

Date and Location

Wednesday June 29, 2022

11:30 AM

6067 Decatur Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the April 2022 meeting were approved.

Operation Highlights

- Damar Charter Academy finished the 2021-2022 school year on Friday, May 27th. Though it was a challenging year due to consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, it ended on a high note. Teachers were hired for all open positions, and there was a significant reduction in staff absences due to illness. Plans to return to pre-pandemic programming and activities have been made, and teachers and admin are looking forward to implementing new programming, as well.
- Graduation was held on Friday, May 20th. Two students earned their high school diplomas, and 23 others received their certificate of completion. Graduate, Jay Colley, gave the commencement address, and a parent of a graduate, James Foster, gave a closing speech. It was a wonderful evening of celebration for all!
- A remodel of all tiled floor spaces within the school is well under way. Multiple classrooms, offices, bathrooms, stairway areas, and the cafeteria have had their old floors removed, and new tile has already been laid in several areas. Not only will this improve those spaces, but it will also be easier to maintain going forward.

Curriculum and Programming

- Two new “makerspace” areas have been created for the coming school year. Funds from the recently awarded School Improvement (SIG) Grant, along with other federal grants, were used to purchase over \$70,000 of curriculum, resources, equipment, furniture, and professional development for staff. The goal is to improve DCA’s instruction in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) through the addition of official makerspaces throughout the building for creative, hands-on learning and problem solving that engages the students and encourages learning through making. A group of teachers and administration were recently trained

by a representative from 1st Makerspace on all the new equipment, which includes 3D printers and a glowforge laser cutter/engraver, along with dash and dot programmable robots, STEM kits teaching circuitry, geometry, physics, etc., crafting carts, and curriculum. We cannot wait to begin utilizing these spaces with students and exploring the world of making!

- A new curriculum is being purchased for use with all K-8 academic track students. Previously, teachers compiled their own utilizing numerous resources that aligned with the Indiana Academic Standards. This curriculum will provide the basis for teaching, ensuring both teachers and students have access to a resource that provides the necessary foundation for learning, while still allowing for flexibility to adapt lessons and supplemental activities as needed.
- Plans are being made to reinstate academic program area team meetings for next school year. This will allow for stronger collaboration and teamwork within each of DCA's three program areas: academic, vocational, and essential skills.

School Safety

- In light of recent tragic events involving school settings, DCA is recommitting to a focus on school safety. Aimee Brown has been meeting with executives from Damar Services to evaluate current practices and identify areas of need. Regular meetings will continue on at least a monthly basis. In addition, the School Safety Committee will be meeting regularly to discuss annual requirements and areas of concern.

Leadership/Personnel

- Staff are set to return to DCA for two days of in-service training August 1st and 2nd, with students returning for the first day of school on Wednesday, August 3rd. The professional development will kick off with guest speaker, Jenni Donohoo, discussing "Collective Efficacy." Dr. Donohoo is the "author of four best-selling books on collective efficacy and teacher inquiry, and driven by her world class knowledge of metacognition, adolescent literacy and facilitating collaborative learning structures, Jenni is proof that the future of learning is here, and it is now. Her current work with system, school

leaders, and teachers, takes her around the world.” DCA is excited to welcome Dr. Donohoo with the use of federal professional development grant funds and looks forward to learning more about the power of collective efficacy.

Grants/Fundraising

- Bi-weekly meetings have continued between the DCA Admin and Damar’s CFO, Octavius. During this time, the budget and financials are reviewed, and all federal and state grants are discussed to ensure deadlines for applications, expenditures, and reimbursements are met. DCA was recently awarded multiple grants, including the SIG, Title I, Title II, Title IV, IDEA 611 and 619, and COVID relief grants (ESSER I, II, and III). These funds, which target specific areas of improvement and are required to be spent on supplemental activities and resources beyond normal operating costs, have been used to enhance DCA’s program offerings and to provide staff training.
- Approximately \$50K of the original \$150K Damar Foundation Technology grant remains after purchasing a new PA system, laptops for all teachers and admin, upgrades to the back door entry system, and new tablets. DCA Admin have worked diligently with Damar’s Director of Facilities, Donnie McCoy, and the IT department to move forward with purchasing additional laptops and tablets for students. The new technology should be in place for the start of the 2022-2023 school year.