

Date and Location

Wednesday February 24, 2021

11:30 AM

Zoom

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Patricia Edwards

Jordan Maitland

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

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 2020 meeting were approved.

There was no meeting in December due to Covid-19 restrictions.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT/ACTIVITIES

Operation Highlights

DCA students and staff began the second semester virtually on Monday, January 4th, in response to an initial mandate issued by Mayor Joe Hogsett requiring all Marion County schools to operate remotely until January 15th. This was later retracted, and DCA resumed in-person instruction the following week on Monday, January 11th. Consistent with the first semester, approximately 40% of students returned, while the remaining continued with the remote learning model.

To date, DCA has reported only 4 positive cases of COVID—3 students and 1 staff member. Guidance issued by the Indiana Department of Health was used to determine which individuals were required to quarantine and for what period of time. Though recommendations from state and county officials seem to be ever-changing, DCA continues to adhere to social distancing, mask wearing, and temperature screenings prior to entering the building.

The second per pupil membership (ME) funding count occurred on Monday, February 1st. DCA met its target enrollment of 195 students for this third and final funding count of the year. According to current law, schools collect only 85% of the typical funding for any student receiving 50% or more of his/her instruction virtually. As you may recall, the Indiana State Board of Education rectified the issue by voting in the fall to fund schools at 100% for each student attending in-person, as well as those who were virtual due to COVID, for the September count. Unfortunately, there has yet to be a resolution for this second count. House Bill 1003 aims to remedy the issue; however, a final determination has not yet been made.

Currently, it is expected that residential students (Damar campus and group homes) will return to in-person learning at the beginning of March.

The 2021-2022 school calendar has been published, and a copy is included herein.

Curriculum and Programming

The spring semester accountability assessments are underway, as no forgiveness due to COVID was given by the state for the 2020-2021 school year. The second round of NWEA testing has been completed, along with the WIDA assessment for English Learners. IREAD will be administered in March, and ILEARN and IAM will begin in April. DCA teachers are in the process of completing the required trainings to be certified as test administrators for those assessments.

Cora Collier is working with high school vocational teacher, Kaitlin LeBoeuf, to develop a universal screener for all high school students that will assess their current vocational skill levels and provide a method for monitoring progress each quarter. In conjunction with the Life Centered Education curriculum, an emphasis on functional academics such as telling time, counting money, and utilizing a calendar will be embedded in the instruction. Additionally, a list of vocational vocabulary sight words is being created to better help students focus on information pertinent to obtaining independent employment.

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, employability, and daily living skills.

DCA's virtual learning continues to utilize Google Classroom as the main platform and includes programs such as Learning A-Z, Brain Pop, Prodigy, CNN 10, Unique Learning Systems, and Boom Cards.

The Dapper Dragon Boutique (apparel and other retail items), The Dragon Depot (office supplies), and The Dragon Press (print/copy shop) officially opened during the second quarter and continue to go well. Each of these are an extension of DCA's Dragon Works vocational program and provide opportunities for students to develop job skills and appropriate work attitudes and behaviors. Students have enjoyed cashing in the Dragon Dollars they have earned for positive behaviors, academic achievements, and in-school jobs at the Dapper Dragon Boutique.

School Safety

DCA has developed an official School Safety Committee to meet monthly and review issues and best practices surrounding safety procedures, protocols, and policies. The committee will consist of School Safety Specialist, Matt Hohman, the administration, and teacher, Joy Patterson.

Aimee Brown and Matt Hohman have been participating in multiple trainings and discussions surrounding school safety throughout the year. In order to remain certified as DCA's Safety Specialists, each has now completed the required 16 hours of professional development for the year.

The Handheld Metal Detector and Wand Searches policy was presented to the members. Motion was made by Patricia Edwards and seconded by Allyson Strother and all members agreed to accept this policy.

Leadership/Personnel

DCA had its first ever "onsite" monitoring visit for Title I, II, III, and IV programming and the federal funds received through each. The audit, conducted by the federal grants team from DOE, was done virtually on December 9th with the DCA administration and Paul Dennison, the Program Administrator. Information was submitted to DOE for review and discussed during the visit. Subsequently, a report was issued on January 7th, and all corrective actions/documentation were submitted for review. A final report is expected sometime in March.

Grants/Fundraising

DCA is thrilled to have an updated PA system in place throughout the entire building! The new system is user-friendly and will add an additional layer to the school's safety measures. Thanks to the newest Damar Foundation technology grant, DCA has now purchased 160 Chromebooks for use both in the classroom and while students participate virtually. DCA wishes to thank the Foundation for their generous and continued support!

The DOE recently released the preliminary allocations for the second round of COVID/CARES act related funding (ESSER). The first round was almost \$60k, after an additional \$10k reallocation, and the second round is currently anticipated to be \$165,630.54! According to the DOE, this funding may be used to support all things COVID-related, including personnel expenses, maintenance upgrades, additional technology, and social-emotional resources, to name a few. In addition, Senate Bill 414, if passed, would require each school corporation to: (1) adopt and implement an Internet use policy; and (2) use hardware or install software on computers and other technology related devices owned by the school corporation or charter school to filter or block Internet access to materials that are harmful to minors by January 1st, 2022. The possibility of covering this requirement using ESSER funds may also be explored.

DCA is considering pursuing a grant that would provide funding toward after-school and/or summer programming. Per the state's Latchkey requirement, schools are to provide after-school care opportunities for students when feasible or obtain a waiver from IDOE acknowledging the undue burden such a program would place on the school, due to low parental interest/participation, etc. Over the past few months, DCA has been meeting with the program director for At Your School (AYS), an organization that provides programming and staffing for summer and before/after-school programs at numerous schools around the state, including Decatur Township schools. As a former Damar employee, Simone Brewer, the local AYS Program Director, has worked diligently to explore opportunities to either partner with an existing program (such as Decatur's) or to begin an independent one onsite at DCA. A recent survey of parents was conducted, and of the 44 responses received, 20 were interested; 13 were "maybe" interested; and 35 were interested in summer programming. DCA looks forward to continuing the conversation with AYS and/or exploring grant funding opportunities in hopes of establishing a sustainable program in the future.

A-F Accountability

DCA continues to work closely with our registered lobbyist at Barnes and Thornburg to establish an accepted alternative accountability framework. DCA has submitted revised language in the proposed model that was received positively by the State Board of Education. The revised language narrows the eligibility of schools that would qualify for the alternative framework. Since the revision of the language, there has been follow-up conversations with other members of the State Board including Pat Mapes, BJ Watts, and Katie Mote. DCA expects positive results in the legislative session.

Governance

Through the leadership of the Governance Committee, the following items are due to the Mayor's Office by the beginning of June 2021.

- DCA Board Self-Evaluation
- School Leader/CEO Evaluation
- School Leader/CEO Self-Evaluation
- Educational Management Organization (EMO) Evaluation
- Conflict of Interest Forms
- Board Assurance Forms

DCA leadership and Governance is charged with ensuring that this information is completed by the Board and submitted on time. There will be more follow-up over the next couple of months.

All DCA Board members are invited to attend the Damar Services annual Strategic Board Retreat scheduled for May 5th and 6th at DePauw University.

Other Committees

Academics Committee

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Academic Committee did not meet during this reporting period.

Finance

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Finance Committee did not meet during this reporting period.

Community/Advocacy

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Community/Advocacy Committee did not meet during this reporting period.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.