



**BOONE COUNTY**  
UPWARD MOBILITY

Early Grade Literacy Workgroup Minutes  
January 14, 2026, 3:00pm – 4:30pm  
Central Missouri Community Action (807 N. Providence, Columbia, MO) and via Zoom

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**Meeting Objective:** Make progress on Raising Readers for Spring 2026 launch

**Attendees:** Aileen Garcia (University of Missouri Extension), Kelly Scheuerman (City of Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services - Brighter Beginnings), Laiken Cash (Brighter Beginnings), Cindy Reese (Boone County Early Childhood Coalition (BCECC)), Sarah Howard (Daniel Boone Regional Library (DBRL)), Onni Flint (Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)), Aaron Fox (Aaron Fox Writes), Kristine Smith (Columbia Public Schools), Adielle Ehert (FACE of Boone County), Enola-Riann White (Boone County Community Services Department (BCCSD)), Gina Jenkins (BCCSD)

1. Welcome

- a. Enola started the meeting by welcoming everyone. She introduced a new sign in method via QR code and provided an overview of the new “Workgroup Wednesday” meeting structure. Enola had everyone introduce themselves.
- b. Partner Updates
  - i. Kelly Scheuerman (Brighter Beginnings) introduced Laiken Cash, a first-year medical student working with Brighter Beginnings. She shared that they have received funding from the Assistance League of Mid-Missouri to purchase board and cloth books for ages 0-5. The 2026 Home Visitors Summit will be on May 15, 8:00am – 1:00pm, location TBD, focus is parent’s mental health. They’ve secured a keynote speaker and Dr. Grow (University of Missouri) will be presenting topics in the perinatal space.
  - ii. Cindy Resse (Boone County Early Childhood Coalition (BCECC)) shared that BCECC received 100 board books last year from the Children’s Grove. Children’s Grove has offered more books again for preschool age. Cindy usually gives out books at locations such as the WIC office, Food Bank Market, and Voluntary Action Center.
  - iii. Aileen Garcia (University of Missouri Extension) shared [United for Children](#) has several education packets for parents and caregivers. Topics include positive discipline, alternatives to corporal punishment, preventing/recognizing childhood sexual abuse, school readiness, and childhood development.
  - iv. Sarah Howard (Daniel Boone Regional Library (DBRL)) shared that DBRL has several openings including an Assistant Manager for Youth Services.
  - v. Onni Flint (Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)) shared the current focus at CMCA is on adult-oriented services such as homebuying and energy assistance programs.
  - vi. Aaron Fox (Aaron Fox Writes) reminded the group he has begun selling other local authors’ books, which include children’s books, on his website [aaronfoxwrites.com](http://aaronfoxwrites.com) and in his display at The Shoppes on Sharp End.

2. Follow up from last meeting

- a. NET Reach out for April 2026 spotlight
  - i. Enola reached out updating the group that Early Grade Literacy will be the April 2026 spotlight.
- b. Parental Release Form
  - i. Mindy has signed the parental release form for the use of the image of Al the Otter.
- c. School contacts for kindergarten entry data
  - i. In December individuals began reaching out to public and private schools to request information about their kindergarten entry and the workgroup discussed updates. A grid with updates is in the shared document.

**Upward Mobility is an initiative of the Boone County Community Services Department  
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Contact has been made with all schools, to date Sturgeon has shared two years of their data and Christian Fellowship School does not have the ability to share data as it is collected by the individual.

- ii. Cindy provided an update on the Atelier; she will reach out to Samantha Flowers and Janet Robinson for more information.
- iii. If there are any schools missing, Enola asked the group to reach out and add them to the shared document.
- d. Campaign material pricing
  - i. Pricing will depend upon the design and amount required. Enola did confirm that Minutemen Press can do custom bookmarks and Columbia Print and Sign can create custom stickers.
  - ii. Enola also asked the group to consider sponsorship to help offset the cost of printing. It was suggested that the printer/company name be listed on the materials/items distributed.
- 3. Current meeting topics
  - a. Timeline review and progress tracker
    - i. Enola created an outline, that can be found in the shared document, of the campaign progress, diving tasks into completed, in-progress, and to-do items.
    - ii. Launch Date
      - 1. Sarah Howard shared that DBRL will bring a guest musician to the Missouri Theatre in May 2026. The workgroup discussed and agreed to collaborate with DBRL to launch Raising Readers.
      - 2. Aaron Fox (Arron Fox Writes) agreed to draft a press release for the launch event.
    - iii. Timeline review
      - 1. The workgroup began setting deadlines for campaign materials and data collection. Discussion included the logistics of collecting survey data at events, creation of hashtags for social media engagement, creation of social media calendars including partner spotlights, and the submission process for organizations to share events and materials. The information was tracked in the shared document.
- 4. Next Steps
  - a. The workgroup is tasked to review the rest of the timeline in the shared document and vote on or submit new names for the participation tiers.
- 5. Closing
  - a. The meeting ended with a summary of the meeting next steps and Enola thanked the workgroup.

**Next Workgroup Meeting:** February 11, 2026, 3:00pm – 4:00pm via Zoom or in person at Central Missouri Community Action (807 N. Providence, Columbia, MO)