



BOONE COUNTY
UPWARD MOBILITY

Early Grade Literacy Workgroup Minutes

October 9, 2024, 2:30PM – 4:00PM

Central Missouri Community Action (807 N. Providence Rd, Columbia, MO 65203) and virtually

Meeting Objective: Revisit past discussions and further develop future workgroup efforts with a focus on 0–5-year-olds.

Attendees: Verna Laboy (Boone County Community Services Department (BCCSD)), Al Plummer (Minority Men’s Network), Cindy Reese (Boone County Early Childhood Coalition (BCECC), Catherine Miller (BCECC), Sarah Owens (Family Access Center of Excellence (FACE)), Adielle Ehret (FACE), Damian Dean (United Community Builders), Lara Wakefield (Smarter Steps), Phil Peters (Grade A Plus), Lindsey Massie (HeadStart), Kelly Scheuerman (City of Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services- Brighter Beginnings), Gina Jenkins (BCCSD), Kerby Webb (BCCSD), Emilio Ayala Youngblood (BCCSD)

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Verna welcomed everyone and opened the floor for introductions.
- Al Plummer welcomed Damian Dean who is the executive director of United Community Builders (UCB). Damian presented his organization to the group. Damian shared that they serve low-income families and at-risk children. UCB has provided over 13,000 hours of instructive teaching. Damian shared that since most of these kids are pandemic babies. This program exists to serve those kids which are falling behind. Damian provided the group with a handout of their 2023 executive summary report which showed the work that has been done at the program. He also verbalized the goals of the program for the future UCB will be moving facilities with the hope of being completely moved by August 1, 2025. The group invited Damian and his team to be present at the table in future meetings.

2. Action Step Update: Help families feel comfortable seeking support

a. Boone County school districts outreach (Centralia)

- Verna shared information on a trip she and Al took to Centralia to meet the Centralia Public Schools Superintendent, Stephen Chancellor and Mary Decker, Director of Special Education. Their conversation included Stephen and Mary highlighting very little resources available in the district.
- The group discussed the possibility of travel being a hurdle for some of these Centralia families, among other things that could also present as a barrier.

b. Continued outreach and collaboration efforts

- The group discussed how we can get information out to the rural areas on Boone County so that families can be aware of resources for them.
- The group discussed the need of going back to these rural superintendents to discuss how do they feel that they can be better helped.



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3. Strategies to move forward with further collaboration

a. Revisit potential action steps with a focus on ages 0-5

- Due to time constraints, the group was not able to get to this agenda item.

b. Workgroup feedback Survey & looking ahead to 2025

- Due to time constraints, the group was not able to get to this agenda item.

4. Closing

a. Next Steps

- Continue to meet rural superintendents to get information on how we can get resource information spread through the community.
- Revisit agenda item #3 in the next meeting.

b. Partner updates

- The Boone County Early Childhood Coalition will update the Kindergarten Readiness Tree.

c. Comments and questions

Next Workgroup Meeting: November 13, 2024, 2:30 PM at CMCA (807 N. Providence Rd) or via [Zoom](#)