



## Board Meeting Minutes

### **Date and Location**

Wednesday August 28, 2019  
11:30 am  
Damar Services, Inc.  
6067 Decatur Blvd  
Indianapolis, IN 46241

### **Board Members Present**

Carlos Alexander  
Lyle Coleman  
Patricia Edwards  
Jordan Maitland  
Tifini McClyde  
Allyson Strother  
Joey Wright

### **Board Members Absent**

Chuck Ellis

### **Others Present (Staff, Public)**

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader  
Dr. Jim Dalton DCA, Superintendent  
Julie Gurule, DCA  
Cora Collier, DCA  
Paul Dennison, Damar, Finance Director  
Elaine Showalter, CFO  
Carla Meyer, Office Manager  
Aerionna Martin, Mayors Office

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the June 26, 2019 meeting were approved.

### **Academic Year Begins**

Damar Charter Academy began its ninth school year on Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Prior to that, staff participated in two days of training, covering topics including seizures, suicide prevention, IEP implementation and transition planning, standard response protocol, active shooter response, and therapeutic crisis intervention. These sessions, along with many of the Damar Services' annual trainings, help to fulfill the list of mandatory requirements for educators published by the Indiana Department of Education each year.

Thirty-four new students have already been admitted this school year, with an additional seven scheduled. This will bring the current enrollment to 187, with our maximum capacity being 195 students. Our targeted enrollment with the Mayor's Office is 185 students. We are continuing to work through our waiting list of roughly 130 students to fill the remaining vacancies prior to the first IDOE Membership Count Day on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Events of Note**

Students and families were invited to our annual Back-to-School Night held the evening before school began. Twenty-eight different families were in attendance and were able to meet the teachers and (re)acclimate themselves to their new classroom environments. Molly Wells (teacher) worked with volunteers from Kohls Cares for Kids to get our clothing and food pantry up and running and made available to families that night. In addition, per the Mayor's Office's initiative, representatives from the Marion County Health Department were onsite to talk to families about the dangers of lead poisoning and to inform them of an upcoming opportunity to have kindergarten and first grade students tested, free of charge, on November 13<sup>th</sup>, at DCA. We were also fortunate enough to have a professional estate planner from MetLife, Gordon Holmes, who specializes in helping families of those with special needs, in attendance. Mr. Holmes provided DCA with a large donation of school supplies and is hoping to schedule a parent information event sometime later this year.

### **Curriculum and Programming**

Cora Collier began meeting with teachers in groups prior to the end of last school year. They are now officially organized into three teams: Academic, Vocational, and Life Skills.

Each team gathers weekly to collaborate on curriculum and develop programming ideas. In addition, Cora will be reviewing all educational data collected with each team on a monthly basis to help inform their instruction and identify areas of program need.

Board Member, Patty Edwards asked about the “I Learn” tests results. Aimee Brown informed the board, the results of the I Learn Tests will be available at the next Board Meeting. The results are made public on September 4, 2019.

### **School Safety**

As previously mentioned, DCA’s new standard response protocol was reviewed during the staff back-to-school training. This “Operational Guidance for Schools, Districts, Departments, and Agencies” is compiled by the “I Love U Guys” Foundation and focuses on four main procedures: lockdown, lockout, evacuate, and shelter. Verbiage to use when communicating a particular threat to all students and staff is outlined in a clear, concise manner, as well as the role of the teacher during such an event. In addition, the Public Relations Director for IMPD presented staff with an active shooter training. Matt Hohman, DCA’s School Safety Specialist, has already begun scheduling and conducting the mandatory drills for DCA.

A student brought a fake gun to school. The gun was found at the bus stop. There was no danger to students. The Safety Specialist and IMPD Officer were present. The student was suspended for failing to follow zero tolerance on any weapon brought to school. A letter was sent to parents. Follow up on the importance of no weapons allowed at DCA.

### **Grants/Fundraising**

The Lilly Comprehensive Counseling Initiative first-year grant report was recently completed and submitted per the grant requirements. As you may recall, DCA resubmitted its Lilly Comprehensive School Counseling Implementation Grant to be considered for the second round of funding last year. DCA’s request for \$100,000 to enhance the current career education program was granted, and work within the scope of this 3-year grant began this past year. Plans to contract with Nancy Washburn, Transition Specialist, to develop a full-spectrum career education curriculum and evaluation process are well under way for this school year. Last year, Nancy conducted weekly lessons focused on transition planning with high school students as part of the Pre-Employment Transition Services Program through Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition, 75% of our graduates were referred to Vocational Rehabilitation Services for employment assistance prior to program exit due to this initiative.

The DCA Life Skills program celebrated the receipt of a generous \$25,000 grant from the Damar Foundation. Thus far, the awarded funds have been used to remodel the kitchen space and incorporate it into the classroom setting with a new access point, appliances, and needed supplies. The sensory area also received a complete makeover, adding various textures to the walls, lighting, equipment, and manipulatives throughout. DCA wishes to thank the Foundation for their extremely generous and continued support!

## **Leadership/Personnel**

The beginning of the school year brought one new addition to our DCA teaching staff. Laura Berning, a former Damar Freeway teacher, joined us after serving for several years at Damar's private school. Laura brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, as well as a heartfelt passion for serving students with special needs and behavioral challenges. She replaced former DCA teacher, Chrissy Harris, who moved to California over the summer. After analyzing the waiting list and targeted areas of need, it was determined that DCA would combine the K-4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary classrooms, and then add a second middle school classroom for intensive behavioral needs students, which Laura is now responsible for.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Governance is in the process of completing the evaluation of the school leader as well as the Board's self-evaluation.

The State is in the process of going to the first appointed Superintendent of Public Schools.

DCA would like to extend the partnership with Barnes and Thornburg to help enforce and push a bill to pass legislation. The lobbying will cover the following:

- Contract will be for 8-9 months, April/ May until Oct. with an increase of an additional \$3,000, for a total sum of \$21,000.00.
- Lobbyist will help push a formal endorsement through legislation, which DCA needs for accountability measures.
- Recognize DCA as a school who uses Best Practices.

Motion was made by Patricia Edwards and seconded by Karen Snyder, all were in favor of continuing the lobbyist for 8 to 9 months.

## **Financial Position**

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, DCA had a positive financial margin of \$260,792. Cash flow is positive and stable. End of year Total Assets of DCA is \$1,762,096.

The balance sheet has remained stable and adequately liquid.

Next Board of Directors Meeting will take place at DCA on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. DCA will be holding their fall carnival/ ice cream social so that parents may attend if they wish.

Chair Carlos adjourned meeting at 12:24 pm