



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Carl A. Donato Jr., Chair

Pathways to Literacy Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2026
Zoom Meeting at 9:00AM

ATTENDANCE

NAME		ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE	11/6/2025	12/2/2025	1/6/2026	2/3/2026	3/3/2026	4/7/2026
Kalitan, Marilyn Chair	Consultant	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X			
Abrams, Larry		BookSmiles			X	X	X	X	
Willmann, Michael, Vice Chair		WMSH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Arreola, Enrique		Center for Family Services		X	X	X	X	X	
Beach, Patti		Goodwill							
Boaten, Roberta	Specific Pop. Program Ambassador	NJ Dept of Health				X	X	X	X
Chisolm, Victoria		Literacy Volunteers of America					X	X	X
Ciri, Frank	Local Area Operations Director	Camden County One Stop	X			X	X	X	X
Clark, Justin		Office of Adult Literacy (MJDDL)		X		X	X	X	X
Daunoras, Heidi	Community Education Consultant	Multiplicity Consulting LLC		X		X	X	X	
Donato, Carl		WDB Board Chair							
Rashawn Davis		Book Smiles							
Fithian, Danielle		Goodwill							
Floyd, Kwame		Teacher Apprenticeship Network							
Godorov, Lori		The Work Group							X
Green, Aurella		Camden County College				X	X	X	
Gutierrez, Innocencia		The One Stop							X
Knopf, Dick	Sales and Marketing Consultant	Marketing Professional Services		X	X	X	X	X	X
Mauro, Jennifer		Goodwill	X						
McKelvey, Christopher		Borough of Clementon						X	
Peterson, Uji		Youth One Stop							X
Tiffany Probasco-Francis		Rowan University			X	X	X	X	
Handall, Angela		Surviving in Strength		X			X	X	X
Hafferty, Joanne		Volunteer Literacy Advisor				X			
Sinclair, Nidia		The One Stop							X
Thompson, Ryan		MidPenn Bank	X						
Hamilton, Karen		BookSmiles							
Emily Loughlin		BookSmiles			X				
Michelle Hardison		WDB							
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	Executive Director	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie		WDB							
Vaughn, Debra		WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X

WELCOME

Michael Willmann, Vice Chair, opened the meeting at 9:05 AM, and asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the March 3, 2026 meeting. Motion was made by Dick Knopf, seconded by Jeffrey Swartz. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the minutes were approved.

ONE STOP CAREER CENTER UPDATE

Frank provided an update on activities at the One Stop Career Center.

March 2026 Monthly Statistics

Service Type	Numbers
GED Tests Scheduled	94 tests
GED Tests Delivered	69 tests
CASAS Assessments	124 assessments
CareerScope Tests	46 tests
Walk-in Career Services	139 individuals



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Year-to-Date Statistics

Table with 2 columns: Service Category, Total. Rows include GED Tests Completed (671 tests), CASAS Assessments (1,415 assessments), and Career Services Recipients (7 months) (1,120 individuals).

Many individuals seeking educational services are being placed on waiting lists due to budget constraints, though alternative support options are being provided.

Self-Certification Process Challenges

- Frank explained the complexities introduced by a new bill affecting the self-certification process:
• Referrals between agencies have become more complex and labor-intensive
• Clients face a 3-month rule, but an appeal process exists
• Appeal process allows additional time before benefits are cut off
• Referrals are made back to the Board of Social Services during the appeal period
• GED Testing Schedule Expansion

Current Situation:

- GED testing is going well with Lori's organization
• Current schedule has capacity
• Adding evening or weekend hours is challenging due to staffing constraints and limited funding

Proposed Solutions:

- Explore potential collaboration with the college to reallocate staff
• Create more flexible programming options
Angela agreed to gather feedback from youth and young adults about barriers to weekend and evening testing
• Frank and team will discuss the possibility of expanding hours at their staff meeting

STRATEGIC PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Michael Willmann presented the report from the Strategic Planning Subcommittee. He outlined six key components of the strategic plan:

Strategic Planning Committee

- Michael (Lead)
• Heidi Daunoras
• Larry Abrams
• Aurelia Green

Strategic Planning Questionnaire

- Sent to 32 committee members and stakeholders
• Follows typical SWAT format
• Invited Eric Naroden (original author of literacy assessment) but he was not present



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Key Questions Being Explored:

- Should the focus be on remediating adult literacy or supporting children's literacy development?
- How to address different populations with varying literacy needs?
- What is the hierarchy of values within state government regarding literacy initiatives?
- How to distinguish between literacy issues and bilingual/ESL issues?

Feedback Received:

- Dick expressed concerns about clarity of certain questions, particularly regarding committee vision and mission
- Michael encouraged participants to respond even if some questions are unclear
- Justin shared detailed responses including research on outside resources for the county

Literacy Landscape Analysis

Population Demographics (from Frank's report):

- Among 1,120 people who visited the office in 7 months, non-English speaking individuals represented only a small portion
- Most non-English speakers were referred for additional assistance
- Diverse Populations Requiring Tailored Strategies:
 - Individuals with language barriers
 - Young adults testing below 4th grade level
 - Young adults with learning disabilities (emphasized by Lori)
 - Adults needing literacy remediation
 - Children requiring literacy development support

Literacy and Employment Correlation

Angela planned to conduct a deeper analysis of correlations between literacy and employment issues, including examining connections to homelessness.

Current Funding Situation

- Limited funding forcing staff to turn away clients
- Camden County was not funded this year despite submitting a strong proposal
- State budget cuts have reduced funding from previous levels

Funding Strategy Recommendations

- Continue lobbying the state for direct literacy funding rather than competitive grants
- Pursue regional approach involving multiple stakeholders
- Pool resources across organizations
- Regional Collaboration Approach

Frank emphasized the importance of involving traditionally non-involved parties:

- School systems
- Department of Education
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)
- Other community organizations



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- Youth Programs and Initiatives

Youth Advisory Board

First meeting of the year scheduled for the 22nd at FSO office in Cherry Hill

- 5 youth and young adults already RSVP'd
- Angela Randall serving as co-chair

Policy and Literacy Initiatives

New South Jersey Policy

Michael presented information about a new policy to provide books to:

- First graders
- New parents in South Jersey

WDB Updates

Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

Summer Youth Work Experience Program Grant Award

Students Applied for - 50	Students Awarded - 23	Total Program Capacity - 73
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Information about the program will be posted on the website with QR code for applications. All committee members encouraged to spread the word.

- Local Plan - Approved
- Regional Plan - Completed, out for public comment.
 - Expected approval, June 17th
- WDB Certification - Due: May 15th, in progress

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Next Literacy Committee Meeting: May 3rd at 9:00 AM on Zoom
- Quarterly Board Meeting: June 17th in-person at Camden County College

ACTION ITEMS SUMMARY

Debra

- Send strategic planning questionnaire again with meeting minutes to all committee members and stakeholders
- Add appropriate DVR contacts to committee distribution list and invite them to participate
- Review and locate Justin's questionnaire response in email and share with Michael

Committee Member Actions

- All members: Complete and return strategic planning questionnaire to Michael
- All members: Send "did you know" factoids or relevant studies/resources to subcommittee for strategic plan
- All members: Spread the word about Summer Youth Work Experience program

Justin

- Forward completed strategic planning questionnaire response to Michael
- Program Development Actions



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Frank and team:

- Discuss at staff meeting the possibility of flexing staff to offer GED testing on weeknight or weekend

Michael and subcommittee

- Consider revising strategic planning questionnaire for clarity based on Dick's feedback

Jeffrey and Dick

- Follow up with Mayor of Gibbsboro regarding closed library, including a possible in-person visit at the end of April or early May

ADJOURNMENT

Michael encouraged participants to share information about available state resources that could benefit literacy programs, emphasizing the need for better awareness and utilization of existing support systems.

Motion to adjourn was made by Dick Knopf, seconded by Lori Godorov. With a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion was carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:05 AM.

The next Pathways to Literacy Committee meeting will be held on Zoom on May 5, 2026 at 9:00 AM.

The next quarterly Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 17th at 8:30 AM at Camden County College/Blackwood Campus, Roosevelt Hall/Room 102 at 8:30 AM. Breakfast will be served. Board members are asked to RSVP to ensure quorum.

Respectfully submitted by Debra Vaughn, Executive Assistant