



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Matthew Verney, Board Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022
ZOOM MEETING

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE									
NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE MEMBER							
			1-Mar-22	5-Apr-22	73-May-22	14-Jun-22	5-Jul-22	6-Sep-22	
Brahl, Ken CHAIR	Ravitz Family ShopRites	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Beach, Patti	Goodwill		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chisolm, Victoria	Literacy Volunteers of America					X			
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X		X	X	X			
Dann, Carol	HopeWorks Camden			X		X			
Daunoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District		X	X	X	X	X		
Druce, Jennifer	Camden County Library					X			
Egrie, Gabrielle	Watermark Communities				X	X			
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill								
Fugee, Antoinette	Center for Family Services, Inc.								
Hill, Lauren Dr.	Camden County College		X	X	X	X			
Kalitan, Marlyn Vice Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services			X	X	X	X	X	X
Mauro, Jennifer	Goodwill				X		X	X	
McKelvey, Christopher	Councilman, Clementon Borough		X	X	X	X			
Mitchell, Danielle	RobinsNest Inc								
Norman, Tahja	Orchards Family Success Center				X				
Rutzler, Eugene	Literacy Needs Assessment Intern			X	X	X	X	X	X
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County One-Stop				X				
Soira, Lizette	Orchards Family Success Center		X						
Strobl, Holly	Councilwoman, Clementon Borough								
Young, Jennifer	Verizon		X	X	X	X			
Levitt, Alex	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vaughn, Debra	WDB		X		X				X

WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Chair, opened the meeting at 8:30am, greeting the attendees and asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the July 5, 2022. There was no committee meeting in August. Dick Knopf made the motion, seconded by Marlyn Kalitan. By unanimous vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the minutes for July 5, 2022 were approved.

ONE-STOP & LEARNING LINK UPDATES

- Frank Cirii was absent. No update was provided for the One-Stop.

LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Eugene Rutzler, Literacy Needs Assessment Intern, stated there is no new information to provide. The addition of the maps and review for edits by Carol Dann (HopeWorks) have not been done yet. Jeff Swartz suggested since the LNA will not be updated with the maps in time for the September board meeting, perhaps Ken and Eugene can make the presentation to the Board during the December quarterly meeting.

Ken commented that some of the things that the committee discussed was rolling the Literacy Needs Assessment out to the various towns, meeting with the mayor's association. By presenting the information to the towns, and highlighting some of the areas that saw improvements, focus can be placed on the areas that improved and the methodology for making their improvements can be shared.

COMMITTEE UPDATES/COMMENTS

Ken Brahl, Committee Chair

Ken commented that whereas the priority during and post-pandemic was to fill enough open positions to meet staffing needs, ShopRite is now putting a higher priority on competencies and building skills, and skill-based training is being offered to employees. A cohort of ShopRite stores is participating in Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) through Camden County College. The IWT upskilling program will offer 5 classes to upskill current employees. A retail management program created by an organization on the west coast was adapted as a Supermarket Management Certificate program for ShopRite. The program is 10 courses through Camden County College that will culminate with a certificate. ShopRite applied for and received a grant through the One-Stop where classes are paid for, with employees paid go to class and also allotted paid time to complete homework and reading assignments. The employee's participation in the certification program is built into their paid work week.

Jennifer Mauro, Goodwill

Jennifer stated Goodwill is experiencing a higher turnover rate and concentrating on retention and on ways to upskill its employees. Employee engagement is part of their employee retention strategy but conversations are taking place with Camden County College about skills training and different succession plans on upskilling individuals into management roles. Goodwill is looking at the curriculum ShopRite is currently following for their IWT. She commented that Goodwill encourages its employees to enroll in Community colleges and will pay for employees and their immediate family to seek an associate degree.

Jeff Swartz, Workforce Development Board

Jeff commented that once the Literacy Needs Assessment is done, he would like to make a presentation before the Mayors Association with Ken to discuss the report and how the Literacy Committee can assist them. He agreed with Ken that the focus of the committee this year should be on the importance of retention. He stated that the Incumbent Worker Training program and the promotion of the upskilling services available through the One-Stop were invaluable because upskilling will improve retention for employers. Jeff commented that he would like the committee to continue to promote our services with the libraries and host an event later in the Fall in coordination with the Clementon Fire Hall's open house and the Clementon Library. He stated that literacy is the foundation for any kind of employment and that literacy and upskilling is the direction the committee should focus on.

Ken asked Alex to put upskilling and the Clementon Library on the committee agenda going forward, and to keep the conversation going on upskilling and retention. Jeff mentioned that retention is not only done in-house but it's also virtual, because there still are opportunities for many companies to provide workforce for their employees virtually.

Dick Knopf, Marketing Professional Services

Dick asked if the actual numbers in terms of an estimate of literacy within Camden County has actually declined and if there are now more people in need of English as a second language services, and if there could be a comparison made between the past two census results. Eugene responded that he did not have the report to provide a response, but he and Carol are working on how to tie everything together and what they can highlight in the conclusion.

Jennifer Mauro noted that as employers are becoming more fully staffed, a greater divide is being created between those that do not have English skills or literacy skills, their high school diploma and employment. She said if we don't continue to focus on these areas of lower literacy needs via ESL, high school diploma and digital skills, we have to be cautious of not creating a larger divide. Ken commented that the older generation is starting to get left behind because they lack digital skills, to which Jennifer responded that while more access to access to digital skills training is available, but not everyone has the basic knowledge to utilize it.

Marlyn Kalitan, Kalitan Consulting Services

- Marlyn commented that she liked the idea of us starting to think about what kind of events to host and that an event at the library was a great idea.

FINAL COMMENTS:**Jeff Swartz, Workforce Development Board**

The quarterly meeting is September 21, 2022 and board members need to confirm their attendance with Alex as there will be a vote to approve the budget and a quorum is required. Kevin Kurdziel, Director of Middlesex County WDB and President of GSETA, will be the featured speaker. Kevin will speak about the GSETA Conference coming up in October, as well as some of the things GSETA is looking at regionally in NJ and nationally. It is important to confirm attendance with Alex, to ensure there is a quorum.

ADJOURNMENT

Ken asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dick Knopf made the motion, seconded by Patti Beach. By unanimous vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:47am.

NEXT MEETING

The next Literacy Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at 8:45am. Meeting materials and Zoom conferencing information will be distributed prior to the meeting.

Submitted by:
Debra Vaughn
Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director