

## **Workforce Development Board**

### **Literacy Committee Minutes**

**Thursday May 4,2023**

**Attendance:** via In-Person and ZOOM

**Attendees (In- Person):**

Danielle Fithian – Goodwill Industries SNJ, Chair  
Rosy Wagner – Burl Co Library System  
Ashley Bennett  
Anthony Phillips – Adult Basic Education/RCB  
Kelly West – WDB

**Attendees (Virtual):**

Jesse Pappler – Burlington County Institute of Technology  
Jennifer Veneziani – Div. Voc. Rehab Services  
Christopher Bound –Workplace Learning Link  
Jesus Arestirado – One-Stop Operator

**Call to order 9:05 - Danielle Fithian**

Anthony Phillips motioned to approve the minutes / Rosie Wagner 2nd.

**Goals and Objectives/Literacy Needs Assessment – Group Discussion**

Danielle asked for suggestions for goals to achieve.

Rosy Wagner - The library is uniquely situated and keeps us connected to the community. The library is actively trying to address the Digital Divide that has become more evident since the pandemic period. They are looking for sustainability and consistency in community partnerships. Rosy will bring additional feedback to this group for solutions.

Danielle Fithian - Goodwill's biggest struggle is getting the word out that they have more services available other than accepting donations and their retail store.

Helms Academy has a GED/HSE program. There are No requirements to enter the program.

We are finding that there is a huge struggle with Literacy and have recently added an ESL program at the Academy. We are seeing a big surge in refugees coming into Philadelphia. Helms Academy will be holding workshops for both Digital Literacy and ESL. WE will be using NorthStar assessment to figure out a baseline of Digital Literacy. GCF Learn free is a great resource.

Rosy Wagner - The library has been trying to address the problem surrounding the availability of transportation and the need for devices. Goodwill (through Grants) stated that they can provide both transportation and devices.

The 8 branches of the library/ Mobile Library will allow customers to check-out hotspots, tablets, and Chromebooks. To do so, a customer must sign an agreement and have a valid library card. Moorestown,

Mt. Laurel, and the Willingboro Libraries are not part of the library system therefore residents cannot take advantage of this unless they are students of BCIT or are part of a library partner or organization and possess a library card.

Anthony Phillips – The Title II consortium purchased laptops and Google Classroom using Covid dollars to virtually tutor students. He averages 15-18 students in a training cohort. They have applied for the Dollar Tree Grant. This Grant will help customers with a minimum of a 4<sup>th</sup> grade skill level. (Customers have 4 weeks to attain level if they are below).

**The first goal of our committee will be to identify resources that are available for adult literacy learners. (Literacy Guide)**

**Letting people know about our services:**

**DVRS:**

For those customers who may have a learning disability DVRS can provide support for Literacy and supported employment.

**Goodwill:**

Goodwill has virtual and in-person ESL (English as a Second Language) classes.

ELL (English Language Learning) classes are available at the main library branch and in some of the partner branches. Rosie suggested exploring a hybrid model.

Some of the marginalized communities do not trust government institutions. We feel like librarians may need to put their boots to the ground and go out into the communities, churches, medical offices, libraries, or wherever the people are that need services. Volunteers may need to go to different institutions and share our information. We need to build trust and join forces to make a bigger impact.

**HiSet to GED**

The shift to the GED vs the Hi-Set will go into effect on 05/31/2023. It will be a big transition. The PSI is administratively inept as students must wait for their diplomas and institutions must wait for payment. The GED practice test is 6.99 per section and there are four sections. If you fail the GED, you must wait 30 days to take it again.

The Plainfield Library offers the GED test prep and the GED test.

Title II testers will need to go to the RCBC testing center to take their GED.

**CASAS VS TABE**

Rosy Wagner mentioned they have online resources at the library for those with a library card. The library uses Peterson and/or Ferguson for their online programming test prep.

**Open Discussion:**

**Anthony- Title II**

We are on course for meeting our End of Year measurables. Are there any additional partners that can be added to the consortium?

We would like to have a HS Equivalency Program at the Burlington County Jail, but we are finding this to be difficult. The jail no longer allows access to the internet, and they will not be able to access the programs. Please let me know if anyone has a solution to this problem.

Anthony has funds to host an activity to get the word out about our resources. He would like to talk about this before 6/30/2023 so we can discuss this matter separately.

### **Chris Bound - Learning Link**

There has been an influx of women coming in to take the CASAS but are not doing well and failing the math section. Do they need math? They do not want to take CDL A training. Kelly mentioned that not all career paths require math. It depends on the career pathway and the training institution.

### **Rosy Wagner - Library**

The library has a community resource navigator. For example, they can help you make a Living Will. They have drop-in hours on Monday and Wednesday afternoons to assist anyone that needs in-person help. They also provide one-on-one (1 Hour appointments) that can be scheduled on-line.

Additionally, basic computer classes are available at the library. The Mobile Learning Lab is looking for public places where the library can take the lab. All that is needed is a space with tables and chairs.

### **Jesse Pappler - BCIT**

We will have about 530 Adult level students when registration is completed in about 3 weeks. You can check out our on-line course catalog. We have some concerns, mostly literacy concerns especially for those trying to obtain a credential.

Kelly asked if there was a volunteer program at BCIT - It would be great to get a volunteer program started whereby students or clubs can assist with tutoring customers in digital literacy. Jesse thinks this is a great idea and we can discuss it further.

### **Young Adult Job Fair**

We will be having a Youth Job fair on May 25,2023 from 4:30-7:00 PM at the Westampton Human Services Facility.

If anyone knows of any ideal candidates for a Summer Internship Program, please send the information to Jenn. She will also be having a literacy resource table at the Youth Job Fair.

**Next Meeting is virtual and scheduled for 9:00 AM September 7, 2023**