



Workforce Development Board
County of Middlesex

LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 11, 2018
550 Jersey Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
9:30 a.m.

Attendance

Present: Gloria Aftanski, Roseann Bucciarelli, Ana Class-Rivera, Jasmina Dizdarevic, Myrna Garcia, & Jessica Tomkins

Staff & Guests: Shamara Gatling-Davila; Lashawn Kendall, Jill D'Amico, Hsien-Min Chen, Debra Dolgos, Kavita Pandey, & Jessica Hunsdon

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:40am. Gloria asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Review of Minutes from June 12, 2018 Meeting

Myrna made the motion and Ana seconded the motion for approval. The minutes are to be filed as is.

Update on Literacy Strategic Plan

The Literacy Strategic Plan has been approved by the Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development/Workforce Development Board Director, Kevin Kurdziel.

Select one Goal from Literacy Plan

Goal number five: Share Communications, was chosen to be the first goal to focus on for the next two to three months. Since a main focus of this committee is community resources, it would be great to start a list of county resources around literacy. Jasmina will create a Google Doc entailing the literacy agencies, their contact information, services offered, and referral process. The committee will then be able to view the docs and add information to it as necessary.

Review Referral Form for Feedback

A referral form was created due to numerous people asking for a way to connect clients through the partnering agencies. For tracking and grant purposes a referral form is beneficial. A section to identify if testing occurred should be made. The receiving agency would then be able to reach out to the sending agency to get testing details, if needed. The form would also be a source of tracking pathways taken by the clients from remediation through employment or post-secondary school. A monthly log in Google Docs can be made to keep track of referrals between each agency.

ESL Data

The Workforce Learning Link in New Brunswick had two registered ESL clients due to the link not having a robust ESL curriculum. Those two clients attended the link due to the Adult Learning Center (ALC) closing for the Summer. Once the Adult Learning Center re-opened, the two clients returned to the ALC.

Perth Amboy Adult School had about 600 clients in general, but 369 were ESL and completed the program. Of that number, 184 exhibited measurable skill gains.

Literacy NJ is currently registering students so the numbers for this semester are not available yet. Last year there were 482 ESL students registered. 360 were with the instructor for at least 12 hours. 114 were re-assessed at the 50-hour benchmark. 68% of 114 students made an ESL gain.

New Brunswick Public Library offers English for Beginners Classes (six week cycles). During the first cycle of 51 participants, 28 of them attended five classes and 9 participants attended nine classes. During the second cycle of 64 participants, 37 of them attended five classes and 13 attended nine classes. Of the 64 participants from the second cycle, 39 were new and 25 were previous participants. Certificates are provided for participants that come to 5 classes. The third cycle had 50 participants. On average the library expects about 50 participants per cycle, some are returning participants. The data has not been collected for their Conversation Café and ESL Conversation groups.

South Brunswick Public Library is currently registering for their tracked ESL Program.

Ana Class-Rivera gave a report from the Chairman of the ESL Program at Middlesex County College. Her information covers 4 semesters. For Fall of 2016, there were 1,572 enrolled. Spring of 2017 there were 1,373 enrolled. Fall of 2017 there were 1,381 students enrolled. Spring of 2018 there were 1,232 students enrolled. These are the numbers for Edison and Perth Amboy Centers combined, but do not include the number of completions.

Roseanne also gave a report for the courses offered for lower level ESL students. Open enrollment and Pre-Academic courses (4parts) were created for non-credit students. In order to reserve financial aid and the students were allowed to pay monthly. Some scholarships were put to the side as well for three semesters. Enrollment has been growing in that area. From Fall 2017 through August of 2018, 171 students were enrolled through open-enrollment and pre-academics. Fifty-nine of those students completed pre-academic. The final test is an evaluation to see if the students are ready for credit courses in conjunction with an interview with the chairman. Currently gathering data to identify those that went forward with credit-courses. Tracey's ESL Workplace Readiness course has served 30 students. Worksite ESL trainings for the past year had 70 participants.

Discuss VISTA

United Way of Central New Jersey is working on their Economic Mobility Initiative and has hired VISTA Worker, Debra. For the Perth Amboy area there two facets. There will be a Volunteer Income Tax Program geared to helping low-income families file tax returns for free. This program will pay the tax preparers and allow customers three options for tax preps: Sit one-on-one with the preparer for an electronic file, drop off service for customers to drop off the paperwork with a preparer then review it at a later time before it is electronically filed and lastly an area for guided self-prepared tax returns. The self-prepared area is geared towards computer savvy people completing their own tax returns, but have a tax preparer on hand if questions arise. I10, Tax identification numbers, can be obtained as well.

The tax preparers will be available all year long with office hours on Tuesdays and off-site appointments available as well. United Way is currently looking for additional sites to be able to provide this service. All of the tax preparers are certified through the IRS. Some of them are advanced preparers while others are entry level. United way will meet with the Perth Amboy One-Stop Manager to discuss the use of computers/space and also to inform the manager of this opportunity for the clients that are served in the One-Stop.

Library Grant Update

South Brunswick Public Library and New Brunswick Public Library were the only two libraries in Middlesex County awarded the Department of Labor Literacy and Career Pathways Community Grant. The maximum award amount was \$100,000. New Brunswick received \$99,851.00 and South Brunswick received about \$49,000.

Update from Last WDB Meeting

A brief summary of the important topics discussed at the WDB meeting was sent out to the Literacy Committee Chair prior to the meeting for review. The Pepsi Beverage Company flyer and the Middlesex County Supply Chain Management flyer were given out during the Literacy Meeting.

Any New or Old Business

Perth Amboy Adult School is currently registering for students for: Basic Skills/ABE, ESL, Civics and the Perth Amboy Adult High School.

Literacy NJ is looking to hire individuals for their VISTA Program. Resumes can be emailed to Jessica.

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned.

<p style="text-align: center;">NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2018 – 9:30AM ROOM G 550 JERSEY AVENUE, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901</p>
