



BOONE COUNTY
UPWARD MOBILITY

Early Grade Literacy Workgroup Minutes
February 11, 2026, 3:00pm – 4:30pm
Central Missouri Community Action (807 N. Providence, Columbia, MO) and via Zoom

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

Attendees: Cindy Reese (Boone County Early Childhood Coalition), Sarah Howard (Daniel Boone Regional Library), Onni Flint (Central Missouri Community Action), Aaron Fox (Aaron Fox Writes), Adielle Ehert (FACE of Boone County), Enola-Riann White (Boone County Community Services Department (BCCSD)), Gina Jenkins (BCCSD)

1. Welcome

Enola opened the meeting and invited anyone with updates to share them.

a. Partner Updates

- i. Sarah Howard (Daniel Boone Regional Library (DBRL)) shared that earlier in the day DBRL [hosted Poetry Out Loud](#), a regional competition for high school students with the opportunity to advance to state and national competitions. Sarah noted less participation since the pandemic.
- ii. Adielle Ehert (FACE of Boone County (FACE)), shared that funding is available for the [Therapy Access Program](#), where children and families with financial barriers to receiving therapy can receive some counseling sessions at no cost. Those interested can contact FACE for more information.
- iii. Enola shared that plans are in place to have an otter mascot costume for the Raising Readers literacy campaign, with a volunteer already offering to wear it to the launch event in May. Sarah added it would be purchased by DBRL soon and the costume would be available for others to borrow for future events.
- iv. Onni Flint (Central Missouri Community Action) shared a picture Mindy Hulett provided of her daughter that drew the mascot picture which can be used for the Raising Reader campaign marketing.

2. Follow up from last meeting

a. Participation Tiers

The workgroup reviewed the tier descriptions outlined in the shared document. The discussion focused on clarifying the expectations for individuals and organizations/businesses interested in participating, as well as identifying appropriate names for each tier. In addition to the three participation levels, the group agreed to include an option for individuals who would like to sign up simply to stay informed. While the workgroup will revisit and finalize the tier names at a later time, the current options under consideration are Friend, Partner, and Leader (or Champion), or similar variations.

b. Press Release

No additional updates were provided at this time.

3. Group work session on Raising Readers

a. Timeline review and progress tracker

In addition to discussion about the participation tiers, the workgroup revisited plans for a Facebook page or group. Based on how the workgroup would want individuals to be able to access and interact with information, there are plans to now have both. The workgroup reviewed some areas of planning requiring additional attention. Time was spent creating initial thoughts on how a survey would be used for those wanting to get involved in the literacy campaign to sign up. Workgroup members came with some questions to be included and plan to review a draft survey at the next workgroup meeting.

**Upward Mobility is an initiative of the Boone County Community Services Department
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Enola asked whether anyone in the workgroup would be willing to take the lead on two next steps: finalizing the welcome packet materials and gathering updated vendor pricing for promotional items. Both tasks are important to keep planning on track for the campaign launch. The group also discussed the quantity of promotional materials to distribute and the process for doing so. The conversation led to a plan to establish clear guidelines while still allowing some flexibility. In relation to the workgroup's activities and data tracking, Cindy shared that she heard Kristine Smith mention that funding for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library may be in jeopardy. Next Steps

- b. The workgroup will learn more about the status of Dolly Parton Imagination Library funding to identify any potential education and advocacy action individuals might want to take. Gina will reach out to Kristine Smith to see if she has additional information.
 - c. Before the next workgroup meeting, Gina will create a draft survey incorporating the workgroup's input. The survey will be used to gauge interest in participating in the Raising Readers literacy campaign.
 - d. Notes added to the shared document during workgroup meeting will be organized by Enola.
 - e. Enola will reach out to local vendors to learn more about stickers and bookmark pricing.
4. Closing

Following the review of next steps, Enola asked the workgroup to start considering workgroup plans following the campaign launch in May, so this can be discussed in the future. Previous workgroup priorities set during the December 2024 workgroup meeting were referenced as the last conversation about this topic before focusing on the development of Raising Readers.

Next Workgroup Meeting: March 11, 2026, 3:00pm – 4:30pm via Zoom or in person at Central Missouri Community Action (807 N. Providence, Columbia, MO)