

Date and Location

Wednesday May 26, 2021

11:30 AM

Zoom

Board Members Present

Patricia Edwards

Amber Fields

Jordan Maitland

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

Ken File, Foundation President

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant

Welcome

Chair Joey Wright welcomed the board and staff to the meeting. This meeting was rescheduled due to low attendance at the April 2021 meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the February 2021 meeting were approved.

Operation Highlights

DCA students and staff began the 3rd Quarter on Monday, April 5th, following a revised, one-week Spring Break (March 29th-April 2nd). Prior to that, Damar residential students returned to in-person instruction on Monday, March 8th, after nearly a year of virtual learning. The transition went smoothly overall, as students were excited to begin physically attending school and returning to their “normal” structure and routine.

DCA has now added 1 positive case of COVID occurring in a staff member, for a total report of 3 students and 2 staff members this year. Guidance issued by the Marion County Health Department was used to determine which individuals were required to quarantine and for what period of time, and all parents/guardians were immediately notified. Luckily, the exposure was

contained within one classroom. 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 prior law, schools collect only 85% of the typical funding for any student receiving 50% or more of his/her instruction virtually. Recent legislation once again rectified this rule to ensure schools normally offering in-person instruction were not penalized financially for making the necessary accommodations for students as a result of COVID.

The second Special Education (SE) count for the year occurred on April 1st. Information collected on this date will be used strictly for informational purposes and not for funding calculations.

DCA held its annual lottery virtually on Wednesday, May 5th. A link to join was posted on the school's website, and the process was also recorded. The lottery will determine students selected for any identified openings for the 2021-2022 school year and will also reset the waiting list order for anyone not yet offered enrollment. Julie Gurulé will continue working with families throughout the remainder of the school year and over the summer to ensure enrollment targets are met for next school year.

DCA is pleased to announce that plans are underway for an in-person graduation ceremony to be held on Friday, May 28th, at 6:00pm, at the Damar Services Gymnasium. More information will be provided as details and safety precautions are solidified.

Curriculum and Programming

The state's 2020-2021 accountability assessments are well underway. The second round of NWEA testing was completed, along with the WIDA assessment for English Learners. IREAD was administered in mid-March, and ILEARN and IAM testing began April 19th. Schools anticipate being held harmless from test results for state accountability purposes once again, but were required to participate in the assessments for federal requirements. More guidance is expected to be issued.

Students in grades K-6, along with some in middle school, began weekly lessons utilizing Kuder Galaxy, an online career exploration program purchased through the Lilly Counseling Grant, after returning from Spring Break. The remaining middle school and high school diploma-track students have begun using the 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.

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.

In light of the recent tragedy that occurred after-hours near the school at the Fed-Ex facility, active shooter protocols have been reviewed amongst the School Safety Committee, and additional training for staff is being planned. As a reminder, DCA utilizes the “I Love U Guys” Standard Response Protocol (SRP) for emergency situations. Per the organization’s website, “A uniform, planned, and practiced response to any incident is the foundation of a safe school. The SRP is action-based, flexible, and easy to learn. It rationally organizes tactics for response to weather events, fires, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety.”

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. Additional paging devices have been purchased to ensure each administrative staff, along with the administrative assistant, nurse, and safety specialist, all have quick access to announce Standard Response Protocols if necessary in the event of an emergency.

New door handles were installed on all classroom, etc. doors throughout the school over Spring Break. These handles allow the doors to automatically lock when shut, so there is no need to use a key to ensure they are secured.

An additional staff ID card reader is being installed on the interior of the back door to the school to help control the flow of traffic and to provide an additional level of security.

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 has now been issued from IDOE stating that all initial findings have been resolved. Weekly meetings are now occurring to ensure all program requirements continue to be adhered to going forward.

Grants/Fundraising

The DOE 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 upwards of \$165,000! The application for funding was recently submitted, and DCA hopes to receive information regarding its final application soon. 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.

A-F Accountability

DCA continues to work closely with our registered lobbyist at Barnes and Thornburg to establish an accepted alternative accountability framework. Members of the State Board of Education continue to consider Damar's submitted framework and are continuing discussions. Presently, HB 1514 proposes to change the current accountability system with some caveats – including the publishing of certain information on a public dashboard (online). Discussions continue with BJ Watts and Pat Mapes to ensure that the changes and expectations work for Damar. Representatives from the Department of Education are expected to meet with Damar's lobbyist group and members of the State Board of Education to further refine. Damar Charter Academy will be participating in a conference call the week of 4-26-21 to further discuss and vet next steps.

Governance

Members were sent the following documents to review/complete before or on the day of the 4-28-21 Board Meeting.

- 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

Once received, Governance will formulate all needed evaluation results to share with the Board and School Leader and will publish for all Board members any recommended actions.

Other Committees

Academics Committee

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

Finance

Paul Dennison reported the financial outcomes noting that DCA is ahead of budget and in excellent condition. The audit results are clean has also been approved.

Community/Advocacy

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

End of April 2021 DCA Report