

Date and Location

Wednesday October 27, 2021

11:30 AM

Damar Services, Inc.

6067 Decatur Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Patricia Edwards

Amber Fields

Sam Moya

Karen Snyder

Allyson Strother

Joey Wright

Others Present (Staff, Public)

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader

Dr. Jim Dalton DCA, Superintendent

Julie Gurule, DCA

Elaine Showalter, CFO

Octavius Moltan, CFO

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant

Aaron Teeter, Mayors Office

Abbie Martin, Mayors Office

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the June 2021 meeting were approved.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT/ACTIVITIES

Operation Highlights

Damar Charter Academy commenced the end of the first quarter on Friday, October 8th. 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. Multiple students and faculty have been out due to COVID, but instruction has continued to occur in person as teachers, teaching assistants, and other faculty have worked together to ensure proper coverage of classrooms.

The first count of the year for funding occurred as planned on Friday, September 17th. The State Board of Education has committed to fully fund students who receive virtual instruction due to COVID-19 for a period not to exceed 50% of the days from the start of school through the end of December 2021. Therefore, DCA should receive 100% of funding for the 179 students who were actively enrolled on that first count date. The first Special Education (SE) count day is scheduled for December 1st, with the goal being to meet an enrollment target of 180 students, a slight reduction of 15 students due to the teacher hiring shortage and still having two teacher openings.

Curriculum and Programming

As previously mentioned, students are once again engaged in in-person learning. Teachers have imbedded the use of technology, thanks to previous grants, within the school environment, and many continue to use Google Classroom as a method for organizing classroom lessons.

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.

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. The Dragon's Den (snack shop), the Dragon Depot (supply store) and the Dragon Emporium (formerly the Dapper Dragon Boutique) have recently resumed operations. Each of these are an extension of DCA's Dragon Works vocational program and provide additional opportunities for students to develop job skills and appropriate work attitudes and behaviors.

School Safety

DCA leaders continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will adhere to any guidance set forth by the CDC, ISDH, IDOE, and/or MCHD. The first round of safety drills have been conducted, and discussions surrounding school safety and the SRP have occurred with students.

Leadership/Personnel

The search continues for the two remaining open teaching positions. Once a teacher has been hired for the open elementary/middle school classroom, the enrollment target will return to the typical 195 students. Attempts have been made to hire and subsequently increase enrollment, but to no avail thus far. DCA continues to operate with an enrollment of 180 students in the interim.

Grants/Fundraising

At this time, there are no new grants or fundraising initiatives underway at DCA. With regard to the previously awarded Damar Foundation technology grant, the remaining funds totaling \$150,000 are being used to purchase additional technology for the school.

Federal Title grants, 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 was 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. Nancy Washburn has once again been contracted for 2021-2022 as a Career Specialist for DCA through the use of grant funds to assist students with transition planning and college/career readiness skills.

A-F Accountability

Damar hosted a tour and meeting with Brian Burdick from Barnes and Thornburg and Brian Murphy, Chief of Staff for the Indiana Department of Education on October 19th. The goal of the talk and tour was to demonstrate the needs of DCA's unique population – to further verify the need for an alternative accountability method for our school. Much success and progress has been made on this front and the idea of DCA being formally carved out of the A-F Accountability approach is more promising than ever. Work is currently being done to add DCA to a future ISDOE meeting to address the issue.

Governance

Committees will begin meeting before each meeting every other month. Chairs are responsible for scheduling the meetings via zoom or in person. Each committee chair will report at the Board meetings.

KPI's will be used to set goals and to measure goals. Damar Services Board of Directors uses this measure in the Strategic Management Report.

Finance

Financials continue to be ahead of budget. Findings from the DCA audit will be presented to the Board by December.

Other Business

The DCA Board of Directors will meet Wednesday December 15, 2021 at 5 pm. Members are then invited to stay for the Winter Festival Celebration at DCA.

Octavius Moltan was introduced as the new CFO.

Aaron Teeter and Abbie Martin from the Mayors office joined DCA for their first meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 pm.