

DCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes August 28, 2024

Date and Location

Wednesday August 28 2024

11:30 am

6067 Decatur Blvd.

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Amber Fields

Monique Johnson

Brittney Kalmas

Sam Moya

Julie Pitts

Allyson Strother

Berenice Torres

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 Associate

Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 11:34 am.

A quorum was present and Minutes from the June 2024 Meeting were approved.

The members and staff welcomed new member Monique Johnson to her first meeting.

Damar Updates

Dr. Dalton updated the board on the happenings at Damar Services. A very busy two months since the last meeting. The State of Damar was presented in early August and information was shared with staff on new AI plans, the Strategic Plan, The Pharmacy, Renovation plans for Damar North and a possible purchase of Wernle.

Phase 3 of the Village Center is ready for move-ins and celebrations. The new Center Grand Opening is scheduled for October 9th and a Concert is scheduled for October 10th. All members are invited to attend.

Operation Highlights

Students returned to DCA on Wednesday, August 7th. A back-to-school event was held the evening before, and over 30 families attended and had the opportunity to meet their teachers and acclimate to their classrooms before beginning school the next day. Information regarding DCA's Title I program was also provided.

Staff participated in two days of back-to-school professional development, including mandatory trainings per IDOE and Damar, as well as use of DCA's Makerspace and other curriculum resources.

Twenty Five new enrollments have started this year. IEP case conferences are in full swing, and students will continue to be added until reaching this year's budgeted capacity of 180 students divided amongst 12 teachers and classrooms. The first Membership Enrollment count will be Tuesday, October 1st, followed by the Special Education count on December 2nd, and the second Membership count on February 3rd.

DCA's charter renewal through OEI is currently in progress.

- An Intent to Renew letter has been submitted.
- The renewal application is in process and is due to OEI at the end of August.
- DCA is scheduled for a **Renewal Capacity Interview on October 29th, 2024, from 2:00 to 4:30pm** at the Indianapolis City-County Building. This will be 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 on December 11th, 2024, at 6:00pm** at the Indianapolis City-County Building.
- 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

Following the close of the legislative session last spring, the IDOE has provided a document for all newly enacted laws [2024 Indiana Legislative Education Guidance Overview.pdf - Google Drive](#) which continues to be updated as more guidance becomes available. Numerous additional requirements have been added, centering around IDOE's 2024 legislative priorities which include:

- Ensuring students are reading by the end of third grade
- Redesigning ILEARN

- Helping more students gain digital literacy skills
- Rethinking high school
- 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

The School Safety Committee met over the summer to review current and proposed safety protocols and procedures. Officer Hurt, DCA's former School Resource Officer, drafted a crisis management plan which was presented to the committee during the meeting. Revisions were discussed, and an updated version was created. The committee will meet to review the plan, and once a final version has been drafted, all staff will be trained to begin implementation.

Under Officer Hurt's direction, DCA's back parking lot was painted at the beginning of the year with lanes and a clearly defined directional flow for cars to facilitate a safer arrival and dismissal experience for students.

Leadership/Personnel

The School Resource Officer, Officer Hurt, recently resigned to take on a full-time position with his police department. During his short tenure, he accomplished several tasks, including those mentioned above, as well as getting Decatur Boulevard zoned a school zone in front of the building. His presence has been missed, and we hope to find a replacement in the near future.

A new teacher has been hired to fill the vacancy in the high school vocational program after Kaitlin LeBoeuf resigned to take another position. Shayna Hyatte brings a combination of teaching and direct support professional experience to DCA, and we are excited to welcome her to the team!

Alex Sanders was hired for the open teaching assistant position in DCA's life skills program. She has already proven to be an asset for the classroom, as well as the school, quickly developing rapport with her students and jumping in to help wherever needed. Welcome, Alex!

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.

The next round of grant budget applications will be due September 30th. A revised School Improvement Plan is due October 4th. Areas of focus in the new plan will include literacy instruction, social/emotional education, and work-based learning, which align to the needs of the school, as well as the priorities recently identified by IDOE. The new grant funding will be budgeted to support these initiatives.

Governance

The Governance Committee met on August 28, 2024. Members include Joey Wright, Dr. Jim Dalton, Julie Pitt and Aimee Brown

DCA's Board seats are fully occupied. As a reminder, the Community/Full Board elects 5 of the 9-person board with Damar Services appointing the other 4 seats. While Damar is charged with appointing 4 seats, the full Board must approve any appointments by Services. The following members are elected/appointed as of 7-1-24.

- Joey Wright – Elected, Board Chair
- Lyle Coleman – Elected
- Allyson Strother – Elected
- Brittany Kalmes – Elected
- Julie Pitts - Elected
- Amber Fields – Appointed
- Sam Moya – Appointed
- Bernice Garcia – Appointed
- Monique Johnson – Appointed

Finance

The Finance Committee met August 28, 2024. Members include Lyle Coleman, Dr. Jim Dalton and Octavius Molton.

The financials are on budget. Staff and CFO continue to meet and monitor the financials for DCA.

Lilly Endowment's Marion County K-12 Public School's Initiative

Damar Charter Academy was invited and attended an information session in August for the new LEI Marion County K-12 Public Schools Initiative. The aim of the initiative is to help public schools initiate, enhance or expand compelling programs and projects that show promise to improve student's academic achievement and/or prospects for post-secondary success. LEI has allocated up to \$450 million for this multi-year initiative.

Eligible public and charter schools can request funding through a 3-step process:

- Phase 1 **Planning Grants** – up to 50K to be used for a one-year period. Requests are due by September 13, 2024.
- Phase 2 **Implementation Grants** – up to the higher of \$500 per enrolled student (2023 - 24 enrollment) or \$200K. Requests are due by February 14, 2025.
- Phase 3 **Competitive Grants** – Up to \$7.5M for schools with enrollment between 151 and 400 students. Concept Papers are due by April 7, 2025.

With the Board's support, the leadership at Damar and DCA will develop concepts and proposals for these initiatives.

DCA Community/Advocacy Committee

The DCA Community /Advocacy Committee met on August 28, Members in Attendance were Julie Fenton, Chair, Amber Fields, Brittney Kalmas and Berenice Torres.

Meeting Goal: to identify ways the committee can support DCA's current focus areas:

1. **Social/Emotional Wellness**
2. **Work-Based Learning**
3. **Literacy Instruction**

Suggestions

- **SEL**
 - Organizing the sponsoring of families at Christmas
 - Attending one of our parent-led Family Engagement Group meetings and hearing directly from them what resources they would like to see/know/have access to/etc.

- Hosting a community resource fair for families
- Assisting with our EOY family engagement event

- **WBL**
 - Developing partnerships with businesses that would like to donate money, resources, and/or the opportunity for students to become employed.
 - Helping DCA promote the Dragon Works program and increase its scope... and also helping DCA to develop an actual enterprise out of student made products (similar to Purposeful Design <https://pdindy.com/>)
 - Assisting with fundraising efforts and/or donor connections to eventually provide DCA with new or additional space to grow programs.

- **LI**
 - Book donations for the Family Literacy Night in December
 - Developing partnerships with community agencies that provide literacy instruction and support for families.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.

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