



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2023  
ZOOM MEETING

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE			6-Dec-22	3-Jan-23	7-Feb-23	7-Mar-23	4-Apr-23	2-May-23
NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE MEMBER						
<b>Kalitan, Marlyn Chair</b>	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Larry	BookSmiles			X	X	X		X
Beach, Patti	Goodwill		X	X		X		X
Chisolm, Victoria	Literacy Volunteers of America		X		X	X		
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X	X	X				X
Dann, Carol	HopeWorks Camden		X		X	X		
Daunoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District		X	x	X	X		X
Druce, Jennifer	Camden County Library							
Egrie, Gabrielle	Watermark Communities		X		X		X	X
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill		X		X			
Fugee, Antoinette	Cooper Healthcare			X		X		
Hill, Lauren Dr.	Camden County College		x	X		X		X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services		X	X	X		X	X
Mauro, Jennifer	Goodwill		X	X	X	X		
McKelvey, Christopher	Councilman, Clementon Borough			X	X	X	X	X
Norman, Tahja	Orchards Family Success Center							
Page-Soncraut, Jeanne	Dept. of Labor						X	
Rutzler, Eugene	Literacy Needs Assessment Intern		X					
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County One-Stop						X	
Soira, Lizette	Orchards Family Success Center							
Strobl, Holly	Councilwoman, Clementon Borough							
Young, Jennifer	Verizon				X	X		
Willmann, Michael	WMSH			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	X	X	X	X

**WELCOME**

Marlyn Kalitan, Chair, greeted the attendees and opened the meeting at 8:30 am. Marlyn notified the meeting attendees that she is now the Committee Chair and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2023 meeting. The motion was made Dick Knopf, seconded by Michael Willmann. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion was carried, and the minutes for April 4, 2023 were approved.

**BRING A CHILD TO THE LIBRARY EVENT**

Marlyn thanked the WDB staff, committee members who attended and assisted, and Chris McKelvey for his assistance getting the Clementon library ready to receive visitors. She noted that while the community participation was not as expected, the people who attended felt they received the support that they wanted. Carol Dann emailed Marlyn to say the committee hosted a very nice event and the parents and children who attended had a great time.

- Chris McKelvey commented that the event helped to stimulate dialog with the library trustees to get the library open to serve the public.
- Alex commented that the resources available to the public, even in the small amount, made a positive impact.
- Dick Knopf commented that he is surprised that the County is not more involved in getting the library operational. Marlyn pointed out that the library trustees pay a fee to the county library system to allow

Clementon's residents to borrow books but Clementon Borough is not actually a part of the Camden County Library System.

- Larry Abrams commented that the event was a great networking opportunity and professionally done. He noted that improving the connection with the people was critical and he'd discussed some ideas with Alex.
- Dr. Lauren Hill agreed that the level of participation was not as robust as expected but she was pleased to see the number of agencies from the Literacy Committee that were in attendance. She hopes those organizations will continue to provide support and resources by attending future literacy events.

### **ONE-STOP & LEARNING LINK UPDATES**

Frank Cirii, Local Area Director

- Frank shared that the state is discontinuing use of HiSet by the end of May and was returning to the use of GED as the testing tool. The Learning Link has been approved to begin GED testing, in addition to HiSET testing already in use. Prerequisites and technological requirements are being worked on to overcome the final hurdles to the GED testing going live. To safeguard the security of the county network, a separate local area network has to be established for the GED software.
  - Marlyn inquired about the HiSET test. Frank explained that the HiSET was favored by customers because of the structure of the questions and testing format, with the option to retake sections they did poorly on without having to retake the entire test as with GED. Patti Beach stated the certificate issued upon passing the test is a standard diploma from the State. Jeff commented that other factors customers preferred the HiSET to GED testing was the test was lengthy, required the use of a computer, traveling distance and the cost to take the test.
- In-person visitations are increasing at the One-Stop. The reorganization of customer flow will result in the Learning Link impacting more SNAP/TANF/GA clients.
- Incumbent Worker Training continues. A successful Goodwill cohort has concluded. ShopRite's third and fourth cohorts are in progress. Details are being worked out for Bancroft to begin a cohort.
- An RFP has been released for CWEP programs. Additional funds were provided by the DOL for Learning Link services.

### **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

STARR Proposal (Strategies Targeting Accelerated Reading Readiness)

- Michael Willman proposed a beta test of a project called "STARR" for Strategies Targeting Accelerated Reading Readiness which could be scaled if it is successful. The premise of STARR is to create a utility that is interracial, inter-generational and that capitalizes on bi-lingual skills, and to match high performing students with older, retired men from Haddonfield65 Club for mentorship and reading readiness. Two-person teams of a volunteer accelerated high school student and senior mentor would commit to a period of time to work with students. The STARR team will work with children from pre-school to school age at a library or other neutral, convenient location with few distractions. Michael has volunteers of accelerated high school students and retired businessmen to offer the tutoring services to children for a committed number of hours per week for a defined period. At the end of the tutoring term, the participating child would receive a personal collection of ten books. Michael said he would want a teacher's recommendation for pre-school or elementary school students in need of tutoring services. He suggested that the sessions would take place in a convenient location other than the student's home, such as a library or other setting with relatively few distractions. Each team would determine the most convenient site.

- Jeff commented that he would like to see the beta test of the program take place in Clementon, with possible use of the library, since this region has been the focal point of the committee's literacy efforts. Michael noted that his student volunteers are accelerated students in Camden and asked Larry if he had any suggestions.
- Larry suggested a successful program call BookMates, which is run by the JCC. He suggested addressing the needs of the English language learner (ELL) students and augmenting the proposed project by providing bi-lingual books.
- Heidi commented that given the lack of transportation options, the best location for the tutoring sessions would be in the school, and that there is a serious need for Spanish-speaking mentors to communicate with students who are incredibly intelligent and need Spanish-fluent people to assist them. She stated that BookMates has been successfully utilized but only at the elementary level and more assistance is needed at the high school level. Heidi added that Lindenwold has approximately 900 ELL students enrolled, while Pine Hill's ELL population continues to grow and their school system actively seeks bilingual educators and hires. Michael commented that his accelerated high school students are bilingual. He explored the provision of a stipend to youth who participated.
- Marlyn proposed creating a subcommittee to work through the details of the STARR proposal.
  - The subcommittee will be: Marlyn, Michael, Larry, and Jeff. Heidi offered to review findings and to share information about monetary incentives for students who serve as mentors.
- NJ DOL Business Services Rep, Jeanne Page-Soncrant, shared information about services that NJ has in place that may be useful to the committee.
- Dick Knopf suggested inviting Rhonda Shevrin, Director of BookMates Literacy Program to the next committee meeting. Dick and Larry mentioned that Rhonda is familiar with both of them. Marlyn and Jeff agreed to invite her to the next committee meeting.
- Heidi will share photos from the library event with the committee.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Jeff Swartz, Executive Director

- The WDB was notified that it was awarded a grant to run the summer youth employment program for 50 young people. Currently, 62 youth applications have been submitted as well as 16 to 17 worksite agreements. The program is open to Camden County residents ages 16 to 24 years old, with no income restrictions to apply. A stipend equivalent to \$15/per hour will be paid over the 8-week program, June 26<sup>th</sup> through August 19<sup>th</sup>, including one week of work-readiness training. Worksite agreements will be prepared and provided to employers. Promotional materials will be circulated as soon as they are finalized. Jeff invited committee members to participate in the work-readiness training, teaching the provided curriculum at Camden County College.
- Atlantic City Electric's first line school class has graduated.
- ACE is sponsoring a summer internship for students and a paid externship for teachers.
- GIE/WISE will resume at the end of the year to match the next hiring cycle more closely.
- The Abilities Committee will host a veteran hiring event on June 8<sup>th</sup> at Cooper University Hospital. Seating is limited to 75. Wawa is underwriting lunch for the event.
- The local and regional plans have been submitted to the State. Procurement for the One-Stop Operator, One-Stop and WDB certifications are the next priorities over the coming months.
- Jeff thanked everyone for the Clementon Library literacy event and suggested hosting the event on a weekend and in partnership with another local event.
- The next quarterly board meeting will be on June 21, 2023 at 8:30 am, via Zoom

**ADJOURNMENT**

Marlyn asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Heidi Daunoras and seconded by Marlyn Kalitan. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion was carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:35 am.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Literacy Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, June 6, 2023, at 8:30 am via Zoom. Meeting materials and Zoom conferencing information will be distributed prior to the meeting.

Submitted by: Debra Vaughn

Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director