

DCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes April 24, 2024

Date and Location

Wednesday April 24, 2024

11:30 am

6067 Decatur Blvd.

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Brittney Kalmes

Sam Moya

Julie Pitts

Allyson Strother

Joey Wright

Others Present (Staff, Public)

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader

Julie Fenton, Director of Student Services

Cora Collier, Instruction and Accountability Director

Dr. Jim Dalton, DCA Superintendent

Octavius Molton, CFO Damar Services

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant

Breille Petty, OEI

Approval of Minutes

A quorum was present and Minutes from the February 2024 Meeting were approved. The meeting came to order at 11:40 am.

Operation Highlights

Damar Charter Academy began the fourth quarter on Monday, April 1st, following a two week spring break. An e-learning day was held on Monday, April 8th, so that all students could safely participate in school and observe the Eclipse. The last day of school will be Friday, May 25th.

DCA's 13th graduating class will participate in a ceremony to be held in the Damar Services' gymnasium on Friday, May 17th, at 6:00pm. At this time there is 20 graduates planning to be part of the ceremony. A cake and punch reception will follow in honor of the graduates and their families. All board members are invited to attend and support our students and help celebrate all they have accomplished. Board Member Amber Fields will be providing the brief commencement speech this year.

Damar's annual prom will be held on Thursday, May 9th, at 5pm at the Shops at Perry Crossing Event Center (2499 Perry Crossing Way, Suite 205, Plainfield, IN 46168). Students will be transported via limo from Damar Services and will enjoy an evening of dinner and dancing, while awaiting the announcement of the 2024 Prom King and Queen. Board members are welcome to attend and share in this heartwarming experience!

The second special education count was held on Monday, April 1st. This count was for informational purposes only, not funding.

DCA's annual lottery will be held virtually on Wednesday, May 8th. At that time, all current waiting list entries will be randomly assigned a number via an excel formula and then ranked according to that number. After adjusting for sibling preference, the new waiting list will be established. All new enrollments for the 2024-2025 school year will utilize this waiting list order. Notifications to selected families will begin shortly after and will continue throughout the summer, until all openings are filled. Any remaining students will continue to be on the waiting list for the year until an opening becomes available.

As a reminder, DCA is in the beginning stages of applying for a charter renewal through OEI.

DCA will submit an Intent to Renew letter, typically due by late May/early June.

DCA will submit a renewal application, typically due at the end of August.

OEI's team will review the renewal application and call DCA in for a renewal interview in the fall. This is a chance for OEI to provide feedback, as well as ask questions about the application in preparation for the final hearing.

The final renewal hearing will occur with OEI staff in November or early December 2024.

Based on the outcome of the renewal hearing, OEI's director will present the renewal report to the Mayor. A renewal contract will then be composed and communicated.

Curriculum and Programming

Per recent legislation:

- (IC) 20-32-8.5-2, public schools where fewer than 70% of students who achieved a passing score on IREAD-3 must:
 - Use a curriculum that is based on science of reading and approved by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).
 - Employ an instructional coach trained in science of reading.
 - Administer IREAD-3 to students in second grade.
 - Use a benchmark, formative, interim, or similar assessment that shows alignment with the Indiana Academic Standards and is approved by IDOE.

- Additionally, to support Indiana’s statewide goal of ensuring 95% of third grade students can read by 2027, House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1558-2023 required the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) to establish a required literacy endorsement for teacher candidates, as defined in Indiana Code (IC) 20-28-3-1, applying for an initial Professional Educator License covering the pre-K-5 grade span or special education licensure after June 30, 2025.
- To further strengthen the professional knowledge of educators with an existing license covering the pre-k-5 grade span or special education licensure, HEA 1243 (2024) revised IC 20-28-5-19.7 to include the literacy endorsement requirement for all Indiana educators renewing a practitioner Professional Educator License or accomplished practitioner Professional Educator License that includes these specified grades and content areas after July 1, 2027. Of DCA’s current teachers, 11 out of the 12 will be required to obtain this literacy endorsement in order to renew their licenses.
- HEA 1001-2023 allocated funding to support educators required to earn the literacy endorsement by securing a provider for the required 80 hours of professional development at no cost to the educator and covering the cost of the licensing exam required to receive the literacy endorsement. Additionally, eligible educators will receive up to \$1,200 in stipends as they progress through the 80-hour course. Cora Collier has been working with the teachers to get them signed up for this opportunity.
- Beginning with the graduating class of 2029, the SBOE voted to update Indiana’s diploma requirements to the state’s current [graduation pathways](#), as well as the five characteristics of an [Indiana Graduate Prepared to Succeed \(Indiana GPS\)](#), which include: academic mastery; career and postsecondary readiness (credentials and experiences); communication and collaboration; work ethic; and civic, financial, and digital literacy. These represent the five characteristics that Hoosier stakeholders consistently agree are essential for all graduates, regardless of where they live or what their path is for the future.
 - Options will include
 - **Indiana GPS Diploma** - a more flexible, personalized version of the current Core 40 diploma
- **Indiana GPS Diploma Plus** - requires high-quality work-based learning and a credential of value (educational attainment)

- **The Alternate Diploma** will continue to be an option for those who qualify.

DCA students have begun taking the state's accountability assessments. IREAD, a reading test for 3rd graders, was successfully completed prior to Spring Break, along with the SAT for diploma-track 11th graders and the WIDA for English Learners. Students in grades 3-8 will be assessed primarily in the areas of math and language arts via ILEARN or IAM (alternate assessment). Results will hopefully be released over the summer and used toward calculating DCA's academic achievement results.

The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) test was recently administered to six DCA students. A passing score of 31 or higher allows the student to meet the Post-Secondary Readiness Competency requirement toward his/her diploma under Indiana's Graduation Pathways. Beginning with the 2025 graduation cohort, a student does have to complete the IDOE Military Enlistment Intent Form if utilizing the ASVAB score for this grad pathway requirement. However, this form is simply filed at the school level and does not actually commit the student to enlistment.

DCA's annual Title I Math Day/Parent Engagement Meeting is being planned for late May. The plan is to invite families to join us for a Parent Engagement Meeting to review the goals of the school and provide feedback regarding our School Improvement Plan (SIP). Families will also be provided with academic resources to utilize with their children over the summer. More information will be forthcoming as details are finalized.

DCA continues to utilize the following curriculum resources:

- **Into Math/Reading** (elementary)
- **Imagine Learning (formerly Edgenuity)** (high school diploma-track) ○ **Life-Centered Education** (high school vocational-track) ○ **Unique Learning System** (life skills) ○ **Moby Max** (elementary) ○ **Learning A-Z** (elementary)
- **Google classroom** (various curriculum for all levels)
- **Community-Based Instruction (CBI)** ○ **Onsite Job Skills**

School Safety

DCA's new SRO, Officer Hurt, was able to work with officials to finally get the area in front of DCA labeled as a school zone. This should alert drivers to slow down when passing the school and to the possible presence of children.

The School Safety Committee has resumed meetings to discuss any outstanding areas of concern and review safety policies and procedures in need of updates. Discussions with

Damar's Vice President of Operations, Donnie McCoy, have been held to identify potential gaps in the current safety plan and to see about the possibility of having an onsite risk assessment completed. Crisis management plans from both ABA and the residential campus have been shared, and DCA administration, along with Officer Hurt, will be working with Damar's communications team to create an updated version for the school.

Grants/Fundraising

As DCA prepares to close out another round of grants, including the last of the ESSER III funds, Admin continues to collaborate with Damar Services to ensure deadlines for applications, expenditures, and reimbursements are met. DCA has been awarded multiple grants, including the Title I, Title II, Title IV, IDEA 611 and 619, and COVID relief grants (ESSER I, II, and III). These funds, which target specific areas of improvement and are required to be spent on supplemental activities and resources beyond normal operating costs, have been used to enhance DCA's program offerings, to provide staff training, and to fund the Social-Emotional Learning Specialist position.

Governance

The Governance Committee met April 24, 2024. Members include Joey Wright, Dr. Jim Dalton, Julie Pitt, and Aimee Brown.

The Governance Committee focus for the next several months is primarily three-fold. First, the Committee is working closely with the Damar Services Board in the consideration of candidates to appoint to the DCA Board. As Damar's Board has recently gone through major changes (reduced in size and scope and increased meeting frequency to monthly) to ensure eligibility for the new FQHC initiative, the Board makeup expectations have changed. The Services Board has one opening and is closely considering several candidates. DCA participated in the Mayor's Board Recruitment event last month and continues to contact and have follow-up with interested parties. Damar Services next Board meeting is scheduled for May 22nd.

The Governance Committee is providing support and oversight to DCA leadership as the process for DCA's Charter Renewal is underway. This includes the submission of the Letter of Intent, the submission of the renewal packet, the renewal interview, the renewal hearing, and the renewal approval.

The last board meeting, DCA is vetting opportunities for expansion. Board Chair Joey Wright, and Damar CEO Jim Dalton met with the CEO of the Mind Trust – Brandon Brown, on April 16th. Brandon provided suggestions and grant opportunities for consideration as DCA continues to look at opportunities for expansion. There is interest in local expansion (DCA and Damar's waiting lists remain long), as well as expansion to support Damar's new residential program in East Chicago (with that campus providing an anchor for a possible new school location and operation).

DCA Community/Advocacy Committee

The Community Advocacy Committee did not meet this period. The Committee will meet before the next scheduled board meeting.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met April 24, 2024. members include Lyle Coleman Dr. Jim Dalton and Octavius Molton.

The Financials remain healthy and on budget. Staff and CFO Octavius Molton continue to meet and monitor the state of the financials.

The DCA will form a task force to look at timing and possible planning of expansion and growth.

New opportunities in the East Chicago Area are one option in the discussion now that Damar North has opened in the area.

New Business

DCA will host Community on May 15, 5 pm to 7 pm. Families are invited to attend food and fun with community vendors.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm.