

Date and Location

Wednesday August 26, 2021

11:30 AM

Zoom

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Patricia Edwards

Amber Fields

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

Octavius Molton, CFO

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the June 2021 meeting were approved. Chair Joey Wright welcomed members and staff. Octavius Molton new CFO was introduced to the members.

Operation Highlights

DCA began the 2021-2022 school year on Wednesday, August 4th. All students returned to in-person learning at that time. The Marion County Health Department and CDC guidelines have been closely followed, and as updates have been issued, Staff and Administration have adapted. Thus far, all students are attending regularly in-person, and social distancing/mask-wearing policies and quarantine guidance provided by the Marion County Health Department are being followed.

Staff participated in two days of professional development. On Monday, August 2nd, a speaker from the I Love U Guys Foundation trained staff on the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) to be used in all emergency situations. The SRP provides consistent and concise verbiage for alerting

staff and students and recommended actions to take for various emergency situations, should they occur in the school environment. Several members of leadership from Damar Services and Damar ABA joined the training and discussion in an effort to help streamline Damar's emergency response across the agency. The following day, all DCA staff participated in "Stop the Bleed" training presented by nurses from Eskenazi Health, as well as Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) recertification.

A Back-to-School Night was held on August 3rd for all new and returning students and their families. Nearly forty 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 provided, as well as assistance with completing the student registration process. Additionally, a parent volunteer hosted a booth for more parental involvement and potentially organize a parent-teacher organization.

Due to personnel changes that occurred just three weeks prior to the start of the new school year, the typical enrollment target of 195 students has been adjusted for the first count day of the year (September 17th) to 180. Once additional personnel are hired, enrollment will once again increase to meet the 195-student capacity. The Mayor's Office was informed of the reduction, and because the current capacity is within 10% of DCA's charter contract number of 185 students, no amendment is needed. More information regarding the personnel changes may be found in the Leadership/Personnel section of this report.

Curriculum and Programming

Students working to earn their diplomas continue to utilize the online Edgenuity program. Those in our life skills classes are once again using the Unique Learning System platform, and those in our high school vocational program are following the Life-Centered Education curriculum. Additionally, DCA's curriculum includes Learning A-Z, Brain Pop, Prodigy, CNN 10, and Moby Max.

Due to lessened restrictions, community-based instruction and volunteer group work outings have resumed. Destinations have included the post office, the grocery store, the BMV, and volunteer organizations. In conjunction with DCA's Dragon Works initiative, the high school vocational program has begun its lawn care and maintenance work for the fall, as well as having begun construction on the school's new playground equipment. Plans are underway to reopen the Dragon's Den (snack shop), the Dragon Depot (supply store) and the Dragon Emporium (formerly the Dapper Dragon Boutique).

Finance

Financials continue to be in good standings. The year ended with \$334000.

School Safety

DCA leaders will continue to monitor the COVID situation and will adhere to any guidance set forth by the CDC, ISDH, IDOE, and/or MCHD. Thus far, two positive cases of COVID-19 have occurred among DCA students, and those affected/exposed were appropriately notified.

The new PA system has been completely installed, and additional paging units have been added for each of the administrators' offices, as well as the School Safety Specialist's desk. Additional walkie-talkies have been ordered to allow for both the teacher and the TA to carry one at all times. The first round of safety drills have been conducted, and discussions surrounding school safety and the SRP have occurred with students.

Leadership/Personnel

Summer 2021 brought the resignation of five teachers (Betsy Kurtz, high school diploma-track; Ian Slatter, high school vocational; Natalie Huffine, high school vocational; Rachel Tilly, life skills; Molly Wells, K-4) and one teaching assistant.

A new teacher, Laura Ralph, was hired to replace Betsy Kurtz, the known resignation, earlier in the summer. Thus far, she has proven to be an incredible addition to the DCA team, actively engaging her students and organizing numerous additional learning opportunities for them.

Two additional teachers have been hired. Kamara (Kami) Gard recently finished Damar's orientation process and began in a high school vocational classroom last week. Andrea Jakresky is currently in orientation and will be filling the life skills position. Kevin Collier has been working as a substitute teacher in the remaining high school vocational classroom and has done a wonderful job focusing on job readiness skills with the students. A former Damar Services Direct Care Staff, Dee Harris, was hired for the middle school teaching position and has been another welcomed addition!

The search continues for the two remaining open teaching positions. Once a teacher has been hired for the open elementary classroom, the enrollment target will return to the typical 195 students.

This month, DCA said goodbye to its Controller, Paul Dennison. Paul accepted a CFO position with a company in Florida. Damar's new CFO, Octavius Molton, has been in place for more than one month and is in the process of interviewing to fill Paul's position. We will miss Paul and wish him the best of luck.

Grants/Fundraising

DCA received a (virtual) on-site audit during the 2020-2021 school year for the federal Title grants. Based on the results, increased efforts have been made to inform and engage families and to ensure full compliance with the numerous regulations set forth for schools that receive Title funds. More information, including the School-wide Plan, District Parent Involvement Policy, School Parent Involvement Policy, School-Parent Compact, Formal Complaint Procedure, and recording of the Annual Title I Parent Meeting may be found on DCA's website at: <https://www.damarcharteracademy.org/title-i-ix/>. A family literacy night and a family math night are also being planned as part of the initiative.

The 2020-2021 school year marked the third year of the four-year Lilly Counseling Initiative grant DCA received. The year-end report has been submitted for review, and highlights include an increase in students' awareness of career opportunities, knowledge of employability skills, technical job skills and soft skills. Funds from the grant were used to purchase an industrial dust ventilation system, contract a Career Specialist who worked both individually and with groups of students, and various other program supplies during the 2020-2021 school year.

Governance

The Governance Committee for DCA will recommend that the Board accept the appointment from the Damar Services Board of Sam Moya for a DCA Board seat. Sam (soon to be Dr. Moya) is the Vice President of Children's Residential Services at Damar. About half of the students who attend DCA are part of Damar's treatment programs at the main campus – that Sam oversees. Sam's resume has been included in the Board Packet this month for Board Member review. More information about Sam can be found on Damar's main website – the leadership section. **Motion was made by Amber Fields and seconded by Allyson Strother to appoint Sam Moya to a board seat on the DCA Board of Directors, all members were in favor.**

The DCA Board Governance Committee has exhausted all methods of attempted communication with Chuck Ellis. This has included phone calls, e-mails, certified mail, and even a visit to his last known address. All attempts have not resulted in contact and certified mail was returned as "Not at This Address." As DCA has had no contact with Chuck for more than one year, it is expected that the Governance Committee will recommend that he be removed from the Board of Directors. **Motion was made by Patricia Edwards and seconded by Karen Snyder to remove Chuck Ellis from his seat on the DCA Board of Directors, all members were in favor.**

Background Checks are recommended for all members and the process will begin by 2022.

Once Covid guidelines change Chair Joey Wright will schedule times to meet with each member to discuss future term goals.