



## 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 June 3, 2026 Zoom Meeting at 9:00AM

#### ATTENDANCE

| NAME                          | ORGANIZATION                      | TRUSTEE | 12/2/2025 | 1/6/2026 | 2/3/2026 | 3/3/2026 | 4/7/2026 | 5/5/2026 | 6/3/2026 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Kalitan, Marilyn Chair        | 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        | X        |
| Arreola, Enrique              | Center for Family Services        |         | X         | X        | X        | X        |          |          |          |
| Beach, Patti                  | Goodwill                          |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Boaten, Roberta               | NJ Dept of Health                 |         |           | X        | X        | X        | X        |          |          |
| Chisolm, Victoria             | Literacy Volunteers of America    |         |           |          | X        | X        | X        | X        |          |
| Cirii, Frank                  | Camden County One Stop            | X       |           | X        | X        | X        | X        |          | X        |
| Clark, Justin                 | Office of Adult Literacy (NJDOOL) |         |           | X        | X        | X        | X        |          | X        |
| Daunoras, Heidi               | Multiplicity Consulting LLC       |         |           | X        | X        | X        |          | X        | X        |
| Donato, Carl                  | WDB Board Chair                   |         |           |          |          |          |          |          | X        |
| Hashawn Davis                 | Book Smiles                       |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Fithian, Danielle             | Goodwill                          |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Floyd, Kwame                  | Teacher Apprenticeship Network    |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Garvin, Torrie                | Your Community Foundation         |         |           |          |          |          |          |          | X        |
| Godorov, Lori                 | The Work Group                    |         |           |          |          |          | X        |          |          |
| Green, Aurella                | Camden County College             |         |           | X        | X        | X        |          |          |          |
| Gutierrez, Innocencia         | The One Stop                      |         |           |          |          |          | X        |          |          |
| Hulnick, Jill                 | NJ Tutoring Corps                 |         |           |          |          |          |          |          | X        |
| Kidd, Kelly                   | New Jersey Department of Health   |         |           |          |          |          |          |          | X        |
| Knopf, Dick                   | Marketing Professional Services   |         | X         | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        |
| Martin, Tom                   | Free Books Project                |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Mauro, Jennifer               | Goodwill                          | X       |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| McKelvey, Christopher         | Borough of Clementon              |         |           |          |          | X        |          |          | X        |
| Naroden, Eric                 | American Water                    |         |           |          |          |          |          | X        | X        |
| Peterson, Jji                 | Youth One Stop                    |         |           |          |          |          | X        |          |          |
| Tiffany Probasco-Francis      | Rowan University                  |         | X         | X        | X        | X        |          |          | X        |
| Randall, Angela               | Surviving in Strength             |         |           |          | X        | X        | X        |          |          |
| Rafferty, Joanne              | Volunteer Literacy Advisor        |         |           | X        |          |          |          |          |          |
| Sinclair, Nidia               | The One Stop                      |         |           |          |          |          | X        |          |          |
| Thompson, Ryan                | MidPenn Bank                      | X       |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Hamilton, Karen               | BookSmiles                        |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Emily Loughlin                | BookSmiles                        |         | X         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Richelle Hardison             | WDB                               |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Swartz, Jeffrey S.            | WDB                               |         | X         | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        | X        |
| Williams, Leslie              | WDB                               |         |           |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Vaughn, Debra                 | WDB                               |         | X         | 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 May 5, 2026 meeting. Motion was made by Jeff Swartz, seconded by Heidi Daunoras. By majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the minutes were approved.

#### **CAMDEN COUNTY ONE STOP UPDATE**

Frank Ciri, Local Area Operations Director

##### Food Assistance Program Impact

Frank Ciri provided a detailed report on the significant changes affecting Camden County residents:

- Statewide Impact: Large-scale removal of individuals from food assistance programs across NJ
- Local Numbers: 1,500 able-bodied adults in Camden County specifically affected by the changes
- One Stop Response: Substantial increase in client referrals and inquiries at the Career Center



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- Service Demand: Staff experiencing heightened volume of questions and support requests related to program changes

### GED Testing Services

Frank reported on the ongoing educational testing services:

- Monthly Volume: Averaging 70-80 GED tests administered per month
- Consistent Demand: Steady flow of individuals seeking high school equivalency credentials

### Cooper Hospital Work Experience Program

A new initiative mentioned by Frank:

- Partnership with Cooper Hospital for work experience opportunities
- Designed to provide practical job training and experience

## WDB UPDATE

### Summer Youth Work Experience Program Expansion

Jeffrey Swartz announced a funding increase for the Summer Youth Work Experience Program:

- Additional Funding: \$92,000 secured from the state
- Participant Expansion: 22 additional youth slots created
- Total Participants: Program now serves 95 young people

### Workforce Development Administrative Updates

Jeffrey reported on completed administrative requirements:

- Local Plans: Successfully completed and approved
- Regional Plans: Finalized and approved
- WDB Certification: Process completed

## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Rowan University

Tiffany Probasco-Francis, Assistant Director, English Language Programs

Tiffany announced College Prep Boot Camp:

- Duration: 6-week program
- Location: Rowan's Camden campus
- Cost: Low-cost program designed for accessibility
- Focus: College preparation and readiness

### Free Books Project

Tom Martin, Founder/Executive Director

Tom provided comprehensive details about the Free Books Project's operations:

- **Book Arcs:** 85 permanent book distribution points throughout Camden
  - Small, accessible structures placed in high-traffic community locations
  - Self-service model allowing community members to take books freely

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- **Pop-Up Libraries:** Temporary distribution sites at strategic locations
  - Cathedral Kitchen - serving individuals experiencing food insecurity
  - Walter Rand Transportation Center - reaching commuters and transit users

### **Proposed Expansion Locations**

- Tom proposed placing a book arc at the One Stop
- Would serve job seekers and program participants
- Frank to connect Tom with Brian Ferguson (One Stop contact)

### **Homeless Services**

- New Camden County homeless resource center (in development)
- County shelter facilities
- Frank committed to keeping Tom informed about opportunities

## **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

### **Trade Programs Partnership**

Innovative idea proposed by committee member Torrie Garvin:

- Partner with trade/vocational programs
- Students build small libraries as training projects
- Provides practical construction experience while supporting literacy
- To be discussed further at August 4<sup>th</sup> strategic planning meeting

### **Language Diversity Initiative**

Committee discussed expanding Spanish-language offerings:

- Current Need: Better serve Camden County's Latino population
- Goal: Increase availability of Spanish-language books
- Target Communities: Areas with significant Spanish-speaking populations
- Action Item: Committee to develop comprehensive plan for Spanish book distribution

### **Workforce Development Integration**

Multiple opportunities identified for connecting Free Books Project with workforce programs:

- **CWEP Placements:**
  - Community Work Experience Program participants could support book arc maintenance
  - Frank to connect Tom with Jyi (CWEP/youth work experience contact)
- **Youth Work Experience:**
  - Summer youth program participants could assist with book distribution
  - Provides meaningful community service experience
- **Paid Position Goal:**
  - Tom seeking funding for Camden resident position



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- Role would focus on maintaining and restocking book arcs
- Would provide employment while supporting literacy mission

### STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION

Michael Willmann outlined the committee's strategic direction:

- **Primary Goal:** Provide books to every first grader in Camden County
  - Serves as rallying point for community engagement
  - Creates measurable, achievable target
  - Potential model for replication in other communities
- **Dual Focus:** Serving both children and adults
  - Early childhood literacy development
  - Adult literacy and lifelong learning

### Reaching Underserved Populations

The committee identified key populations outside traditional school systems:

- Early Childhood Settings
  - Daycare centers and childcare facilities
  - Pre-K programs
  - Home-based childcare providers
- Alternative Living Situations
  - Group homes for children and adults
  - Foster care placements
  - Transitional housing facilities
- Vulnerable Populations
  - Homeless individuals and families
  - Food assistance program recipients
  - Job seekers at One Stop Career Center

### STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

- **Questionnaire Distribution:**
  - Debra to resend strategic planning questionnaire with meeting minutes
  - All committee members requested to review and complete
- **August 4th Planning Session:**
  - Dedicated meeting for strategic planning discussion
  - Members to come prepared with potential action items
  - Focus on developing concrete, measurable initiatives
- **Funding Strategy:**
  - Committee members to identify and share relevant grant opportunities



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- Explore alignment with committee's mission and goals
- Consider PSEG grant and other funding sources

### **COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Multiple synergies identified between existing programs and literacy initiatives:

- **Workforce Development + Literacy:**
  - Book distribution at One Stop Career Center
  - Literacy support for job seekers
  - Integration with training programs
- **Youth Programs + Community Service:**
  - Summer youth participants supporting book distribution
  - CWEP placements maintaining book arcs
  - Meaningful work experience with community impact
- **Education + Workforce:**
  - GED testing services connecting to literacy resources
  - College prep programs linking to book access
  - Trade programs building literacy infrastructure
- **Community Partnerships**
  - Rowan University's English Language Program
  - New Jersey Tutoring Corps
  - Camden County College
  - Cooper Hospital
  - Cathedral Kitchen
  - Walter Rand Transportation Center

### **REGIONAL UPDATES**

#### **Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships**

Jeffrey discussed a major potential workforce development opportunity in collaboration with Hanwha Shipbuilding.

- Hanwha Shipbuilding planning significant workforce expansion
- A meeting with regional workforce board directors and a Hanwha representative
- Program goal is to create a registered apprenticeship program specifically for shipbuilding industry
- Collaboration would involve multiple workforce development boards across the region

#### **PSEG Grant Opportunity**

Jeffrey shared details about an upcoming funding opportunity:

- Focus Areas: Workforce readiness and literacy programs
- Application Timeline: Applications open June 1<sup>st</sup>



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- Funding Range: \$500 to \$15,000 available per grant
- Potential Application: Committee discussing using funds for book distribution program

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Abilities Committee Event “Successfully Employing Uniquely Abled Associates”**

- June 11<sup>th</sup> at Camden County College/Rohrer Center - Cherry Hill
- Collaboration with Arc of Camden County and DVRS

### FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

#### **Frank's Connections:**

- Connect Tom with Brian Ferguson (One Stop contact)
- Connect Tom with Jyi (CWEP/youth work experience contact)
- Keep Tom informed about homeless resource center and shelter opportunities

#### **Jeffrey's Coordination:**

- Set up meeting with regional workforce board directors for Hanwha Shipbuilding apprenticeship program
- Follow up with committee members regarding PSEG grant application for book distribution

#### **Tom's Development:**

- Explore CWEP/youth work experience placement opportunities
- Continue efforts to secure funding for Camden resident maintenance position

#### **Collective Committee Actions**

- Review strategic planning questionnaire before August 4th meeting
- Identify and share relevant grant/funding opportunities
- Identify potential book distribution locations (daycare centers, group homes, etc.)
- Consider trade program partnership for building small libraries
- Develop plan for increasing Spanish language book offerings in Latino communities

Motion to adjourn was made by Heidi Daunoras, seconded by Jeffrey Swartz. With a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:04 AM.

**The next Pathways to Literacy Committee meeting will be held on Zoom on July 7, 2026 at 9:00 AM. The Strategic Planning Subcommittee will meet on August 4, 2026.**

**The next quarterly Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> 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