



Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Robert Weil, Chair

LITERACY COMMITTEE  
 MEETING MINUTES  
 TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2020  
 CONFERENCE CALL MEETING AT THE WDB OFFICE, 1111 MARLKRESS ROAD, CHERRY HILL, NJ

ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		3-Sep-19	1-Oct-19	3-Dec-19	7-Jan-20	4-Feb-20	3-Mar-20	7-Apr-20	5-May-20	2-Jun-20
Brahl, Ken CHAIR	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	X
Cirii, Frank	Local Area Operations Director, Camden County		X		X	X	X	X		
Dann, Carol	Hopeworks Camden			X	X				X	
Daunoras, Heidi	Pine Hill School District			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
De, Shyamoli	Director, Volunteers of America		X		X	X	X		X	
Fugee, Antoinette									X	
Hill, Lauren Dr.	Director, ABS, Camden County College		X	X		X				
Kalitan, Marlyn Vice Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services	X		X		X			X	X
Lisa, David	Camden County Library System									
Mitchell, Danielle	RobinsNest Inc		X		X				X	
Petteyford, Shawnee	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	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 8:35am. He asked for a roll call for the minute’s attendance record. He thanked the committee for attending the call. The Committee discussed personal thoughts and experiences during the NJ State of Emergency.

Ken reviewed items on the agenda, such as outreach. He said that not much has changed about dates for re-opening the state. Regular retail and other businesses have not yet opened. It is still hard to predict whether local communities will be hosting large gatherings like National Night Out. Ken asked Heidi Daunoras, Curriculum Coordinator, Pine Hill Schools, to report on any updates about Pine Hill setting a new date for their National Night Out. Heidi said the event has been cancelled and may be re-scheduled but no official dates have been set.

LEARNING LINK PILOT PROGRAM

Patti Beach, Instructor, Learning Link, One-Stop, reported there is not much to update. Counselors are still working with current customers that have online access to the program. They are staying in contact with other customers by making well check calls. She is working with one customer and she is not sure about the case load of the other counselors. Otherwise there are no new updates.

Ken asked Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, for an update about the One-Stop's current status and re-opening plan. Jeff reported a tentative date has been set for re-opening. He said each of the local areas was asked by the State to write a re-opening plan. He has met with One-Stop upper management to facilitate a safety plan and protocols for re-opening. There is a conference call scheduled for tomorrow, June 3<sup>rd</sup> to finalize a draft and review it for sending it to the state. The plan will address re-opening safety measures and protocols that will be put into place to protect not only the staff but customers as well. Jeff said the bigger concern will be the lack of presence and engagement by Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff upon re-opening especially since many customers will be visiting the One-Stop for assistance with UI claims and concerns. This is a statewide concern. Employment Services and Resource Center staff are not in a position to access the UI system and answer these concerns. Local management is concerned about sending customers away angry. Hopefully, there will be a peaceful opening. The One-Stop will have a plan in place to ensure that social distancing and safety protocols are established and followed. Jeff also said he is attending daily calls with other WDB Directors from across the state and the Department of Labor. The group is discussing the current systems and looking for ways to improve service and create a new model for what the One-Stops are going to look like going forward. The way business is conducted now will be very different from the way it was done in the past. Many virtual or digital activities are being considered that can not only certify customer s but instruct customers as well. Some staff will continue to work at home or remotely on an alternating schedule. The One-Stop management will bring staff back in, for the first week, to train and make sure all workspaces are set up in compliance with CDC protocols before opening to public access. Jeff said the WDB has been fielding calls from some customers who have been waiting weeks and months for assistance. These individuals need someone to speak with. The call centers are overburdened with the backlog of claims making it almost impossible for customers to get through to a live person.

#### US CENSUS 2020 UPDATES

Kathleen Varallo, Administrative Assistant, WDB, reported that the Camden County website has a whole list of resources for promoting the Census 2020. She noted that she sent out a couple of sample flyers along with committee meeting materials. The County is putting a great focus into making the census as user friendly as possible. The promotional materials are great and there are other resources as well. The County is also theming the weeks to bring attention to all of the public and social services who's funding is dependent on every resident being counted in the census. The WDB is using these promotional materials to promote the census on their social media platforms. The Census also created a Facebook page as well. The Census takers are not out on the street yet but they did extend the deadline for filling out forms through October.

Kathleen also reported that she and Jeff attended a conference call with Truist Bank, formally BB&T. Matt Verney, Vice President, WDB, organized the call with their Chief of Community Giving (CCG). The WDB may have an opportunity to apply for a grant through their foundation. The grant may be able to sponsor some of the WDB committees outreach efforts. Jeff and Kathleen also brought up the need for a financial literacy program that is tailored to the diversity in the customer base of the One-Stop. The One-Stop has hosted financial literacy programs in the past but some failed to keep the interest of our customer base because they were too generic. The Truist CCG seemed to really like that idea. The deadline for applications is July 31<sup>st</sup>. Dick Knopf, emphasized how important this type of tailored program could be for the community by helping customers to climb the economic ladder as we help with them with their career path. He offered the suggestion

of Literacy Committee efforts to achieve this goal. The Committee discussed this effort and agreed it was an important goal to keep at the forefront of meeting discussions.

Kathleen reported Camden County College offers a grant funded workforce training program that is free to private sector employers. An employer can sign up to offer various training programs to up skill their workforce. More information can be found at the college website <https://www.camdencc.edu/about-1/for-your-business/workforce-training/> Programs include online offerings such as leadership development, time management, Microsoft office and others. The Workforce Development Board did establish a policy for incumbent worker training that was approved to help businesses develop more tailored training programs for their workforce. Ken said he was using this service as provided by Camden County College for his employees at Shoprite. He said the one requirement of the program is that the training must take place during the employee work schedule so the business is paying for the time employees are using to attend the training.

#### BOOKS TO FAMILY DISTRIBUTION

Ken reported the committee discussed the distribution of books to area families at the last meeting. He asked the committee to discuss more ideas on the subject. Marlyn Kalitan, Vice Chair, said lots of homes are holding books they cannot donate to the library anymore so there are plenty of books around. Heidi reported she is scheduled to do a pick-up of books from the Booksmiles organization on Friday afternoon and Pine Hill is going to include the books with their food distribution on Mondays during the month of June. Booksmiles also initiated a program where students could volunteer to be “Literacy Worriers” in their hometown. Her son signed up to host one of the collection bins. It will be placed outside their home so that friends and neighbors could donate any extra books they have. She said Pine Hill will include the books with food distribution so that it is a safe distribution gathered within our own hometown. The committee asked Heidi to send locations of drop off locations. Heidi told members to contact Booksmiles to get a list of drop off points from June 15-28<sup>th</sup>. Marlyn asked if books are sanitized. Heidi said once the books are collected. Booksmiles picks up the collection bins and takes them back to the warehouse where they are sanitized before re-distribution. Dick asked if they are accepting all age books. Heidi said they are accepting all books but there is a focus on collection of early age chapter books. Elementary age chapter books are in high demand.

Ken asked for any other updates. Marlyn wished everyone a good month and to be safe and cautious when entering the re-opening phase. Jeff announced the WDB Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting will take place via Zoom conferencing on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>@8:30am. He said there are several motions that will require a quorum for voting. Ken thanked the committee again for attending the call. He said the July meeting will likely be held via conference call as well.

NEXT MEETING: The Literacy Committee will meet on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 8:30am. The WDB will send out meeting materials and dial-in information prior to the meeting.

Submitted by

*Kathleen Varallo,*

Administrative Assistant