



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Carl A. Donato Jr., Chair

**Pathways to Literacy Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2026
Zoom Meeting at 9:00AM**

ATTENDANCE

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE	3/4/2025	4/1/2025	5/6/2025	6/3/2025	7/1/2025	8/5/2025	9/2/2025	10/7/2025	11/6/2025	12/2/2025	1/6/2026	2/3/2026	3/3/2026
Kalitan, Marilyn Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Larry	BookSmiles		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Willmann, Michael, Vice Chair	WMSH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Arreola, Enrique	Center for Family Services								X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Beach, Patti	Goodwill		X	X		X	X	X							
Boaten, Roberta	NJ Dept of Health													X	X
Chisolm, Victoria	Literacy Volunteers of America		X	X	X									X	X
Cirri, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X
Clark, Justin	Office of Adult Literacy (NJCOL)		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Daunoras, Heidi	Multiplicity Consulting LLC		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Donato, Carl	WDB Board Chair						X	X	X						
Rashawn Davis	Book Smiles		X												
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill			X											
Floyd, Kwame	Teacher Apprenticeship Network														
Tiffany Probasco-Francis	Rowan University						X		X	X		X	X	X	X
Green, Aurelia	Camden County College		X			X			X					X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mauro, Jennifer	Goodwill	X	X	X		X	X	X							
McLevey, Christopher															X
Randall, Angela	Surviving in Strength					X	X	X		X	X			X	X
Rafferty, Joanne	Volunteer Literacy Advisor														
Thompson, Ryan	MidPenn Bank	X											X		
Hamilton, Karen	BookSmiles									X					
Emily Loughlin	BookSmiles											X			
Richelle Hardison	WDB		X												
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB														
Vaughn, Debra	WDB		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Michael Willmann, Vice Chair, opened the meeting at 9:00 AM, and asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the February 3, 2026 meeting. Motion was made by Heidi Daunoras, seconded by Larry Abrams. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the minutes were approved. Attendees were reminded of the meeting time change from 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM for the start of all future meetings.

One Stop Career Center Update

Frank provided an update on activities at the One Stop Career Center.

February Performance Highlights:

- GED testing administration
- CASAS assessments completed
- CareerScope testing conducted
- Strong performance numbers across all metrics

CWEP Placements (Community Work Experience Program):

- 16 placements completed in February
- 157 total placements since July 2025

Facility Compliance: Passed recent state inspection with only minor issues noted

Upcoming Events:

- Virtual conference on AI applications
- The One Stop will participate in the following upcoming events:



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- GSETA Virtual Summit - March 19, 2026
- Job Fair at Cherry Hill Mall - May 15, 2026

Strategic Planning Subcommittee Report

Michael Willmann presented the report from the Strategic Planning Subcommittee. He outlined six key components of the strategic plan:

Library and Book Donations

- Heidi reported receiving a significant donation of 2,000 books
- Larry mentioned receiving a response about a potential book partnership but decided not to pursue it further

Strategic Planning Initiatives/Strategic Planning Questionnaire — Michael

Michael announced that a strategic planning questionnaire has been distributed to all committee members. The questionnaire is designed to:

- Identify the committee's greatest challenges
- Determine desired roles for committee members
- Gather perspectives on literacy program effectiveness
- Guide future strategic planning processes

Deadline: All members must complete and return the questionnaire to Debra electronically before the April 7th meeting

Research and Best Practices Research Initiative — Michael

Michael proposed that the committee investigate successful literacy programs to identify replicable models. The research should examine:

- Local organizations with literacy missions
- Statewide literacy initiatives
- National programs with proven success (example: Portland, Oregon was cited as an example)
- Organizations where literacy is part of their broader mission

Literacy Program Challenges and Solutions

Barriers to Access for Disadvantaged Populations

Michael and Frank engaged in detailed discussion about ongoing challenges that prevent disadvantaged populations from accessing literacy services:

- **Limited internet access** for program participants
- **Transportation difficulties** creating barriers to program attendance
- **Digital divide** significantly affecting service delivery capabilities
- **Current solution:** Camden Loop transportation service continues to be utilized
- **Technology support:** Tablet computers available for some participants to bridge digital access gaps

Adult Literacy Challenges and Program Realities - Angela Randall

- Programs can improve literacy skills but cannot guarantee outcomes such as:
 - Employment placement
 - Housing stability

Angela provided important context about the limitations and realities of adult literacy programs:

- **What programs CAN do:** Improve literacy skills and competencies
- **What programs CANNOT guarantee:**
 - Employment placement
 - Housing stability
- **Gap identified:** Need for stronger connections between literacy programs and employment services
- **Current partnerships:** Collaborations already exist with workforce development centers and One-Stop

Support Strategies/Mechanisms for GED Participants

The committee discussed comprehensive support strategies to enable GED program participation:

- **Childcare funding** to enable parents to attend classes
- **Bus passes** to remove transportation barriers
- **Literacy coaches** to provide individualized one-on-one support
- **Family literacy nights** offering resources and support for both adults and children simultaneously

Outreach and Communication Strategies**Reaching Different Populations with Multi-Channel Communication Strategy**

The committee recognized that different populations require different outreach approaches. A comprehensive communication strategy must address diverse needs:

Digital-Native Populations

- Young adults comfortable with technology
- Low-literacy learners using technology
- Platforms to utilize:
 - TikTok
 - Instagram
 - Other social media
- **Digital platforms to leverage:**
 - TikTok
 - Instagram

- Other social media channels

Traditional Communication Needs

- Non-English speaking residents
- Multilingual learners
- Populations not engaged with social media
- Traditional outreach methods required

Community Engagement Approaches/Strategies

- Expand community ambassadors: Increase the number of trusted community ambassadors voices
- Organize focus groups: Conduct community listening sessions to understand different constituencies' needs
- Develop targeted programming: Design programs based on direct community feedback
- Create assessment website: Develop a special online platform to help individuals:
 - Self-assess their literacy needs
 - Connect directly to relevant programs and resources

Comprehensive Literacy Approach - Heidi Daunoras

Heidi emphasized that effective literacy efforts must extend well beyond simply distributing books. A comprehensive approach includes:

- Family literacy programs
- Adult education initiatives
- Addressing parental involvement barriers
- Considering cultural factors affecting literacy

Workforce Development Connection - Jeffrey Swartz

- Core principle: Literacy serves as the essential foundation for workforce development
- Funding advocacy: Serious state investment needed in literacy programs
- Goal of increasing: Increase regional literacy rates through adequate funding and comprehensive resources
- Business engagement: Target businesses to invest strategically in workforce development
- Adaptation: Address continuously changing workforce needs and requirements

Business Investment in Workers Strategy - Heidi Daunoras

- Strategic imperative: Companies must invest in their workers as a business priority
- Competitive advantage: Worker investment serves as both an attraction and retention strategy



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- Incumbent worker training programs

South Jersey Regional Research Project Literacy Assessment

The committee discussed a comprehensive region-wide research initiative:

- Survey scope: 2.5 million South Jersey residents
- Research focus areas:
 - Awareness of local non-profit services
 - Direct experience with available programs
- Survey frequency: To be repeated every two years for trend tracking
- Purpose: Track progress over time and identify service gaps in the region

Subcommittee Survey Development

Heidi to forward draft survey to committee via Debra

- Survey draft to be included in meeting minutes
- Review process: All committee members will receive the draft for feedback

Upcoming Programs and Events

South Jersey Nonprofit Summit at Rowan University, Glassboro

- March 17, 2026
- Committee attendees confirmed: Tiffany, Heidi, Larry, and Michael

WDB Updates

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Summer Youth Work Experience Program

- Awaiting grant approval
- Once grant is approved, worksite agreements and applications will be posted online
- Program goal: Provide meaningful work experience opportunities for youth participants

Additional Workforce Development Initiatives/Programs

- Certification processes underway
- Aviation tech maintenance training
- EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) training programs

Administrative Items

- **Virtual quarterly board meeting:** March 18, 2026 at 9:00 AM
 - Board members requested to confirm attendance with staff



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Strategic Focus Areas Identified by the Committee:

1. Address digital divide and transportation barriers affecting program access
2. Expand literacy programs beyond traditional book distribution to comprehensive services
3. Strengthen connections between literacy programs and workforce development systems
4. Develop targeted outreach strategies for diverse populations and languages
5. Secure adequate state funding and resources for sustained program growth
6. Build strategic partnerships with businesses for workforce investment
7. Create comprehensive support systems including childcare, transportation, and coaching
8. Establish robust assessment tools and research initiatives for measuring impact

ADJOURNMENT

Michael encouraged participants to share information about available state resources that could benefit literacy programs, emphasizing the need for better awareness and utilization of existing support systems.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jeff Swartz, seconded by Heidi Daunoras. With a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion was carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM.

The next Abilities Committee meeting will be held on Zoom on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 9:00 AM.

The next quarterly board meeting will be held on March 18, 2026 at 9:00 AM on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by Debra Vaughn, Executive Assistant