner to meet with them. Dick Knopf, Marketing Professional Services, asked if the update will be sent to the Mayors with the letter. Jeff said it would be. Ken noted that the Committee also presented the LNA to the Mayors Association meeting in October, 2018. He asked that it be included in the update. Dr. Hill noted her new title should be changed on the update as well. The Committee approved the update. Jeff said Kathleen will send it to the mayors. Jeff also noted that Kristi Connors, Manager Employment Service, DOL, created a check-in survey for customers entering the One-Stop. Customers are directed to a computer to fill out a brief survey. For the first time, we are able to track, how many customers we are truly serving, the services they are requesting, and where they are traveling from.

Ken said he liked the idea of inviting the mayors to another spaghetti dinner. This time maybe we can invite representatives from the schools and from the libraries. The Committee discussed dates and agreed to try for May 5, 2009 and the dinner would replace the morning Literacy Meeting. Kathleen will contact Holly Strobl and make sure the Clementon Fire Hall is open for the date. The Committee also reviewed the Work Flow Report. Frank said the report has been pretty consistent from week to week.

LEARNING LINK PILOT PROGRAM

This online pilot program is an attempt to extend skills training into other parts of the County. The satellite program allows participants to register with the One-Stop Career Center upon meeting with a Counselor by appointment at the Winslow Township Library. They may be in need of brushing up on math and reading skills. The individual is tested with the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) to establish their reading and math grade level. Once levels are established, the Counselor works with each individual to create a plan that can be implemented using the computers at the library. The Counselor can monitor the progress of the individual online and plan in-person check points along the way. This service is especially good for an individual preparing to qualify for a training program or GED High Set test.

Frank Cirii, Local Area Operations Director, suggested that the Committee concentrate their efforts to referring customers to the One-Stop Career Center, now located closer to the southern part of the county. In

this way, customers can also be referred to training opportunities as well as Adult Basic Skills Programs at the Camden County College and the Literacy Volunteers office located within the One-Stop. There are many other services as well such as career counseling, and help for individuals with disabilities. If the customer is going make an effort to travel for career assistance, they will find more of the types of services, at the One-Stop, that help them obtain training, a degree, and a solid career path.

Shyamoli De, Literacy Volunteers of America, (LVA) brought up a concern regarding the CASAS Test. The State recently mandated that all agencies transition from the TABE test to the CASAS Test (900 Series). She also said there are different versions of the test. The One-Stop and LVA are using two different versions. She had a meeting with Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center. The participants are scoring very differently between math and reading. The math scores are much lower because the CASAS test includes more Algebra and Geometry. Shyamoli said that LVA is going to administer the test in a paper version. The One-Stop will continue to test with their version. The concern is that participants are taking too many tests. Dr. Hill said she was working through concerns about the test. She was encouraged by conversations she had and further guidance on how to move forward. She said the State spent a lot on the CASAS test so it will be around. Shyamoli said she will be using one version as a practice test. Frank said certain types of training does not require the higher levels of math. A 9th grade math and reading score is required in order to qualify for a training grant. Shyamoli said participants with higher needs are referred for LVA from the Learning Link. Ken asked if there was a flow chart that showed how a customer would be helped by the Learning Link. Dr. Hill said the Learning Link serves four different populations. She did develop a flow of services before she left the One-Stop. Youth, Adult, Dislocated Work and High Set Only. (GED). Frank said that all career advancement services start with the assessment tool, which is the CASAS test. Then, depending on the individual needs of the customer, a career plan is developed. It can be very different for each person because they have different wants, needs, or barriers that need to be addressed.

Ken asked about the general processes of the Career Center. He asked why a person would come to a One-Stop. Frank explained that 50% of customers start out with an unemployment claim. They may have just gotten laid off from a seasonal job as a cashier in a retail position. They may be directed to attend an orientation about a career training grant, or request job search assistance or help with their resume. If they are an out-of-school youth, they may need to get a GED. They may be directed to attend an employment recruitment. Ken asked if a customer was under-employed would they benefit from the services of the One-Stop. Frank said yes, if a customer is under-employed, their skills can be upgraded by attending training. Frank said the one of the biggest target audiences are customers who may be referred from the Board of Social Services because their grants or benefits are coming to an end. There is a five year life-time limit to receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). If a customer is running out of benefits or nearing the end of an unemployment claim, the One-Stop can help. Dick asked if there were services for customers age 55 and over. Frank said the One-Stop has a 55 plus department. The committee discussed the services of the One-Stop and were made aware that a customer does not have to be on unemployment to take advantages of the services at the One-Stop. Kathleen said she listed all the partners in the letter to the Mayors because they too might not be aware of all the services located under one roof. She also suggest creating a flyer that lists all the partner services. Frank further explained that orientations take place on Tuesday and Thursday morning. The Orientation explains the steps to obtain a training grant. The customer meets with a counselor and is given some goal setting and career

exploration homework to complete and of course eligibility documentation is discussed. Dick asked if there has been a difference in the amount of customers coming in as a result of the move. Jeff said that is why the check-in and work flow report was created. It was created to track how many customers and where they are coming from. Frank said the good news is, that while the location was criticized by some, the biggest percentage of customers are getting here easily from Camden City. We are getting customers from other parts of the county that might not have traveled into Camden. Frank also said that even the people that work at the One-Stop did not know about all the partner services because they were housed with different entrances at the old location. It was not easy to refer customers from one service to another. Now, at the new location, every co-worker is being trained about all the services so customers can be referred without having to make additional appointments.

2020 CENSUS

Kathleen reported the County Board of Freeholders is very focused on hiring Census Takers for the upcoming 2020 Census. The Business Service Team will be supporting this effort by hosting information sessions and hiring events at the One-Stop. Kathleen said she was very proud to participate in the Census Information Session held on Friday, January 31st at the One-Stop. It was nice to see the One-Stop triaging customers from one service to another. The customer service and courtesy at the front desk was wonderful. Kathleen said the County is emphasizing the importance of the Census because counting every resident can affect state and federal funding for public programs. The County is setting up safe sites, including the libraries, where residents can get help with filling out the Census form. Frank said the census mailing will include instructions on how to fill out the on-line form. Kathleen said the reason she added the Census to the Literacy Agenda is because it will affect our LNA and the committee can be promoting it. Frank said the big push for the county is to make sure that census taker positions are filled especially in rural parts of the county and areas where bi-lingual help is needed. The goal is to assist families in areas of the county that are underrepresented. It will be very important over the next five months to be able to count every resident in the county because it also affects education and funding. During the last Census, a NJ state legislative seat was lost. Kathleen said there are also other year round opportunities for someone who succeeds at their job as a census taker. They can go on to participate in other surveys that take place throughout the year so it could develop into a fulltime job. Frank said the rate of pay is up to \$20.00 per hour for census takers working in Camden County.

BOOKSMILES BOOK DRIVE

Ken reported that Ravitz Family Markets has been working with the WDB and BookSmiles to host a book drive during the month of January at Ravitz Family Market, Shoprite locations. He said that Shoprite will probably end up with a pallet of books to donate to BookSmiles. He said the books are being sorted and Channel 3 News will join Shoprite as they deliver the books to the BookSmiles site on February 12th. He will send the information for anyone on the Committee that would like to attend. Kathleen said there is also small free book library located in the lobby of the One-Stop.

Ken said that the Committee will begin planning a literacy event that may be focused on adults this year, 2020. The event will be planned for some time in the fall. Ken asked for a reminder about what was discussed by the committee with regard to the working with the Family Success Centers. Kathleen said the goal was set to work

more to promote the friendliness and accessibility of the Centers as a resource for helping job seekers. Ken said the committee will definitely plan to attend some of the National Nights Out in August 2020.

Jeff reported on a meeting with Mary Horstmann, Vice President Program Officer, Global Philanthropy, JP Morgan Chase. He received an unsolicited call from her to meet and get more information about the work of the WDB. Jeff said he presented the work of the Literacy Committee in hopes they might find some interest in supporting the financial literacy effort to bring more career development and soft skills to the schools. Her visit was more of a fact finding conversation. Kathleen and Jeff met with her on January 30th at the WDB office. Jeff said Kathleen presented Mary with lots of information including the LNA. They are building more branch locations in Camden County and were particularly interested in assisting youth in Camden City.

Heidi Daunras, Curriculum Coordinator, Pine Hill Schools, presented the Committee with School Performance Summary Reports. These are dashboard reports she obtains from the local area showing the needs of families in the areas of English Language Arts, Math, Economic Needs and other barriers. She pulled the data from Lindenwold Boro, Pine Hill Boro, and Berlin Township. These are public reports available on-line. The other data, the report gives us, are the challenges in these areas due to multiple factors such as poverty rates and homelessness that can affect a student's school performance. She said that is why she is representing the local area in discussions about finding better ways to serve families in her local area, in the southern part of the county. It is only when we are all working together can we take actions and provide better services and solutions for our families. The biggest challenge is getting programs like financial literacy embedded into the services we can provide. A one and done program does not do it for us. We need embedded partnerships that are ongoing and integrated throughout our programs in the district, whether we are talking about curriculum or supportive services for our families. These kinds of partnerships is what helps us move the needle on what you see and understand about our local area. Heidi also explained that when they are registering students and they notice family challenges they work with the family to fill out a community needs form. This information gives us an idea of the challenges facing the student. The form was created in corporation with the local Police Department. It is part of our "whole child, whole school, whole community effort" The family completes the form and indicates whether they need assistance with housing, clothing, food or other needs such as child care or employment counseling, ID or case management. The form goes out to community partners that can offer assistance to the family. The partner organizations/agencies contact the family directly and a social worker is assigned to follow that family through the processes of getting the help they need. It may be that the family is without heat so the social worker gets in touch with the family and helps them navigate into a heat assistant program. There are not words to measure the kind of help and impact we can have on our local area families with these types of needs and we can respond quickly. Marlyn said it's difficult to measure but very impactful. Dick asked if other local areas do the same kind of work. Heidi said the local areas are small so it's easy to share information and local partners are on board with helping local residents. She would be happy to share the information with other areas. It might not look the same in other areas. The Committee discussed the reports and agreed that the continued focused effort in the southern part of Camden County, revealed by the LNA, will continue in 2020.

Jeff said the next Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at Camden County College, Roosevelt Hall, Room 102, 200 College Dr., Blackwood, NJ 08012. Ken closed the meeting and the Committee proceeded on a tour of the One-Stop Career Center.

NEXT MEETING: The Literacy Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 3rd, 2020 at 8:30am at the WDB Office, 1111 Marlkrass Road, Suite 101, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

Submitted by

Kathleen Varallo,

Administrative Assistant