



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022
ZOOM MEETING

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE									
NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE MEMBER	5-Oct-21	7-Dec-21	4-Jan-22	1-Feb-22	1-Mar-22	5-Apr-22	
Brahl, Ken CHAIR	Ravitz Family ShopRites	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Beach, Patti	Goodwill					X	X	X	
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Dann, Carol	HopeWorks Camden			X		X		X	
Daunoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District			X		X	X	X	
Druce, Jennifer	Camden County Library								
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill					X			
Fugee, Antoinette	Center for Family Services, Inc.		X		X				
Hill, Lauren Dr.	Camden County College		X		X	X	X	X	
Kalitan, Marlyn Vice Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X		X		X	X	X	
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services		X	X	X	X	X	X	
McKelvey, Christopher	Councilman, Clementon Borough					X	X	X	
Mitchell, Danielle	RobinsNest Inc								
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County One-Stop								
Soira, Lizette	Orchards Family Success Center					X	X		
Strobl, Holly	Councilwoman, Clementon Borough								
Young, Jennifer	Verizon			X	X	X	X	X	
Levitt, Alex	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Vaughn, Debra	WDB					X	X		

WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Chair, greeted the attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves before calling the meeting to order at 8:30am. He introduced the committee to the Literacy Needs Assessment Intern, Eugene Rutzler, and welcomed him. Eugene spoke briefly about his language arts teaching experience and passion for education and expressed his enthusiasm for the working on the LNA project. Ken asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the March 1, 2022, meeting. Marlyn Kalitan made the motion, seconded by Dr. Lauren Hill. By unanimous vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

FRANK CIRII - ONE-STOP & LEARNING LINK UPDATES

- Unemployment returned on March 28th without any serious issues for site operations. The scheduled appointment numbers have gone from 21 claimants on the first day to 150, with 15-minute appointment intervals, and appointments up to a half-hour allowed as needed. Walk-ins are being assisted whenever possible. There have been no major issues with public safety and overall operations have gone smoothly.
- The recently hired Learning Link counselor, Steven Waylon, resigned on April 1st. He had recently been retired for 8 months and, while he was excited about his new position, he realized he needed to return to retirement for personal reasons.
- The Learning Link is working to meet the involved technical requirements of testing certification. The proctor must be able to monitor the entire workstation, including the keyboard and the person being tested. The installation of required cameras and lockers were not budgeted items but is being taken care of.

Steve Stetzer is working on the technical requirements, and appropriate staff is being trained to perform testing and proctor duties.

- A meeting with the Director of the Camden County Library System will take place on April 6th to discuss coordination and joint promotion of literacy services available in both locations. Jeff Swartz asked Frank to be sure to mention that the Literacy Committee would welcome a representative from the Camden County Library system. Dr. Lauren Hill commented that Victoria Chisholm, Director of Literacy Volunteers, stated in the previous Committee meeting that she looked forward to being active on the Literacy Committee.
- Frank stated there is a waiver to work requirements for unemployment claimants. There is no penalty for failure to search work or for refusing offered employment. He stated he believes the waiver is a threat to the operations of county systems and is detrimental to vendors, childcare providers, and to transportation. Jeff Swartz and Ken Brahl agreed that the jobs are available, and the pay rates had increased to starting rates of \$15 to \$17 per hour and Ken predicated that the pay rate for the Summer will be \$20 per hour.
- Frank conveyed his concern that on-going UI waiver practice affects the counselors who are now not being pro-active in performing the personal aspects of customer service. The waiver, combined with the apathy of people who refuse to work, in a sense, is causing a ripple-effect in the way service providers interact with clients who are genuinely seeking for assistance to improve their lives. Marlyn Kalitan commented that even executives she is working with have been in no rush to return to work until their severance pay was almost exhausted.

LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Ken Brahl discussed what is next for the Literacy Needs Assessment (LNA).

- Ken reviewed the Needs Assessment report by section. He accepted the first four sections of the report as they exist but would like to add a section at the end indicating what changed between the 2017 and 2020 Census and illustrating trends, and noting the methods and programs utilized to tackle the issue of illiteracy, with data showing the progress made or not. In addition to the maps, he would like to see the data in table format, with population shifts according to Census data and using green indicating increases and red indicating decreases on the maps.
- Marlyn Kalitan welcomed Eugene and offered him assistance to provide or direct him to any information he may need with his work on the Literacy Needs Assessment (LNA).
- Carol Dann referred to another version of the LNA that she feels would be more helpful to Eugene, where each map is gradations of one color illustrating each issue. An index number was created that is a compilation of the other four indicators of the index. Since the last LNA was prepared, attention has been turned to the connection between families and on helping children with literacy, which also improves the literacy of their parents. As important as that connection is, the primary need for doing the LNA was not only to see where to apply literacy support but also to see why and how people are not utilizing the literacy programs in place to serve them. She would like to suggest that the new assessment pivots to evaluate how to increase the numbers of people who will take advantage of the literacy programs. Carol also commented that the lack of transportation is a part of the problem and the need to identify and resolve reasons people do not take advantage of literacy programs before resources could justify the expense of solving the barrier to transportation issues.
- Dr. Lauren Hill agreed with Carol on identifying the eligible and interested public and commented that programs providing academic support have declined since they transitioned from mandatory to voluntary.

She added that the financial situations of prospective participants may also be what they are prioritizing over participation in literacy programs. Jeff Swartz added that access to transportation and childcare are the most significant barriers but relocating the One-Stop to Cherry Hill has made access to services easier for the people in the lower parts of the county than they were at the Mt. Ephraim location. Dr. Hill raised the point that the cost of transportation is also a factor for people of minimal means. Dick Knopf noted that new “hybrid” work situations and the ability to access to remote services would enhance participation and ease the expense of accessible transportation. Heidi Danouras added that a model where programs partner with localized libraries or locations that have computers available would be a way of ‘meeting people where they are” and that providing childcare on-site for events has proven to be helpful.

- Jeff Swartz suggested using Clementon Library for a pilot program as a satellite literacy facility, such as a Learning Link training center. Chris McKelvey stated he would bring the idea to the attention of Clementon Borough Council at the upcoming meeting. He stated the library is not currently staffed but he felt strongly that the borough would be interested in the building being used. Frank stated that there are no Learning Link funds available so funding would need to be identified to pay for the proposed satellite literacy facility. Chris stated that funding was still available through the Cares Act, and he would investigate those funds and other resources for turning the library into an educational facility.
- Carol Dann offered the idea of a partnership for a literacy program between the Blackwood campus of Camden County College and the Clementon Library for services during the day. She stated, in the case of HopeWorks, the participation rate was lower when services were offered remotely than when offered in-person. Jennifer Mauro added that the GoodWill Stratford facility, which is accessible to the Lindenwold PATCO, offers ESL-prep and Adult Basic Education, as well as HiSET testing on Monday and Wednesday, rotating weeks. The program is free and there are at least 20 computers available for people to come in to participate. The same services are offered at the GoodWill facility in Maple Shade. Ken Brahl stated that a future meeting should be dedicated to more discussion on these literacy partnership ideas and turned attention to the upcoming Job Fair.

DISCUSSION/UPDATES

- The Youth Job Fair will be held on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, at the Clementon Fire Hall for 3:00pm to 6:00pm. Information on services for training and literacy services will be available and the job fair will be focused employment for youth aged 16 to 21. Flyers providing information will be distributed to high school guidance counselors and employers for participation interest. Gabby Egrie, of Watermark Communities expressed an interest in participating in the job fair. She offers employment opportunities for minors, with very flexible shifts to accommodate school schedules. Frank Cirii suggested coordination with Nidia to provide One-Stop resources for the job fair. Jeff suggested having refreshments available. Chris McKelvey offered an opportunity for children who are present to get a tour of the fire hall from the Clementon Fire Chief. Jeff stated that the bucket truck has been requested from Atlantic City Electric.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be on May 3rd and will be devoted to finalizing details for the Job Fair. The June meeting will focus on the Literacy Needs Assessment work with Eugene Rutzler. Ken asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dick Knopf made the motion, seconded by Frank Cirii. By unanimous vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:28am.

NEXT MEETING: The next Literacy Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at 9:28am. The WDB will send out meeting materials and Zoom conferencing information prior to the meeting.

Submitted by:

Debra Vaughn, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director