



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 14, 2016
550 Jersey Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Attendance

Present: Gloria Aftanski, Ana Class-Rivera, Jessica Tomkins, Tom Crane, Luis Ortega, and Wanda Segarra-Cruz

Staff & Guests: Julie Piano, Shamara Gatling-Davila and Elizabeth Acosta

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:43 am. Julie Piano initiated the round table introductions and announced that Ms. Shamara Gatling-Davila, is the Middlesex County's Workforce Development Board Analyst, a newly created required position by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC).

Review of Minutes from March 8, 2016 Meeting

The committee was given time to look over the minutes of the last meeting. The members had no corrections or additions to the minutes of the March, 2016 meeting. Ms. Aftanski motioned for approval and Ms. Segarra-Cruz seconded the motion. Motion carried and the minutes are to be filed as is.

Funds for current Program Year (July 2015 – June 2016)

Discussions at the Literacy committee were centered on funding sources for literacy programs. The funding for the Learning Link was cut to almost half this program year compared to last year's funding. The good news is that one hundred twenty percent (120%) have already been served of the required level of service.

Julie Piano indicated that the Notices of Obligations (NOO) were not yet received to date. The NOOs are typically received in April or May of each year. The program year starts July 1 and ends June 30. The county is about to put out the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the youth program. For the new Program Year, the Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development (MCOWD) is changing the cycle of the youth program to start in September and to end in August.

Discussions about youth programs followed . It was reiterated that the MCOWD's young adults' program serve solely Out-of-School Youths ages sixteen (16) to twenty four (24) years old. The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that seventy five percent (75%) of received funds must be used for out-of-school youth and twenty percent (20 %) must be used for funding work experience activities (e.g. on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship, internships and externships). Recognizing the agency's difficulty with the latter, stand-alone components will be put out in the RFP.

Dr. Kane indicated that the NB BOE Adult Learning Center runs a NJ Youth Corps Program, and that they are one of the twelve recipients in the state.

Additional discussions ensued regarding eligibility and expected outcomes for grant funded programs and funding sources for literacy programs.

Update: NJ Career Connections Initiative

The committee was updated on NJ Career Connections, the anticipated new job board for Job Seekers and for Businesses that is expected to be rolled out by the New Jersey Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) by July 1, 2016. The website address is <http://careerconnections.nj.gov/>. The state is currently beta testing the website. NJLWD have the county colleges doing the navigator training statewide. The platform is expected to replace Jobs4Jersey and have mobile application though this is still not yet operational. There is also anticipated partnerships with the libraries. The committee will be updated when additional information is received. Dr. Kane indicated that the Career Connections was cited in all the Notices of Grant Opportunity (NGO) put out by the state.

Update from members of the committee

More changes are anticipated at the One-Stop Centers, termed American Job Centers under WIOA. As cited in the NJ Combined State Plan for WIOA, roles and responsibilities of key partners at the One Stop Career Centers are going through a process of functional alignment. Highlights of the recently held High Quality Partnership conference, the three Development Centers and the Talent Networks were discussed.

Dr. Crane informed every one of the new Title II funding (over \$1.2 million across the consortium) that the Middlesex County Adult Education Literacy Consortium received for the incoming fiscal year. The consortium put the application together and will continue with the four (4) Board of Education (BOE) partners, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, East Brunswick, and South River with the New Brunswick BOE as the lead agency. One thousand two hundred seventy (1,270) are expected to be served across the consortium in the coming program year.

On the current program year (ending June 30, 2016), one thousand three hundred twenty one (1,321) were served which is one hundred nine percent (109%) of the expected one thousand two hundred seven (1,207) that was expected to be served. On the prior year, two hundred percent (200%) were served of the expected level of service. For the coming year, managed enrollment is mandated.

The NB BOE ALC Adult Learning Center met seven (7) out of the eleven (11) Educational Functioning Level (EFL), passed two out of four secondary outcomes and the numbers are expected to go up after data matching and the LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System) closes out in August.

The NB BOE ALC will be holding open registrations for the Summer Programs on June 21st (10 am – 12 noon) and on September 8th for the Fall Program. There will be four (4) English as a Second Language (ESL), two (2) Adult Basic Education (ABE), two (2) High School Equivalency (HSE) English and two (2) HSE Spanish classes for the summer. Seating is limited for the summer- fifteen (15) in each class.

Ms. Segarra-Cruz shared that the Perth Amboy Education Center met ninety percent (90%) of the benchmarks. The PA summer program will run for six (6) weeks, from July 11th to August 16th, Monday – Friday, (8 am – 1 pm), offering similar programs as the NB BOE ALC.

Mr. Ortega informed the committee about the PA LEAF (Learning Empowerment Achievement Foundation), a financial assistance scholarship to students of the Perth Amboy Education Center. One HSE Spanish and one ESL student were awarded one thousand (\$1000) each scholarship to attend post-secondary education.

The Perth Amboy Education Center will hold their graduation ceremonies on June 23, 2016 at six o'clock PM. Forty two (42) students are expected to graduate.

The NB BOE Adult Learning Center will hold their graduation ceremonies on June 24, 2016 at six o'clock PM. One hundred fifty eight (158) students are projected to graduate. The number includes all projected to graduate from the various NB BOE ALC programs. Dr. Kane indicated that last year there were two hundred (200) graduates and the year before that two hundred fourteen (214) graduated. He indicated that the effects of the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education are seen on its third year of implementation.

The Middlesex County College's (MCC) High School Equivalency (HSE) Programs are holding their Graduation ceremony that night, June 14th-seven o'clock PM, at the MCC Crabiell Hall.

Ms. Class-Rivera announced that Middlesex County College (MCC) came out with a new major starting last semester- Program/Degree in Public Health. This program was designed to transfer to four (4) year degree in Public Health. This gives students another alternative to the highly competitive Health Technology like nursing who at times have nine hundred applicants to ninety slots. Ms. Class –Rivera also indicated that MCC is re-configuring their English as a Second Language(ESL) Program so that students get ESL instruction and not exhaust their Financial Aid resources prior to enrollment in the academic courses in their major. She further announced that MCC has two (2) new buildings scheduled to open in October, 2016. One building is slated as the new Science building and the other as a One-Stop Enrollment Center that will house the offices of the Registrar, Advisement, Veterans Services and Career Services.

Ms. Aftanski stated that United Way, in collaboration with the United Parcel Service (UPS) and Jamesburg School will start a small elementary school program for kindergarteners transitioning to first grade who “need to improve their literacy skills”. Students are from non-English speaking households. This will serve thirty four (34) students at a four (4) hours a day, four (4) days a week schedule, with 4 teachers to teach English to non-English speaking families.

Old Business

Julie Piano stated that the committee will re-visit goals and process mapping of services at a future meeting.

In response to question about progress in the Regional planning, Middlesex County has been meeting with Mercer, Ocean, and Monmouth Counties who the members of the Central Region collaboratively to forge a viable regional plan. Currently, The Memorandum of Understanding among the partners are out for signatures. This is a requirement towards recertification of the Workforce Development Board.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00am. The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 13, 2016 at 9:30am at 550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick.