



## 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 September 2, 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	9/2/2025
Kalitan, Marlyn Chair	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Larry	BookSmiles			X	X	X	X	X			
Willmann, Michael, Vice Chair	VMSH	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Arreola, Enrique	Center for Family Services										X
Beach, Patti	Goodwill			X	X	X			X	X	X
Chisolm, Victoria	Literacy Volunteers of America		X	X	X	X	X				
Ciri, Frank	Camden County One Stop	X		X	X	X			X	X	X
Clark, Justin	Office of Adult Literacy (NJDOL)		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		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	X
Williams, Leslie	WDB			X	X	X	X				
Vaughn, Debra	WDB								X	X	

#### WELCOME & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Marlyn Kalitan, Pathways to Literacy Chair, opened the meeting at 8:33AM. She asked for a motion to approve August 5, 2025 minutes. The 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.

#### SUMMARY

##### New Member Introduction

Christopher introduced Enrique, from the Center for Family Services. He will be at the upcoming Empowerment Expo in October.

##### Strategic Plan and Literacy Initiatives

The committee reviewed a strategic plan proposal developed by Heidi and Michael. Marlyn highlighted a concerning New York Times article about declining reading habits among Americans, particularly noting that only 2% of surveyed parents with children under 9 read with their child. The committee members were tasked with researching potential partnerships and pilot programs, with Jeffrey sharing information about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library as a potential partnership opportunity.

##### Book Programs Expansion Discussion

Jeffrey explained that Imagination Library sends free books to children's homes but there are no facilities in New Jersey, suggesting Camden County as a potential site. Michael shared that Magic Seeds, a program initiated by a woman from Lindenwold, provides new books to newborns leaving hospitals, and he is exploring funding opportunities with organizations like the Horizon Foundation to expand it beyond Virtua hospitals.



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### **Reading Program Kit Discussion**

Michael discussed a reading program kit that Heidi had shared, which includes books and materials about the importance of reading to children. He agreed to send the online version of the kit to Michelle for distribution. They also discussed the possibility of researching existing programs in other counties to avoid reinventing the wheel, with Michael suggesting they could learn from other municipalities' successful initiatives. Marlyn agreed to follow up on these ideas.

### **Early Literacy and Child Development**

Heidi shared resources about the importance of reading aloud to children for 15 minutes daily and discussed research on child development through play. She emphasized educating caregivers about the benefits of early reading and play, noting that many children enter school with developmental delays due to lack of these experiences. Michael suggested creating a shared Google Doc to compile resources and research for future reference by the literacy community.

### **Job Fair Planning and Updates**

The committee discussed the upcoming job fairs, with Frank confirming they will have 10 tables staffed by counselors and a veteran's representative, operating from 10am to 2pm in the atrium at Cherry Hill Mall on September 12. Frank reported positive budget developments due to Jeff's efforts, though they are still awaiting official documents. Frank also discussed recent audits by DOL and WDB and noted increased traffic due to the start of GED testing and new Board of Social Services requirements, with Frank mentioning they may need to order additional book boxes from Dick for their partnership program.

### **Reading Promotion Flyer Discussion**

The committee discussed creating a flyer to promote the value of reading books, which would be inserted into books distributed at events. Michael and Heidi agreed to provide a list of bullet points for the flyer, which would also include resources like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and [readalong.org](http://readalong.org). The group also touched on adult literacy efforts in Camden County, with Marlyn providing an update on their programs and achievements.

### **Job Fair Literacy Promotion Plan**

The committee discussed plans for distributing bookmarks or flyers at job fairs to promote literacy programs. Marlyn suggested having committee members attend job fairs, while the group explored options for printing materials, with Michelle offering to research costs for Canva printing. Enrique proposed using half-flyers as an alternative if bookmarks prove too expensive, and Michael suggested they could initially use printed inserts while working toward the perfect solution.

### **Clementon Resource Fair Planning Meeting**

The committee discussed plans for an upcoming Empowerment Expo in Clementon on October 8th, which will run from 3-6 PM and feature various county services. Jeffrey reported that flyers have been distributed, and refreshments have been arranged by Carl Donato, the board chair. The event is expected to attract around 1,000 people, like a previous successful youth job fair in the area.



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#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Jeffrey: Explore the possibility of establishing Dolly Parton's Imagination Library facility in Camden County
- Michael: Follow up with Jennifer Gowdy at the Horizon Foundation regarding funding for the Magic Seeds program
- Committee: Explore potential pilot program with Winslow municipality
- Michael: Send the online version of the Magic Seeds kit to Michelle for distribution to the committee
- Jeffrey: Research funding sources for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program
- Michelle: Set up a shared Google Doc for committee resources
- Heidi: Share her existing Google Doc with Michelle to create a shared repository for literacy resources
- Committee members: Research literacy programs in other South Jersey counties
- Heidi: Send research links about the importance of play in child development to the committee
- Michelle to design a literacy flyer or bookmark to be included with books at upcoming events

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Marlyn asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Michael Willmann and seconded by Heidi Daunoras. By majority vote of the affirmative, the motion was carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:30AM.

Respectfully submitted by: Michelle Rohan, Committee Coordinator