



Beloit Early Literacy Initiative

December 13th Meeting

Beloit Public Library

7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Attendance: Tara Tinder, Bill Flanagan, Rachelle Elliott, Courtney Schindler, Kevin Murph, John Wong, Michelle Erikson, Carol Mishler, Monica Krysztopa, Ben Vogiarolo, Andrea Heckner, Bill Lock, Rich Franklin, Jan Knutson, Melody Wirgan, Samantha Woods, Kristi Helmkamp, Megan Miller

Tara Tinder - Welcome/Comments/Announcements

Tara started the meeting with introductions. She gave a recap about the foundations small library at the Stateline Community Foundation. Tara introduced stickers with the BLFLI logo to place on the front of the books so children and parents know where they are coming from. Tara also discussed how the Beloit Health Systems' team has been trained for Reach Out and Read and will be starting back up the first of the year.

Bill Flanagan - Progress since our last meeting

Bill had the group go around and make introductions. He explained the goal and importance of literacy. BLFLI's goal is to reach the entire community. We will need to develop an advisory committee to determine the structure of this project going forward and ensure that it stands tall in the future. Additionally, we will need to develop corporate and business partnerships. We need these partners to help support initiatives for the BLFLI (Examples: Culver's and the Snappers).

John Wong - Beloit School District Volunteer Program

John introduced the culmination of the ad hoc committee on closing the achievement gap with a new position focused on coordinating school district volunteers working on the issue of early childhood literacy including numeracy. Important to this effort is the development of some sort of tracking system in order for all parties involved to be updated with how the literacy initiative is going. He discussed how a volunteer program was established throughout the School District of Beloit but there wasn't any tracking in order to determine its success. The committee he was involved in began discussing early childhood literacy and then developed the program for volunteers. This effort has grown to a current point where 2 positions have been developed that will coordinate the volunteer program and to track its success. Their committee is focusing on reaching out to the private sector in order to get more involved in the community. John believes there is a large disconnect between what is going on in the schools and what is perceived to be going on in the schools. It will be vastly beneficial for the private sector partners to be able to come into the schools and volunteer to see beyond test scores.

Kevin Murph - Volunteer Coordinator for the School District of Beloit

Kevin explained what steps have been taken since assuming the volunteer coordinator position in October. He has contacted all administrators to gather data based on determined needs and projected demands. Efforts have been made to discover and organize current volunteer partners. He has identified who our current volunteers are, where they are from, schedules, what staff member they are assigned to, and student they are assigned to. It became apparent that finding tangible results was needed, so a tracker system was created. The tracker lists all of the current grades and the grades after the volunteers have worked with the students in order to maintain accountability of the volunteers. A qualitative data analysis has been created to determine changes from year to year along with sections of learning (reading, math, etc.). Volunteers are being recruited and then trained on policies, procedures,

objectives, materials, etc. Volunteers are also trained by Rachelle Elliott with materials (backpacks, books, etc.) that they can take with them into the schools for their volunteer efforts. Kevin also explained that they have access to a volunteer database that allows for open source technology and is looking for funds to purchase. John and Kevin found that the School of Hope in Madison is using this technology as well which is a benefit because they are able to understand their mistakes and learn from them going forward in building this program.

Michelle Erikson – State Literacy

Michelle visited Wausau in October and checked out a program called LENA (Learning Environment Analysis). The focus of this program is to work on literacy from birth to age three at an intensive rate. This is a type of program that would greatly benefit Rock County however, it would take a significant amount of funding. Wisconsin Literacy is looking to encourage more parents on their own professional development. Michelle passed out a flyer with the following links to encourage adult learning in addition to child literacy.

- www.vroom.org
- www.talkingisteaching.com
- <https://striveforfive.com>

Rachelle Elliott - School District of Beloit

Rachelle explained that a Google form has been set up to inquire about who would like to be involved with a community workshop with corporate partners. An app has been rolled out from University of Notre Dame for parents to aid in literacy where they get three updates a week about activities they can do with their children in the home. Rachelle also explained she will be meeting with an individual to discuss more on app development and how to engage families on literacy. Rachelle passed out marketing flyers for the BLFLI. These flyers focused on tips for families regarding math. The flyers can be laminated and placed throughout the community to be cleaned and reused. When you go to the Talking is Teaching website (www.talkingisteaching.com), there are different communities that are posted that are involved in early childhood literacy. Rachelle's goal is to be able to get Beloit on the website as we are heavily involved in this initiative.

Partner announcements, plans and reports on progress to date

- Community Health Systems - Book readings are occurring and collaboration is beginning based on BLFLI contacts.
- Rock County Family Resource Center – Working on giving toys and educational materials to families.
- Culver's – Free library is setup and in action. Working now on outreach about the BLFLI. Posters will be put up near the library for events going on. Every Thursday night will be a reading night between 6:00pm and 7:00pm. Book marks are being used to encourage children coming back to get more books. May be on the rise of more connections for the BLFLI. See events below.
- Beloit Snappers – Schools are signed up to participate in the Snappers reading program and can get prizes for reading more. Snappers are trying to utilize their positive outreach to reach more early childhood readers in the community. Snappers will be at Culver's to aid in the reading mission in January, February, and March.
- Blackhawk Tech – Working with Anthony Bonds to encourage early literacy as a profession in the Grow Your Own program. Using a system where students can get their education in a quick and easy way.

- United Way – United Way has partnered with Scholastic to host book fairs in South Beloit elementary schools for three reoccurring years. Each book fair kicks off with a special pep rally featuring remarks from the school principal, United Way president, and photos with Clifford the Big Red Dog®. Afterward, students are invited to browse the book fair and choose their favorite books to read, enjoy, and add to their home libraries. Every child in the school will be gifted two books to take home.
- St. Paul Lutheran Church – Hosted a book fair after Thanksgiving and into December using donated books to give away which was successful. Completing an advent reading calendar activity during the month of December. Soup Lunch is every Wednesday and is free for all in the community (December 19th Christmas Dinner with gift shop). At the lunch, families will be able to also choose a free book in addition to the gift.
- Beloit Public Library – Self based program for young children to read more books to promote reading as a habit. Working with Community Health to focus on dental hygiene book readings. Working with Rachelle to put on a 4K family night at the library. Looking for volunteers for 12 week literacy pop up programs.

Additional Resources

- Experience Fellowship – collaboration between the Stateline Community Foundation and the Hendricks Family Foundation
 - Program encourages students to find something they would like to broaden their horizons with which can be tied into literacy
 - Visit the website <https://statelinecf.org/the-experience-fellowship/> for more information

Calendar of Events for September

- December 27th – Cone with a Cop at Culver’s from 5:30pm-6:30pm
- January 1st – Will be “dressing up” with books at Culver’s
- January 17th – Fries with a Firefighter at Culver’s from 6:00pm-7:00pm
- January 24th – Cone with a Cop at Culver’s from 5:30pm-6:30pm
- February 21st – Cone with a Cop at Culver’s from 5:30pm-6:30pm
- February 28th – Fries with a Firefighter at Culver’s from 6:00pm-7:00pm
- March 21st – Cone with a Cop at Culver’s from 5:30pm-6:30pm
- March 28th – Fries with a Firefighter at Culver’s from 6:00pm-7:00pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 10th beginning at 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the Beloit Public Library

Please email all calendar events and partner announcements to courtney@statelinecf.com prior to the BLFLI meeting to ensure the meeting occurs in a timely fashion.