



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Carl A. Donato Jr., Chair

**Literacy Committee Zoom Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 4, 2025 via Zoom**

Attendance

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE				
NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE	1/7/25	2/4/2025
Kalitan, Marlyn Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X
Abrams, Larry	BookSmiles			X
Willmann, Michael, Vice Chair	WMSH	X	X	X
Allen, Mikala	One-Stop			
Beach, Patti	Goodwill			X
Chisolm, Victoria	Literacy Volunteers of America		X	X
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X		X
Clark, Justin	Office of Adult Literacy (NJDOL)		X	X
D'amato, Greg	Pine Hill School District			
Dann, Carol	HopeWorks Camden			X
Dauoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District		X	X
Deprey, Brynn	NTIA			
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill			
Floyd, Kwame	Teacher Apprenticeship Network		X	X
Fugee, Antoinette	Cooper Healthcare			X
Green, Aurella	Camden County College			
Jenkins, Timothy	Camden Board of Education			
Johnstone, Brent	Fathers365			
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services			X
Mauro, Jennifer	Goodwill	X	X	X
McKelvey, Christopher	Councilman, Clementon Borough		X	X
Petty-Ford, Shawneeq	HopeWorks Camden			
Robinson, Terrenny	Net America			
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County One-Stop			
Staples, Akeiff	Fathers365			
Stewart, Queen	Volunteer UP			
Randall, Angela	Camden County OEO		X	X
Thompson, Ryan	MidPenn Bank	X		X
Michelle Rohan	WDB		X	X
Richelle Harbinson	WDB			
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB			
Vaughn, Debra	WDB			X

Welcome & Approval of the Minutes

Marlyn Kalitan, Literacy Chair, opened the meeting at 8:30am. She asked for a motion to approve the January 7, 2025 minutes. The motion was made by Micheal Willmann and seconded by Richard Knopf. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

Quick recap

The team discussed topics including a recent literacy online seminar, the rebranding of the committee to 'Pathways to Literacy Committee', and the creation of a flyer for the March 1 event. They also discussed potential grant opportunities for their literacy program, the need for volunteers to help distribute books to children in Camden County, and the possibility of hosting their own webinar.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Carl A. Donato Jr., Chair

Next steps

Michelle to create a draft flyer for the March 1st event by the end of the week.
Jeff, Heidi, and Chris to schedule a walkthrough of the library next week.
Chris to check availability of the fire hall for March 1st and report back.
Ryan to investigate sponsoring snacks for the event.
Angela to mention the March 1st event at the youth focus group.
Larry to provide books and shelving for the March 1st event.
Committee members to contact Michelle with ideas for contributions to the March 1st event.
Jeff to consider updating the literacy needs assessment with new data and metrics.

Summary

The participants discussed assorted topics, including a recent literacy online seminar.

Camden County Workforce Board Collaboration

Carl, the Chairperson of the Camden County Workforce Board and the Abilities Committee, expressed his appreciation for the team's work and announced his intention to collaborate more closely with them this year. He mentioned that he and Marlyn had discussed potential joint events and projects. Carl also acknowledged the team's achievements, particularly their work on the library.

Early Literacy and Adult Education

Heidi discussed the importance of early literacy and its impact on children's development. She emphasized that literacy foundations begin in infancy, highlighting the need for books in the home and social interactions to develop language skills. Heidi also shared her experience as a preschool supervisor, noting the challenges of addressing the wide range of experiences children bring to the classroom. She mentioned the importance of adult education programs in Camden County, while acknowledging the barriers adults face when returning to education, such as transportation, healthcare, and childcare issues.

Focusing on Children's Needs and Scores

Heidi emphasized the importance of in-person interaction for learning and expressed her desire for more discussions to bridge programs together. She also urged the team to focus on the needs of the children rather than dwelling on past losses. Michael echoed Heidi's sentiments, stressing the need for specific ideas and context for potential projects.

Volunteers Needed for Book Distribution

Larry discussed the need for volunteers to help distribute books to children in Camden County. He proposed a model where groups, including churches and civic organizations, could come to the Book Bank to take books into schools for distribution. Larry emphasized the importance of getting books into the hands of children to improve their literacy and future workforce capabilities. He also mentioned his plans to move the Book Bank to a larger space due to the increasing number of books being donated. Marlyn and Michael expressed their support for Larry's initiative.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Carl A. Donato Jr., Chair

Rebranding and Webinar Discussion

The meeting discussed the rebranding of the committee to 'Pathways to Literacy Committee'. The decision was made after a vote and a survey, with the new name receiving a majority of votes. The committee also discussed the possibility of hosting their own online seminar but decided against it due to the recent online seminar hosted by Heidi and Michael. The committee also discussed their budget and the need for donations. Lastly, the committee decided to adopt the tagline 'enlighten, enrich, empower' to reflect their mission and purpose.

March 1 Event

Jeffrey shared his vision for an event on March 1st to promote pathways to literacy, which would include a book giveaway, a financial literacy session, and a reading session for children. The team discussed the need for a flyer to promote the event and the possibility of setting up a tent outside the library if the firehouse was unavailable. They also discussed the need for a walkthrough of the library to assess the space. The team agreed to work on the event details and to consider the involvement of community partners. Heidi proposed circulating the flyer through schools, which she believed would be more effective than posting on websites or social media. The team also discussed the target age group for the flyer with Jeffrey suggesting consistency with the Read Across America theme, which focuses on elementary age students.

Exploring Grants and Rotary Club Connections

The team discussed potential grant opportunities for their literacy program. Michelle researched grants, including the Read Across America, Believe in Reading, and Dollar General Foundation grants. However, some deadlines had already passed. Michael suggested sending a package of information about their program to organizations that decide where to go and what to consider for funding. Jeffrey proposed reaching out to local Rotary clubs to potentially adopt their literacy committee as a project. Christopher agreed to investigate local Rotary chapters in Clementon and nearby areas. Michelle, a Rotarian, expressed interest in promoting their program to other Rotary clubs.

Summer Youth Work Experience Program

The meeting concluded with important points. Jeffrey reminds the group about the Summer Youth Work Experience Program grant the WDB applied for, aiming to place one hundred young people in internships throughout Camden County. Michael requests to be added to the next meeting's agenda to discuss a programmatic idea. Jeffrey also suggests updating their literacy needs assessment, engaging a Rutgers student for the task.

Adjournment

Marilyn asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Michael Willmann and seconded by Angela Randall. By majority vote of the affirmative, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:34am.