



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE  
 MEETING MINUTES  
 TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020  
 MEETING AT THE WDB OFFICE, 1111 MARLKRESS ROAD, CHERRY HILL, NJ

ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

| MEMBERS                           |   | 2-Jul-19 | 3-Sep-19 | 1-Oct-19 | 3-Dec-19 | 7-Jan-20 | 4-Feb-20 | 3-Mar-20 | 7-Apr-20 | 5-May-20 |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Brahl, Ken CHAIR</b>           | Ravitz Family Shoprites                             | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        |
| Patti Beach                       | Learning Link, Camden County One-Stop Career Center |          |          |          |          | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        |
| Ciri, Frank                       | Local Area Operations Director, Camden County       | X        |          | X        |          | X        | X        | X        | X        |          |
| Dann, Carol                       | Hopeworks Camden                                    | X        |          |          | X        | X        |          |          |          | X        |
| Daunoras, Heidi                   | Pine Hill School District                           |          |          |          | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        |
| De, Shyamoli                      | Director, Volunteers of America                     | X        |          | X        |          | X        | X        | X        |          | X        |
| Fugee, Antoinette                 |   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | X        |
| Hill, Lauren Dr.                  | Director, ABS, Camden County College                | X        |          | X        | X        |          | X        |          |          |          |
| <b>Kalitan, Marlyn Vice Chair</b> | Kalitan Consulting                                  | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        |
| Knopf, Dick                       | Marketing Professional Services                     |          | X        |          | X        |          | X        |          |          | X        |
| Lisa, David                       | Camden County Library System                        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Mitchell, Danielle                | RobinsNest Inc                                      |          |          | X        |          | X        |          |          |          | X        |
| Pettyford, Shawneeq               | Hopeworks   |          |          |          |          | X        |          |          |          |          |
| Sayles, Keith                     | Camden County College, Camden City Campus           |          | X        | X        | X        | X        |          | X        | x        | X        |
| Strobl, Holly                     | Council Women, Clementon Borough                    | X        |          | X        |          | X        |          |          | X        |          |
| Young, Jennifer                   | Verizon   |          |          |          |          | X        |          |          |          | 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 8:05am, and welcomed attendees to the conference call. He asked for a roll call for the minute’s attendance record. The Committee discussed personal thoughts and experiences with the COVID 19 response efforts. Ken asked Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, for an update on the One-Stop’s current status, needs and some of the things the committee can do to help at this point in time. Jeff reported that all of the schools are closed through the end of the academic year. The One-Stop is continuing to provide services to customers remotely. Tentative dates for re-opening the One-Stops are changing based on the Governor four phased approach which is heavily reliant on the data, testing and a positive decline of COVID cases. The One-Stop has begun the process of taking precautions to implement safety measures in terms of setting up the interior spacing in the public access area to comply with new social distancing and proper sanitizing protocol. He does not see a full re-opening happening for at least another 30-45 days, depending on how the data measures safety standards. He said actions of the committee to plan any outreach and events may not be possible this summer. He said it will be more prudent to air on the side of caution until the WDB receives good data in terms of re-opening the state and then we can make intelligent decisions. It is an unprecedented situation. He deferred to Heidi Daunras, Curriculum Coordinator, Pine Hill Schools, for updates about the local area in the southern part of the county. Heidi reported that virtually all events have been canceled through October. All summer school programs will be provided remotely. As of now,

the “National Night Out” has been assigned a tentative date of October 6, 2020. She said locally, there are concentrated pockets of positive COVID cases. Discussions are ongoing as to how and when to open as a school district and a Borough and plan for all the social distancing protocols. She also said the committee may want to discuss some new kinds of actions or resources that are supportive yet do not involve large gatherings. The Committee discussed safety measures. All agreed that the wearing of masks and social distancing protocols may remain in place for a long time but the key is to stay positive until the virus runs its course and a new way of safely interacting is implemented. Jeff said the committee has put a lot of effort into developing really great relationships in the southern part of the county and we will want to continue to maintain them. There may be some creative ways to offer supportive services in virtual or remote ways. Heidi said that aside from the distribution of food to the most vulnerable population in the area, there are some ways to support families with accessibility to online services and access to books. Reading materials, adult or child could be supplied by BookSmiles or other organizations the WDB is working with to families in the Pine Hill area.

Ken said that he would send an email to the committee with a link to a great speaker who noted that while the county has been quickly thrown into this crisis, there are other events in history such as 9/11 and the internet that have caused changes to the lives of the whole country. He said the committee can look at its goal to deliver literacy services to the community and ways to adapt that goal to the current situation. He said he loved Heidi’s idea about getting books out to families in the community especially at a time when they are stuck in the house. Giving books that parents can read to their children or offering them remote options they may not have been aware of. Those types of ideas can help the community and achieve the goals of the committee. The answers to our goals will change over time but it is something to think about and how we can change our delivery of services to meet the current need. New innovations are being developed as a result of this pandemic. Noticing them and bringing those resources to our Camden County residents is a goal this committee can actively pursue.

Carol Dann, Adult Basic Education, HopeWorks, Camden, reported that HopeWorks is delivering its student classes remotely. We are finding that our students who come to us are dealing with very challenging situations in their home life. Many of the students were coming to HopeWorks in order to get away from what was going on at home. Now that they are home seven days a week 24/7 there is no escaping some of the things that have created their challenges. Dan Rhoton, Director, HopeWorks, contacted the medical school at Rowan College of South Jersey. They gave the staff, and any student who wanted to participate, a presentation on mental health mainly dealing with depression and anxiety during this time. After the presentation there was a very good question and answer (Q&A) session. Carol said she picked up a lot of ideas from the Q&A session. One of the things that relates to this discussion today is that Carol started mailing out readings and worksheets to her students. That has made a difference in the way students are adapting to online communication and interaction with the learning. Having something tangible and real to hold on to has inspired a group reading project. The emails are backing up and supporting what they can show to their families that they are working on. She is personally seeing better results from this online and paper interaction.

Dick Knopf, Independent Business Consultant, said that he noticed in Philadelphia, that they were giving out chrome books around the city to kids that needed them for online study. He asked if the committee knew anything about this same type of initiative happening in Camden County. Jeff said that connectivity and WIFI

services were more of a concern in Camden County. Giving students a computer would not do much good if they cannot access the internet.

Ken asked for a report of library resources in Camden County. The Committee wanted to connect closely with library programs. Shyamoli De, Director Literacy Volunteers, Camden County, reported a date has not been set to re-open the libraries. There has been a lot of construction and upgrades to several libraries around the county. Linda Devlin, Director, Camden County Library System, has formed a committee to plan a phased re-opening schedule. Regarding Literacy Volunteers, one-on-one tutoring and classes are being conducted remotely via ZOOM and Facebook Messenger. There are several resources that have been provided and we are using them to connect with the students. The library will be giving out books to the tutors. The library is also offering free library cards. Access to online programs such as Hoopla and digital books has grown. Jeff asked if someone from the library could reach out to the Mayor of Pine Hill to get addresses of residents or families that might benefit from free access to the library's online services. Perhaps an email could be sent to residents offering this free access. Shyamoli said the Director would be happy to help. Jeff said the committee can be promoting access to the county library system online services. Heidi said the library in her local area has offered a free temporary library card and it is being promoted. All students in the high school have been sent communication about these resources. All residents in Camden County are being offered a free online library card. Kathleen said she will send this notice around to the committee. Jeff and Ken suggested that the committee promote this free access where ever possible. Kathleen said she will contact the State Library and see if there have been any online provisions made for free public access for New Jersey residents.

Danielle Mitchel, Program Director, Orchards Family Success Center, reported that the center is also offering online programming. She said the center has notified participants that they can pick up kits outside the center so they can follow along with some of the online activities. If we had the ability to offer additional books to residents, they could pick up outside the center, that would be great. Heidi said that she will be meeting with staff to plan a summer reading program. Some sort of book distribution program could be implemented as well. Ken said that he will contact BookSmiles to see what kind of inventory they have. Heidi suggested that a criterion be stated as to how the books are sanitized for public distribution.

### US CENSUS 2020 UPDATES

Dick Knopf asked about how the Census 2020 is progressing and have there been any updates about how the Census Takers are operating. He was concerned about underreporting in minority and low income neighborhoods of the county and also that the committee uses the census data to update the Literacy Needs Assessment (LNA). Kathleen reported the County Board of Freeholders is very focused on promoting the ease and access of filling out the Census. Jeff said they may extend the deadline for filling out the Census. Kathleen said it has been reported that 52% of residents in the state have filled out the online form. It was reported that 53.4% of Camden County residents have completed the Census. She said the date has been extended. Camden City, Lindenwold and Woodland Borough have been cited as under reported local areas. The Census Takers are on hold right now but the county is promoting it through all social media platforms and on TV. There is a bilingual children's book being offered online that clearly explains the meaning of the Census and its ease of access.

### LEARNING LINK PILOT PROGRAM

Patti Beach, Instructor, Learning Link, One-Stop, reported there are 3 counselors currently working with approximately 10 students each. Some of the students do not have computer access. Some students are zooming with LVA tutors as well. Each participant's hours and activity can be tracked online via the Aztec online learning platform. Counselors are staying in touch with students and even those who are unable to participate online. Kathleen asked for instructor names mentioned at the last meeting. Patti named Makaila Allen and Ken Rice.

### COMMITTEE UPDATES

There were no new updates reported the Camden County College Adult Basic Skills Consortium. The college is still closed to public access. Jennifer Young, Verizon, said there were no new updates but wished everyone safety and success during this state of emergency. Marlyn Kalitan, Vice Chair Literacy Committee, Career Coach, reported that some schools in Philadelphia are making the education policy of counting student grades up through the third marking period as completion to the end of the school term. She commended Ravitz Family Markets-Shoprite for all they are doing as an essential service in the local area. Kathleen said she sent out an email to the committee after the last meeting with several online resources and she included a Families First guide book with today's meeting invite. She asked the committee to forward any additional resources or links that might be publically shared. Ken offered a training room in a Shoprite location for the June meeting where the committee could meet in-person with social distancing standards. More information to follow as the State announces re-opening phases. He thanked committee members for participating on the conference call.

**NEXT MEETING:** The Literacy Committee will meet on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 8:30am. Ken reminded the committee the meeting will probably be conducted via conference call. The WDB will send out meeting materials and dial-in information prior to the meeting.

Submitted by

*Kathleen Varallo,*

Administrative Assistant