



County of Mercer Workforce Development Board

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Virgen Velez
Acting Director

Brian M. Hughes
County Executive

Keith Secrest
Chairperson

WDB Literacy Committee ♦ Chairperson: Peg Gould

February 1, 2023 9:00 a.m. ♦ Zoom Meeting Minutes

Peg Gould, Chair (MCCC), **Keith Secrest**, WDB Chair (Kinetics Industries), **Lori Johansson** (MCCC), **Nate Phillips** (LALDEF)

WDB Staff: Virgen Velez

Welcome & Introductions

Committee Chair Peg Gould opened the meeting up at 9:00 am and welcomed everyone.

Work First Development Board

All present introduced themselves. As the new Committee member Nate Phillips introduced himself and spoke briefly about LALDEF. His comments included the following:

- Currently working with One Stop providing an ESL CWEP (Community Work Experience Program) (for TANF recipients)
- Citizenship Program (opened up in January)
 - o Free program
 - o Screen clients to see if they have legal permanent resident status
 - o Need to have Green Card for at least 5 years or married to U.S. citizen
- ESL Class
 - o Goals of getting them into the citizenship class

Question was asked as to how can an individual join the class? The response was that they would contact LALDEF for an initial screening as the first step.

Review & approval of December 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2022 meeting was made by Keith Secrest and seconded by Lori Johansson. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as distributed.

One Stop/Learning Link Updates

- WLL
 - o Served 15 students thru 12/31/22
 - o Primary goal is for customers to raise their reading/math levels for entry into occupational training

- One Stop
 - 5th year applying for the SYEP grant
 - Youth 16 – 24 can earn up to \$3,000
 - Need Committee assistance in marketing the program (if awarded) to youth & employers
 - Career Fair
 - Targeting students in 12th who may not be college-bound after graduation
 - Two events will be held – one will be in person & one virtual
 - Events will be scheduled late afternoon/early evening in an effort to attract parents
 - One Stop has reopened for walk-in services – with the exception of UI
 - Will begin to provide orientations in person in addition to virtual

Title II Consortium

Peg Gould spoke about the supplemental grant that was given with a year to spend down (consortium meeting)

- Grant is for development or growth of online teaching and learning (digital skills)
- development of career ladders/pathways
- Funds will be used to develop more career ladder supports or other innovative ways to create meaningful workforce development opportunities, for example - I Best
- Pilot or development of pre-apprenticeship opportunities
- Career pathway bridges with contextualized instructions

According to this grant we can offer certifications from North Star Certification, Microsoft Office Certification, etc. Peg explained how the College has been researching how to provide viable certificates for individuals without high school diplomas.

The College has developed a Soft Skills curriculum which is summarized below.

- Soft Skills Program
 - Accessible via online
 - 10 different soft skills that employers seek
 - 10 module course
 - Modules include those targeting: attitude, attendance, appearance, flexibility, adaptability, communication, work ethic
 - Video lesson introduces the skill
 - Guest speaker talking about the skill
 - Small quiz
 - Certification test after all 10 modules
 - All of MCCC's ABE adult basic education, HSE high school equivalent and advanced ESL students are required to take this course

A meeting will be scheduled with the One Stop YCC (Youth Career Connection) to discuss the feasibility of incorporating this curriculum into the summer program (if grant is awarded).

Early Mercer Reads

- Discussing options to provide the event in a hybrid manner - return to the in-person readings at child care centers & provide virtual readings to be posted on the County website
- Possibly in June
- Schedule a planning meeting in March.

PY 22 Meeting Dates: 1st Wednesday bi-monthly 9:00 – 10:00

April 5, 2023

June 7, 2023