



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE  
 MEETING MINUTES  
 TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020  
 ZOOM MEETING AT THE WDB OFFICE, 1111 MARKKRESS ROAD, CHERRY HILL, NJ

ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		3-Mar-20	7-Apr-20	5-May-20	2-Jun-20	7-Jul-20	1-Sep-20
<b>Brahl, Ken CHAIR</b>	Ravitz Family Shoprites	X	X	X	X	X	X
Patti Beach	Learning Link, Camden County One-Stop Career Center	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cirii, Frank	Local Area Operations Director, Camden County	X	X				
Dann, Carol	Hopeworks Camden			X			X
Daunoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District	X	X	X	X		
De, Shyamoli	Director, Volunteers of America	X		X			
Fugee, Antoinette				X			
Hill, Lauren Dr.	Director, ABS, Camden County College						
<b>Kalitan, Marlyn Vice Chair</b>	Kalitan Consulting	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			
Petteyford, Shawnee	Hopeworks						
Sayles, Keith	Camden County College, Camden City Campus	X	X	X			
Strobl, Holly	Council Women, Clementon Borough		X		X	X	
Young, Jennifer	Verizon			X	X	X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB, Executive Director	X	X	X	X		X
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB, Administrative Assistant	X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Literacy Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:36am. The Committee discussed personal stories and challenges of adjusting to remote meetings. Carol Dann, HopeWorks Camden, spoke about challenges to remote learning and how much more time it takes to prepare for instruction. Planning and preparation is now much more detailed. Carol said Adult Basic Skills, Students at HopeWorks have resumed learning, since June, partially on a remote basis, and have now returned to in-person learning. Internship Students are still out participating on a remote basis. Marlyn Kalitan, Vice Chair, Literacy, said she was happy to conduct a virtual career readiness workshop for the Summer Youth Employment Program cohort. Jeff Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, thanked Marlyn and Ken for their contributions to the program.

ONE-STOP & LEARNING LINK UPDATES

Patti Beach, Instructor, Learning Link, One-Stop, reported the One-Stop is currently closed to public access. Customers are being served by appointment and virtually. The County updated the One-Stop page on the website to include a list of virtual services. Patty said the Learning Link is able to serve customers virtually and

by appointment. She scheduled three customers to come in on September 11, for CASAS testing. She is in touch with customers who have been active on the AZTEC software all during the pandemic. They are progressing toward a re-test so they can achieve a HiSet - High School Equivalency Test, or to see if they are ready for training. Jeff said its important to get the message out to the public that the One-Stop is open and able to serve customers. The distinction is they are not able to simply walk-in, they have to schedule an appointment. He wanted to make it clear to the committee so they can begin promoting the Learning Link, training grants, career counselor engagement and employment services. Patty said that counselors have received over 60 career packets to review for referral, so the One-Stop is starting to move in the right direction. She is receiving referrals for learning link services. Jeff reminded the committee that the only service not open or engaging with customers is Unemployment Insurance (UI). All UI customers are being referred to the state's website and call centers. Carol asked if customers are still able to access "Career Scope" She thought it was the best program available for career assessment and planning. Patty said she attended a counselor meeting last week and was told it can be accessed online, however, she will confirm it and report back to the committee. Patty said she would forward the information to Carol. Follow this link for a list of One-Stop Virtual Services:

<https://www.camdencounty.com/service/employment/job-training-placement/>

#### LITERACY SHARING UPDATES

Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB, reported the WDB continues to share online Adult and Literacy services such a Kuhn Academy, Camden County Library and the State Library. The State's former website Career Connections is still operating for some types of information such as career exploration and links to skills remediation. The WDB also shared some financial literacy links as well. The WDB posts links to public health resources and real jobs on its social media platforms. Kathleen also reported the committee received a nice email update from Heidi Daunoras, Curriculum Coordinator, Pine Hill Schools. The Booksmiles, Book Drive successfully distributed over 6000 books to local area families. The WDB also sent her the virtual services directory and she promised to share that information with families at the food distribution locations in Pine Hill. The One-Stop has had requests to produce a Spanish translation of the directory as well.

Ken reported that Ravitz's Family Markets, Shoprites will be hosting another Booksmiles, book collection on Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at the Mt. Laurel location. The book drive will be hosted in conjunction with Shoprite's hunger fighting charity, called "Partners in Caring" The drive will be titled, "Feed Your Body, Feed Your Mind." Customers dropping off books are given a General Mills, gift bag as a thank you. Ken met with Larry Abrams, Founder, Booksmiles, to ask if there were any other events to partner with. Booksmiles is a great program, they are collecting and distributing thousands of books in the local area. Ken said he is glad to have the partnership and will continue to work with the Booksmiles Organization. Follow this link for more information: <https://www.booksmiles.org/>

Carol Dann asked if the committee was aware of Tom Martin, Camden County Pop-Up Library. She said this organization sets up a book borrow and return type of lending library at different locations around the county. Some local neighborhoods have adopted the program and she even saw one at the local Pizza shop. The books are primarily adult books so it might be an avenue to distribute the adult books. Follow this link for more information: <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/camden/sections/giving-back/articles/pop-up-library-founder-wants-to-help-camden-escape-into-a-book>

Jeff said the WDB may be able to incorporate some book distribution at the food distribution sites happening around the county. The Committee discussed current resident needs around the county and some of the efforts that are happening to provide food and other household items such as face masks, fire detection devices and faucet lead filters.

#### US CENSUS 2020 UPDATES

Kathleen reported that Census takers are now on the job and the Census is being promoted at all county food distribution sites. The deadline for filling out the Census is September 30, 2020. She was happy to say she filled out her census form guided by a Census Taker at her home in Maple Shade. It was a very pleasant experience. Jeff said the WDB, Summer Youth Employment Program, employed 13 youth to work on county census initiatives under the direction of Freeholder Carmen Rodriguez. He reminded the committee how important the census information is to future funding. Dick Knopf, Independent Business Consultant, asked if presidential mandates have interfered with the Census. Kathleen said the census deadline was requested to be extended through October but no extension was given.

Follow this link for more information: <https://2020census.gov/en.html>

#### FINANCIAL LITERACY UPDATES

Ken asked the Committee for any updates to keeping Financial Literacy on the front burner of committee efforts. Kathleen reported that Nidia Sinclair, Director, Resource Center contacted a woman that used to conduct financial literacy workshops at the One-Stop. Evidently they were well received. Once the One-Stop opening to public access, these workshops may resume. In the meantime, Youth One-Stop Counselors were instructed to attend a financial literacy program offered in the City of Camden by TD Bank to assess the value of referring customers to that program for now. Kathleen also mentioned she sent a workbook to the committee offered by Truist Bank during one of the weekly work readiness workshops hosted for the Summer Youth Employment Program participants. The workbook is entitled "Budgeting During a Crisis." She sent the workbook along with committee meeting materials. Kathleen said she also came across a site containing specific curriculum for youth work readiness skills. There are lesson plans and nice power point presentations contained to share with youth on a host of subjects including financial literacy. She will share the link with the committee. Follow this link for more information <https://www.vaprojectlife.org/for-professionals/youth-skills-for-life-curriculum-3/>

Carol Dann said she will contact one of her associates at Camden County College to see if about sending the scope and sequence that program on financial literacy. Carol will see about sharing it with the committee. Carol commented that many of the financial literacy programs are very general and do not meet the needs of youth in Camden City and that is why HopeWorks developed their own specialized curriculum that realistically address a youth's day to day challenges. She gave one example of a simple scenario. A youth borrows \$25.00 from a friend, how will he/she pay it back. The HopeWorks program does touch on budgeting but in a way that can be realistically applied to their participants. Dick asked if financial literacy was being taught in regular schools. Kathleen said the State mandated that it be taught in junior and high schools starting in 2019. The WDB has been working with some schools when we visit for career days, to incorporate career readiness into that learning module. We'd like to see resume writing and contract understanding be

incorporated as well. As employers move more toward the “gig” economy, it will be important for youth to learn how to understand and interpret a contract.

Ken asked if there were any other updates or items the committee wanted to share. Carol shared that she has served the Interfaith Homeless Outreach Council (IHOC) for 30 years. She went on the say on her morning walk she took a different route and ran into a young man, probably in his thirties, was lying on the sidewalk with his belongings in a bag. Carol asked the man if he needed anything and if he was ok. The man waved her on. She said members of IHOC have been talking about how much more of an increase in homelessness will be seen going into the fall and winter months of 2020. The reason she brought it up was because she wanted to let the WDB and committees know how vital employment and aid services are to the community during and going forward in uncertain times. The Committee discussed concerns about how to help to individuals with severe barriers to employment. Follow this link for more information about IHOC:

<http://www.interfaithhomelessoutreachcouncilsj.org/>

Carol also reminded the committee to get online and register to vote as a resident of New Jersey in the upcoming presidential election. All agreed how important it is to vote on November 3, 2020.

#### Registration deadlines

Online: Oct. 13

By mail: Postmarked by Oct. 13

In person: Oct. 13

#### Absentee ballot deadlines

Request: Oct. 23

Return by mail: Postmarked by Nov. 3

Return in person: Nov. 3 by close of polls

#### Early voting

Sep. 19 - Nov. 2, but dates and hours may vary based on where you live

Follow this link for more information: <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/register>

Ken thanked the committee for attending and expressed this hope that everyone could meeting in person as soon as it is safe to do so.

NEXT MEETING: The next Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 8:30am. The Literacy Committee will meet on Tuesday, August 4, 2020 at 8:30am. The WDB will send out meeting materials and Zoom conferencing information prior to the meeting.

Submitted by

*Kathleen Varallo,*

Administrative Assistant