



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

August 5, 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	8/5/2025
Kalitan, Marilyn Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X	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	X
Beach, Patti	Goodwill			X	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	X
Clark, Justin	Office of Adult Literacy (NJCOL)		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Daunoras, Heidi	Education Consultant		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Donato, Carl	WDB Board Chair								X	X
Rashawn Davis	Book Smiles				X					
Fithian, Danielle	Goodwill					X				
Floyd, Kwame	Teacher Apprenticeship Network		X	X						
Tiffany Probasco-Francis	Rowan University								X	
Green, Aurella	Camden County College				X			X		
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services			X	X	X		X	X	X
Mauro, Jennifer	Goodwill	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
McKelvey, Christopher	Councilman, Clementon Borough		X	X	X		X	X		X
Randall, Angela	Surviving in Strength		X	X				X	X	X
Thompson, Ryan	MidPenn Bank	X		X						
Michelle Rohan	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Richelle Harbinson	WDB				X					
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB									
Vaughn, Debra	WDB			X	X	X	X		X	X

WELCOME & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Marlyn Kalitan, Pathways to Literacy Chair, opened the meeting at 8:35AM. She asked for a motion to approve July 1, 2025 minutes. The motion was made by Heidi Daunoras and seconded by Richard Knopf. By a majority vote to the affirmative, the motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

SUMMARY

Strategic Planning and Budget Updates

Frank provided an update on One Stop's activities, including a busy start to the month with clients and an upcoming job fair at Cherry Hill Mall on September 12th. He mentioned budget constraints and a 3-month extension on NJWF funding until October, with uncertainty about future funding.

Strategic Literacy Planning Discussion

Heidi led a strategic planning discussion for the Pathways to Literacy Committee, emphasizing the need to address both ends of the literacy spectrum while working within funding uncertainties. She encouraged committee members to share ideas, particularly those that don't require significant financial investment, and expressed concern about the impact of AI on digital literacy. Michael suggested that committee members research and report on successful literacy initiatives from other areas by September 2nd, while Michelle shared findings from her research into literacy programs in Camden County and mentioned USA Reads' pop-up libraries initiative.

Enhancing Literacy Through Community Access

Michelle discussed the correlation between the number of books in a home and literacy rates, emphasizing the need for book libraries in every child's home in Camden County to improve literacy. She proposed ideas such as providing books to schools, placing libraries in common areas of apartment complexes, and using laundromats as distribution points. Heidi highlighted the role of



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schools providing access to books and curriculum but stressed that the lack of support at home and in the community is a significant barrier to literacy. Both agreed on the importance of focusing on family and community support to enhance literacy levels.

Camden County Literacy Initiatives

The committee discussed initiatives to increase literacy among children and adults in Camden County. They explored ideas such as giving books at baby showers and birthday parties, incorporating play and social media into reading, and partnering with schools and community organizations. The committee agreed to research existing national programs like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and consider adapting them for local use. They emphasized the importance of engaging parents in reading with their children and developing strategies to encourage both children and adults to participate in literacy activities.

Community Literacy Program Pilot Initiative

The committee discussed strategies for promoting literacy and distributing books to children, focusing on the importance of adult involvement in reading initiatives. They agreed to pilot a program in a specific municipality, potentially Winslow, by providing magic seeds packages to newborns and books to preschoolers, while also supporting adults in the community. Angela and others volunteered to read books at pop-up events at grocery stores and laundromats, emphasizing the need for interactive reading experiences. The group planned to research successful literacy initiatives, reach out to organizations like the Girl Scouts and local businesses, and test their approach before expanding to other communities.

October Awareness Event Planning Meeting

The committee discussed plans for an October event; Empowerment Expo, in conjunction with disability and breast cancer awareness month. Debra confirmed several services including BP and glucose screening with Cooper, potential mobile market services, veteran services from Kristi Connor's office, and resume assistance from Monica McClintock. Jeffrey reported interest from several nonprofits and St. John of God in Westville, who offered to bring a food bus with fresh produce, though logistics need to be worked out. The event is scheduled for October 8th from 3-6 PM at the Clementon Fire Hall, with parking available at the fire hall and library lot, and Mayor Weaver has confirmed the hall's availability.

Youth Program Updates and Planning

The meeting covered updates on the Summer Youth Work Experience Program, which is progressing well with 100 youth across 36 worksites, and plans for the upcoming Quarterly Meeting in September, including a call for presenters. Jeffrey highlighted budget uncertainties, with 50% of the budget secured and the remainder pending, affecting program implementation. The committee discussed the upcoming GSETA Conference in October and Heidi suggested a presentation on AI skills in the workforce, which Jeffrey agreed to explore. The conversation ended with details about National Night Out events in Pine Hill and Cherry Hill, where committee members will be present.

NEXT STEPS

- Committee: Select one municipality to pilot the literacy initiative.
- All committee members: Research successful literacy initiatives for preschoolers before the September meeting.
- All committee members: Research and prepare a brief report on successful literacy initiatives or strategies from other areas to present at the September 2nd meeting.



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- Committee members: Explore potential partnerships with existing literacy programs like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Toys for Tots.
- Committee members: Volunteer for pop-up reading events at locations like grocery stores or laundromats.
- Committee members: Consider potential presenters on AI skills in the workforce for the September 17th Quarterly Meeting.
- Frank: Coordinate with Richard for restocking BookSmiles in about a month.
- Heidi: Bring research on the importance of play in developing literacy skills to the September meeting.
- Heidi: Check with Jacob about his availability to host a Book Smiles table at the October 8th event.
- Jeffrey: Follow up with nonprofit organizations interested in attending the October 8th event.
- Jeffrey: Confirm with St. John of God about bringing their food bus to the October event.

ADJOURNMENT

Marlyn asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Frank Cirii and seconded by Richard Knopf. By majority vote of the affirmative, the motion was carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:32AM.

Respectfully submitted by: Michelle Rohan, Committee Coordinator