



Board Meeting Minutes

Date and Location

Wednesday February 26, 2020
11:30 AM
6067 Decatur Blvd
Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman
Chuck Ellis
Karen Snyder
Allyson Strother
Joey Wright

Others Present (Staff, Public)

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader
Dr. Jim Dalton DCA, Superintendent
Cora Collier, DCA
Julie Gurule, DCA
Paul Dennison, Damar, Finance Director
Elaine Showalter, CFO
Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant
Amber Fields, Guest

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the December 2019 meeting were approved.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT/ACTIVITIES

The Winterfest Carnival held in conjunction with the DCA board meeting on December 18th was a huge success! Over 150 people were in attendance, and it was a great time had by all! Participants enjoyed pizza, games, music, live vocal performances, and pictures with Santa. Seventeen families received food and Christmas gifts, and every child walked away with a toy, courtesy of Toys for Tots. DCA would like to thank Duke Energy and the entire Board for their extreme generosity and assistance with the event.

DCA staff participated in a full day of professional development on Monday, January 6th, covering the newly required “Stop the Bleed” training (HB 1063) and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) recertification. The second semester officially began on Tuesday, January 7th with the return of students.

The new year has brought multiple staff and student absences, due to illness. DCA admin are exploring the possibility of hiring a PRN sub to help cover teacher and TA positions when staff are out. Thus far, there have been no school cancellations due to weather, and DCA has only had one delay this semester.

In conjunction with the Damar Guild’s annual gala fundraiser, a crew from the Guinness Book of World Records came to Damar Services on February 7th and filmed over 100 DCA students playing a variety of games in the Damar gym. Students were thrilled to be “TV stars” and included in the project!

DCA enjoyed a Valentine’s Day Dance hosted by the Student Council on Friday, February 14th. Students were divided into three different sessions and enjoyed music, dancing, sensory activities, cookies, and the crowning of a king and queen during each. It was a wonderful event, thanks to the efforts of Tammy Travier, life skills teaching assistant and Student Council Advisor.

Eighty two new students have been enrolled so far this year. As previously mentioned, this resulted in a total of 198 (196 special education; 2 general education) students enrolled for the annual special education funding count day on December 2nd, 2019. The target enrollment for DCA is 195 students. The school’s charter states it will maintain an enrollment of 180 students each year, with a +/- 10% allowance. DCA anticipates receiving a total of **\$1,421,148.00** in special education funding, based on this count. In addition, DCA met its membership (ME) goal of 195 students on February 3rd for the third and final funding count of the 2019-2020 school year.

The 2020-2021 school calendar has now been published. A copy is included for review.

Curriculum and Programming

The winter round of the NWEA is currently being administered, and IRead, ILEARN, and IAM will begin in March.

Mandatory annual instruction on child abuse and child sexual abuse for students in kindergarten through 12th grade (SEA 355) has begun. This year, all students are receiving developmentally appropriate lessons from the Safer, Smarter Kids or the Safer, Smarter Teens curriculum series. Depending on the grade level, lessons consist of 5-8 weeks of instruction on topics related to personal safety, including peer pressure, being assertive, body boundaries, cyber bullying, safe/unsafe secrets and touches, self-esteem, recognizing red flags, healthy relationships, dating violence, and sexual abuse.

DCA will begin implementing Kuder Galaxy, an online career exploration program geared toward elementary students, after Spring Break. The high school diploma-track students will be using Kuder's Indiana Career Explorer program to research potential careers, assess work skills and attitudes, and develop a portfolio consisting of a resume, cover letter, and various artifacts related to college and career readiness. High school vocational students will continue working on transition and employability skills, with progress recorded via ULS.

As previously mentioned, two DCA seniors completed the application requirements for Project SEARCH, a collaboration between IPS, Easterseals Crossroads, and Community East Hospital that provides students who have recently graduated with a Certificate of Completion (diplomas are not allowed) the opportunity to train in various positions throughout the hospital. This year-long, unpaid internship translates into paid employment for individuals who successfully complete the program. We are beyond thrilled that both students were accepted into the program! One individual, however, has chosen to delay his participation in the program and remain a DCA student for two more years until aging out of special education services.

Emily Watson, school social worker/Damar Services' behavioral therapist has begun her social/emotional group work with students from several DCA classes. Emily will soon be credentialed to bill private insurance for students who do not qualify for Medicaid, thereby increasing the number of students receiving individual counseling services as well. In addition, DCA will again be organizing the Curriculum-Based Support Group (CBSG) small groups to begin weekly sessions after Spring Break.

DCA is continuing its work to increase the scope of vocational training opportunities offered to students. Plans are already underway to add a “Damar Depot” supply store and a “Dapper Dragon Boutique” resale shop. In addition, Cora Collier is working with Donnie McCoy, Vice President of Operations for Damar Services, to explore the possibility of DCA students assisting with landscaping and general lawn care for the Damar group homes. A school-wide positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) economy system is also being developed, where students will have the opportunity to earn “Dragon Dollars” for work completed and other positive behaviors to be spent at The Dragon’s Den, The Dragon’s Depot, and/or The Dapper Dragon Boutique.

DCA had an actual school lockout on Friday, February 14th, after receiving word that an estranged man was likely on his way to the school in search of a staff member. Admin responded immediately, following the “I Love U Guys” standard response protocol for a lockout. Staff successfully followed directives, and the suspect was apprehended by the school’s resource officer before ever making it to the school.

DCA Administration, along with teacher, Molly Wells, met with Nina Suntzeff of the Damar Foundation to review the needs of the school and to create a strategic fundraising plan. A lengthy discussion was held, as Nina gathered information to share with the rest of the Foundation. The meeting was productive and supportive, and DCA looks forward to continuing its partnership with the Foundation.

The 5th Annual SPEDucators Symposium, hosted in part by DCA leaders, is just around the corner! The conference will be held on March 6th, 2020, at Marian University and will provide free professional development to nearly 200 attendees from public, private, and charter schools around the state, all focused on better serving students with disabilities. DCA’s own Dr. Dalton will be presenting a session titled, “If it weren’t for that one kid!” focusing on practical strategies for teachers facing the most challenging of behaviors in their classrooms.

The Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation recently asked for nominations for their Teacher of the Year (TOY) award. Molly Wells was nominated for DCA, and she has now been invited to participate in phase two of the process. Selections will be made during the spring and summer, and three winners, each winning a \$3,000 cash prize, will be announced in the fall. The following is an excerpt from Molly’s nomination:

“Molly is a natural leader, both personally and professionally. In addition to serving her community by volunteering with organizations such as The League of Miracles and Active Grace, she has taken on numerous supporting roles throughout our school. Molly works tirelessly year-round, including evenings and weekends--and even often during her vacations--to ensure no need goes unmet for our students and families. She has written numerous grants to secure funding for technology, play equipment, sensory items, field

trips, and even the food and clothing pantry she founded. Additionally, Molly developed a partnership with Kohls Cares for Kids which provides both volunteers and financial assistance to our school. She has solicited donations from the community to help supply the food and clothing pantry, and she secured a twice weekly donation from Panera Bread that she personally picks up from the store each week. Every Friday, Molly works with a group of students to pack backpacks full of food to help over 50 students avoid hunger on the weekends. Molly's leadership extends beyond community and family involvement, as she actively collaborates with other school personnel. The school administration relies on Molly's input and expertise for program development and assistance with teacher trainings. She regularly aids other teachers with assessments and compliance documentation, and she takes on responsibilities in their absences, such as stepping up to chair the staff social committee for a colleague out on medical leave. From gathering donations for Christmas assistance for families to nominating fellow coworkers for programs like the WZPL 12 Days of Christmas, Molly is the epitome of a dedicated teacher, leader, and friend.”

The IDOE recently shared school accountability data for the 2018-19 year with schools. On a positive note, DCA was again issued a “no grade” on the state report card. However, Federal designations for Indiana schools identified as Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI) were released and unaffected by the State’s “hold harmless” on letter grades. Damar Charter Academy was designated as CSI based on graduation rate (a four year federal graduation rate below 67%) for the ESSA federal accountability system. As such, Damar Charter Academy is REQUIRED by Indiana’s ESSA plan to complete a Comprehensive Needs Assessment and School Improvement plan. Additionally, CSI schools must participate in a Climate and Culture survey provided through the Department and Panorama Education. Unfortunately, there is no waiver process for the federal ESSA accountability system. The climate and culture survey has already been shared with parents, teachers, and students. More information will be disseminated from IDOE as DCA continues to walk through this process.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the Indiana Department of Education, Office of Special Education (IDOE/OSE) to determine if each local educational agency (LEA) meets the requirements of Part B of the IDEA. Based on an LEA’s score on a number of criteria, the LEA is ranked in one of four categories of determination: meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention, and needs substantial intervention. The process by which the IDOE/OSE makes determinations has changed. To determine if each LEA meets the requirements of Part B of the IDEA, IDOE/OSE has implemented *Results Driven Accountability (RDA)*.

RDA includes three elements. Results Elements, including federal results indicators and other assessment data, Timely Data Elements, and as in prior years, Compliance Elements. Data from these elements are then calculated, resulting in an RDA score, which in turn is used to make the determination. The chart below details the score range for each determination category, the LEA score, and the resulting determination category.

Based on the combined score of the RDA Compliance and Data Matrices, DCA has been placed in: **Needs Assistance**. Aimee Brown attended the required IDOE “Roadshow” to learn more about the corrective action necessary. A meeting was held with an IDOE representative on February 12th to review the matrices and develop an action plan. Fortunately, the

Compliance and Data Matrices	
Determination Category	Range
Meets Requirements*	82.30-100
Needs Assistance	56.00-82.29
Needs Intervention	0.00-55.99
Needs Substantial Intervention	N/A
RDA Determination Score	67.84
Determination Category	Needs Assistance
*In order to qualify for “Meets Requirements,” an LEA must score above 41.56 in the Results Matrix.	

Results Matrix	
Level of Differentiated Support and Technical Assistance	Range
Level 1	52.50-100
Level 2	36.80-52.49
Level 3	0.00-36.79
Level 4	N/A
RDA Results Score	27.06
Technical Assistance Level	Level 3

representative was familiar with the population served at DCA and worked with admin from a supportive, rather than punitive, approach to complete the plan of correction. Once the final copy is submitted, no further action will be required this year.

Governance

Damar Services’ Board of Directors recommended the appointment of Amber Fields and Jessica Smiley to the DCA Board of Directors. A team of DCA Board members, led by Chair Joey Wright, met with Amber and Jessica to vet their interest and qualifications. Ms. Wright subsequently communicated to DCA Board members regarding the recommended candidates and the team’s approval for Board seats. Since that time, Ms. Smiley has taken on a new job within her company (Key Bank) that requires additional travel and responsibilities. Because of that, she

did not believe that she could adequately fulfil her responsibilities to the Damar Board and to the DCA Board. She has since requested that she no longer be considered for a DCA Board seat. This information has been shared with the Damar Services Governance Committee and follow-up to address the Damar appointed open DCA Board seat is occurring. Motion was made Allyson Strother to appoint Amber Fields to the DCA Board of Directors and seconded by Karen Snyder all members agreed.

In conversations with the Office of Education Innovation through the Mayor's Office, Chair, Joey Wright, has recommended more formal Committees be established through the DCA Board (e.g. academics, Governance, Finance, etc.). This will be discussed in more detail at the February 26th meeting. Dr. Dalton, Joey Wright and Aimee Brown will propose members for each committee.

FINANCIAL OUTCOMES/OPERATIONS

For the reporting period ending January 31, 2020, DCA had a positive financial margin of \$113,798.00. This is compared to a budgeted margin of \$12,654. YTD margin is \$171,631 compared to a YTD budgeted margin of \$88,581.

The balance sheet has remained stable and adequately liquid with cash flow positive and stable. End of January 2020 Total Assets of DCA is \$1,983,507.

New Business

Lyle Coleman would like for staff to research before and after school programs. Staff members agreed to follow up on some leads. Amber Fields will contact the YMCA to find out what programs they offer.

The Prom is scheduled for May 14, 2020 and Graduation is scheduled for May 29, 2020.

End of DCA Strategic Management Report

DAMAR CHARTER ACADEMY

2020-2021 School Calendar

August 2020				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

September 2020				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

October 2020				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9*
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

November 2020				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

December 2020				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17*	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

January 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

February 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

March 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19*
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

April 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

May 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28*
31				

June 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

July 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

No School (Office Closed)
Summer Break (Office Open)
Teacher Attendance Only
* End of Grading Period
Snow Make-Up Day

Grading Periods	Days Attended	
	Student	Faculty
1st	47	49
2nd	41	42
3rd	52	53
4th	40	40
Total	180	184

- Monday, August 3-Tuesday, August 4, 2020
- Wednesday, August 5, 2020
- Monday, September 7, 2020
- Friday, October 9, 2020*
- Monday, October 12-Friday, October 16, 2020
- Wednesday, November 25-Friday, November 27, 2020
- Thursday, December 17, 2020*
- Friday, December 18, 2020
- Monday, December 21, 2020-Friday, January 1, 2021
- Monday, January 4, 2021
- Monday, January 18, 2021
- Monday, February 15, 2021
- Friday, March 19, 2021*
- Monday, March 22-Friday, April 2, 2021
- Friday, May 28, 2021*
- Monday, May 31, 2021

- Teacher Work Days (No Students)
- First Student Day
- Labor Day
- End of 1st Quarter
- Fall Break
- Thanksgiving Break
- End of 2nd Quarter
- Teacher Work Day (No Students)
- Winter Break
- Teacher Work Day (No Students)
- MLK, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day/Possible Snow Make-up
- End of 3rd Quarter
- Spring Break
- End of 4th Quarter
- Memorial Day

If needed, additional snow make-up days will be announced

