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### **LITERACY COMMITTEE**

**October 19, 2011 – 8:30 a.m.**  
**Mercer County Community College (JKC)**

**Present:** Gay Egan (Mercer Street Friends), Peg Gould (MCCC), Melinna Harris (MCCC), Jane Kleindienst (Lutheran Social Ministries), Sharon Nemeth (MC Tech Schools), Lynne Wise (HomeFront), Pat Shump, (LWD), Paula Rossi (Princeton Y), Claire Walton (UIH)

**Guest:** Michael Huckaby, Steck-Vaughn (Houghton Mifflin)

**Staff:** Beverly Mills

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#### **Welcome:**

Bev Mills opened the meeting on behalf of Co-Chair Melinna Harris who was stuck in traffic. Committee members introduced themselves to guest, Michael Huckaby, who was visiting to update on the Houghton Mifflin Job Readiness Skills Credential.

The minutes from September 21, 2011 were reviewed –Sharon Nemeth made a motion to accept the minutes and it was seconded by Lynne Wise. Sharon added that the SAVE THE DATE notifications for the upcoming December 2<sup>nd</sup> Literacy Conference had been received.

#### **Video Project:**

Peg Gould updated: Sam Koenig, the videographer currently working security at MCCC, also did a video for Mercer Street Friends. Sam is getting a proposal together for a target date of completion by March or April of 2012. He would need a script and Peg said she has data which is geared more toward State statistics rather than a Mercer County or Trenton focus. We will need students willing to speak as well as teachers and staff. Length of the Mercer Street Friends video was about 6 minutes; Peg inquired how long we envisioned our video. Bev said about 10 minutes for the longer version and 4-5 minutes for the abbreviated version to be used for businesses and community outreach. Committee discussed pros and cons of not using students (more costs involved). If we go the route of using students they would not be able to start until next fall. Steve Voorhees mentioned he would be willing to have this as a required project for class but they are not offering this spring.

Sam will submit a proposal; the WIB will need to solicit at least two other bids as per County policy.

### **Consortium Update:**

The final budget revision for the FY 2010 budget was submitted on October 13, 2011 (\$531,194 to serve 936 students). The first quarter report showed 317 students enrolled which is 39% of the goal. By December 31, 2011 a goal of 50% should be met. On October 7, 2011 the End of the Year Narrative Report for FY 2011 was submitted.

Melinna mentioned a minor revision in that a 25% match is required however the contract is expected to be received soon. At the Consortium meeting following Melinna plans to discuss the FY 2011 increase in post testing but performance objectives were not met; what to do this year to increase performance for FY 2012.

### **Marketing Subcommittee:**

Melinna asked for volunteers to chair this subcommittee – no one volunteered. The committee needs to start collecting success stories; Bev volunteered to be the point of contact. Testimonials would be a nice start with links to these stories placed on the WIB website.

### **Upcoming Literacy Conference:**

Committee discussed December 2, 2011 conference with topics that would include: Contextualized Instruction; Numeracy (strategies for teaching) and Useful Websites for Students. Funds are available to pay registration fee for Consortium members only. Peg will contact LaGuardia to follow-up on who will be willing to come speak on contextualized instruction and why they feel it has been so successful. For the topic of numeracy Peg will speak to a contact from Rutgers regarding how to teach numeracy. For the topic of useful student websites Gay Egan volunteered to be the point of contact at [gegan@mercerstreefriends.org](mailto:gegan@mercerstreefriends.org).

Melinna pointed out there is one more meeting before the Literacy Conference – Bev will send reminders to members for success stories; need for a marketing co-chair and the send useful website information to Gay.

Paula inquired about the amount of prep time required by teachers for contextualized instruction; how are they compensated as many programs do not pay extra for their teachers. Peg and Melinna answered that the teacher willingly puts in the extra time because their heart is in what they are doing.

Fields of exploration for the 20 students in the pilot include culinary arts, education, entrepreneurship, business and healthcare. Two books are used (GIG and “Working,” by Studs Turkel) because of authenticity of the materials. Each Friday there are supplemental activities and on November 18<sup>th</sup> there is a transitions program geared toward students who complete their program; what’s next? Through a grant MCCC Kerney will also start offering a CNA program. Melinna also mentioned that time is needed (which she doesn’t have!) to research grants so they can retain teachers for this program.

## **New Business:**

Melina updated on the upcoming new GED test. The State had a meeting for all examiners and January 2014 will be the beginning of on-line GED testing which will be harder and more expensive. NJ along with other states is looking at other options. Florida, New York and California will go with the new GED which is unfortunate because the larger states carry a lot of weight. Pearson has partnered with the GED test makers (ACE) so essentially it is a non-profit with a "for profit." There is a conference on November 18, 2011 and more information will be available after that regarding what other states plan to do.

Gay shared information about a new report coming out from the National Research Council of the National Academies entitled, "Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options for Practice and Research. The description of the report from their website includes the following:

"A high level of literacy in both print and digital media is required for negotiating most aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> century life including supporting a family, education, health, civic participation, and competitiveness in the global economy. Yet a recent survey estimates that more than 90 million U.S. adults lack adequate literacy. Furthermore, only 38% of U.S. twelfth graders are at or above the proficient level in reading" (which means 62% are lacking)

Gay further mentioned that Mercer Street Friends is getting many pre-literate students from African countries; she asked if anyone is offering service. These students cannot be TABE tested. Serving these students is very time consuming as they need one-on-one counseling. TASK was mentioned as a suggestion.

Michael Huckaby spent the remaining time updating on Houghton Mifflin partnership with the National Work Readiness Council. Contextualized content is accessible at a 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading along with math, situational judgment and listening; the focus is soft skill training. New York started the Work Readiness Credential this past summer. Members questioned where New Jersey was in terms of the Work Readiness Credential. Peg mentioned that Starbucks is honoring the work readiness credential. Mike added that there is flexibility in getting the Certificate which is offered on-line but working on a paper version.

Meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting: Literacy Committee will meet November 16, 2011 8:30-10:00, MCCC (JKC Campus)**