



BOONE COUNTY
UPWARD MOBILITY

Early Grade Literacy Workgroup Minutes

January 10, 2024

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Attendees:

Al Plummer (Facilitator, Minority Men's Network), Gay Litteken (First Chance For Children), Bailey Stock (Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)), Adielle Ehret (FACE of Boone County), Katie Bowes (Burrell Behavioral Health), Andrew Grabau (Heart of Missouri United Way), Kelly Scheuerman (Brighter Beginnings), Joanne Nelson (Boone County Community Services Department (BCCSD)), Gina Jenkins (BCCSD), Lenna Peterson (BCCSD), Verna Laboy (BCCSD)

Meeting Objective: Review Columbia Public Schools special education referral process and determine next steps for workgroup.

Results Statement: All children in Boone County learn to read and write and see themselves as readers and writers.

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Al opened the meeting welcoming all attendees. No introductions were necessary.

2. Review Columbia Public Schools Special Services Page:

The Columbia Public Schools (CPS) Special Services website was shared, and the group discussed the CPS Special Services process, continuing the conversation from a previous workgroup meeting. It was reported that staff in the CPS Administrative Office verified the school district still uses the document posted, which follows the MO Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) approved process, and that a parent simply has to ask their building principal to evaluate their student for special services. It was explained that as soon as the request is made, the principal has a certain number of days to initiate the process.

Some workgroup members shared that many families they work with are not having a successful experience, citing difficulties such as long delays to receive testing and uncertainty of next steps when denied special services and advised their student doesn't qualify. It was suggested that MPACT has extensive experience in supporting families through this process, and it would be good to have them invited to our workgroup. Gay Litteken indicated she has a contact and will reach out to them.

3. Review Mobility Action Plan and Strategic Action Steps

It was highlighted that the discussion related to the Special Services process, both at CPS and throughout all Boone County schools, is in response to two potential action steps within the workgroup strategy to increase social/emotional/behavioral supports for children - #4 (Help families feel comfortable seeking support) and #7 (Coordinated/increase screenings (autism, social/emotional, etc.) with other providers and schools). The group was interested in pursuing these potential action steps further.



605 E. Walnut, Ste A, Columbia, MO 65201



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There was discussion around introducing the Upward Mobility, Early Grade Literacy workgroup to school districts in Boone County and promote relationship building. The group ultimately decided more planning about next steps was needed. This resulted in a plan for BCCSD to share more information with the workgroup about another time to meet virtually prior to the next scheduled workgroup meeting, with anyone interested in helping invited to attend.

During the planning session, group members will coordinate the process in more detail. Areas to develop further included thinking through messaging strategies, what information to request from school districts, and determining who will take ownership. It was suggested the group should engage with elementary school counselors, school resource officers, early childhood administrators, curriculum developers, and special education teachers given the workgroup strategies being addressed. Additional information about the next steps planning session was to be shared in the next email communication to the workgroup.

4. Closing

AI asked for organization announcements/updates.

Gay Litteken recently met a nonprofit organization whose focus is on literacy, Free Air Books led by George Norman III, and thought the organization might be a good connection for the workgroup. Verna volunteered to reach out and invite him to the workgroup.

The BCCSD shared a preview of the soon-to-be launched Upward Mobility Website. A Boone County Community Services 2024 Funding Opportunities flyer and information about a survey being conducted by Partners For Better to evaluate the Boone County Children's Services Fund were brought up, encouraging all to share the information with their partner organizations and contact lists once the documents are shared with the workgroup.

The meeting closed with a summary of the next steps:

- Gay will contact MPACT
- Verna will contact Free Air Books
- A special virtual workgroup session will be scheduled to work out the additional details of the action steps discussed, with more information to be shared in a follow up email. Anyone is welcome to attend and contribute to this planning session.

Next Workgroup Meeting: February 14, 2024, at 2:30PM at CMCA (807 N. Providence Rd)



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