



## 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

July 1, 2025 via Zoom

#### Attendance

COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND ATTENDANCE									
NAME	ORGANIZATION	TRUSTEE	1/7/25	2/4/2025	3/4/2025	4/1/2025	5/6/2025	6/3/2025	7/1/2025
Kalitan, Marlyn Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Larry	BookSmiles			X	X	X	X	X	
Willmann, Michael, Vice Chair	WMSH	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Allen, Mikala	One-Stop								
Beach, Patti	Goodwill			X	X	X		X	X
Chisolm, Victoria	Literacy Volunteers of America		X	X	X	X	X		
Cirii, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X		X	X	X		X	X
Clark, Justin	Office of Adult Literacy (NJLDO)		X	X	X	X		X	X
Daunoras, Heidi	Education Consultant		X	X	X		X	X	X
Donato, Carl	WDB Board Chair								X
Rashawn Davis	Book Smiles				X				
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill					X			
Floyd, Kwame	Teacher Apprenticeship Network		X	X					
Tiffany Probasco-Francis	Rowan University								X
Fugee, Antoinette	Cooper Healthcare			X					
Green, Aurella	Camden County College				X			X	
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services			X	X	X		X	X
Mauro, Jennifer	Goodwill	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
McKelvey, Christopher	Councilman, Clementon Borough		X	X	X		X	X	
Sinclair, Nidia	Camden County One-Stop								
Randall, Angela	Surviving in Strength		X	X				X	X
Thompson, Ryan	MidPenn Bank	X		X					
Michelle Rohan	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Richelle Harbinson	WDB				X				
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB								
Vaughn, Debra	WDB			X	X	X	X		X

#### Welcome & Approval of the Minutes

Marlyn Kalitan, Literacy Chair, opened the meeting at 8:33am. She asked for a motion to approve June 3, 2025 minutes. A motion was made by Michael Willmann and seconded by Heidi Daunoras. By a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

#### Committee Meeting: Literacy Rates Discussion

The committee meeting began with introductions, including a new member, Tiffany Probasco Francis, who was welcomed as the director of English language programs at Rowan University. The group discussed literacy rates, with Richard noting their low ranking, and Michael suggesting that the committee could influence change. The conversation ended with a brief mention of new agenda items for the day.

#### Community Events and Initiatives Planning

The meeting discussed upcoming events and initiatives. Jeffrey and Marlyn talked about a joint committee event in October in conjunction with National Disability Month, which will include services for youth and adults, potentially featuring activities like haircuts with proper insurance. They also discussed the National Night Out events on August 5th in Pine Hill and Cherry Hill, with Jeffrey inviting committee members to help by contacting Michelle or Deb. The group also briefly touched on the success of previous literacy events in the southern part of the county and their efforts to raise awareness of available services in less accessible areas.



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### **Digital Literacy and Staff Reorganization**

Frank discussed several updates, including outdoor building improvements and the unsuccessful application for a digital literacy grant. He mentioned that the agency received funding for WIOA and a three-month extension for WFNJ, which will be listed on the July Commissioner's agenda. Frank also announced a reorganization plan affecting 19 employees and new job titles, aimed at improving flexibility and cross-training. The next job fair is scheduled for September 12th at Cherry Hill Mall, and Frank emphasized the importance of digital literacy for clients, especially those over 55. Richard inquired about potential aspects of the digital literacy grant that could be implemented without funding, and Frank explained that some digital literacy instruction is already included in existing programs.

### **Digital Literacy Challenges and Solutions**

The group discussed the challenges of digital literacy, particularly for older adults and young people. Frank emphasized the importance of providing in-person customer service to help people navigate digital systems, noting that many programs offering Wi-Fi access are being cut post-COVID. Marlyn shared examples of clients who still prefer in-person applications despite security measures. Tiffany highlighted the need to support digital literacy across all age groups, including teaching computer skills and making online resources mobile-friendly. Richard expressed concerns about the impact of digital shortcuts on reading and writing skills among young people.

### **Community Health Awareness Event Planning**

The meeting focused on planning a community event scheduled for October, with Carl and Marlyn discussing the agenda and potential activities. Carl outlined ideas including music, snacks, books, and health services like blood pressure screenings, while Heidi suggested adding a mobile mammogram van to align with Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The group agreed to finalize details at a joint meeting on July 10th, where they will confirm the date, venue, and responsibilities for organizing the event.

### **Strategic Literacy and AI Planning**

Heidi and Michael presented a strategic planning document highlighting widening literacy gaps and the impact of AI on literacy, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach addressing both traditional and digital literacy. They proposed a phased strategic plan focusing on community engagement, digital literacy, and generational approaches, urging the committee to consider innovative ideas and initiatives. Michael suggested testing smaller-scale programs and targeting specific areas or demographics, while Heidi stressed the importance of maintaining tactile learning methods and ensuring access to books for children. The committee was asked to review the document before the next meeting in August to discuss potential strategies.

### **Board Updates and Program Success**

Jeffrey discussed recent activities and updates, including the election of Carl as Chairman of the WDB Board and budget delays for programs. He reported on the success of the Summer Youth Work Experience program, which is being conducted in two sessions due to its large size. The board received an allocation extension and continued to operate the One-Stop Center. Heidi



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offered to provide

guidance to those distributing books at a National Night Out event. The group also discussed an upcoming fireworks event in Cherry Hill on July 3rd.

**Next steps**

- All committee members: Review the strategic planning document prepared by Heidi and Michael before the August meeting
- All committee members: Email Michelle or Deb if interested in helping with National Night Out events
- Heidi: Meet with committee members at the book bank in Pennsauken to provide guidance on distributing books at National Night Out events
- All committee members: Consider ideas for strategic initiatives to address literacy needs in Camden County for discussion at the next meeting
- Carl and Jeff: Continue planning the joint committee event for October, including finalizing the date and venue
- Frank: Continue exploring ways to incorporate digital literacy training into existing programs at the One Stop
- Leslie and Richelle: Complete the second week of work readiness training for the summer youth work experience program

**Adjournment**

Marlyn asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Heidi Daunoras and seconded by Michael Willmann. By majority vote of the affirmative, the motion was carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:35am.

Respectfully submitted by: Michelle Rohan, Committee Coordinator