

Date and Location

Wednesday December 14, 2022

5:00 PM

5125 Decatur Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Joey Wright

Allyson Strother

Brittney Kalmes

Sam Moya

Karen Snyder

Others Present (Staff, Public)

Dr. Jim Dalton, Superintendent

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader

Julie Fenton, Director of Student Services

Cora Collier, DCA

Octavius Molton, CFO Damar Services

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the October 2022 meeting were approved.

Operation Highlights

Damar Charter Academy will conclude the first semester on Thursday, December 15th.

Students will observe Winter Break from December 16th-January 3rd, returning to class on

January 4th. Teachers will have a work day on December 16th and a training day on January 3rd.

Topics will include Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) presented by Damar and child trafficking and abuse prevention via the Indiana Center for Prevention of Youth Abuse and Suicide.

The first special education funding count of the year occurred on December 1st. DCA will receive funding for the special education students who were actively enrolled on that date. Of the total 178 enrolled (2 students were no-shows), 170 students had eligibilities that qualified; eight students did not. It is anticipated that DCA will receive over \$1.4 million in funding from this count. The breakdown is as follows:

- 115 Level I funded students @\$10,575/student
- 54 Level II funded students @\$2,657/student
- 1 Level III (primary) funded student @\$500/student
- 109 Level III (secondary) funded students @\$500/student

DCA is hosting its annual Title I Family Engagement evening on Wednesday, December 14th, from 5:30-8:00pm. Activities will include signing up for library cards, writing letters to Santa, decorating cookies, enjoying pizza, hot chocolate and popcorn, and watching a popular Christmas movie. Last year's event was a huge success, and we're hoping for another great turnout!

Curriculum and Programming

Teachers and students have been steadily increasing the use of the Makerspace and the STEM Lab. The Makerspace houses the glowforge, 3D printers, programmable robots, and various other STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) kits teaching circuitry, geometry, physics, etc. The STEM Lab includes various building and craft supplies, hands-on activities, and space for students to enhance their critical thinking skills and creativity. It also serves as the location for a weekly art class taught by an outside artist from the ArtReach program. Together, these resources are helping DCA achieve its goal to improve instruction in the areas of STEM and to provide dedicated makerspaces throughout the building for creative, hands-on learning and problem solving that engages the students and encourages learning through making.

The installation of the new, highly interactive LU system was recently completed. Purchased earlier this year with a portion of DCA's ESSER II grant funds, LU is a "state of the art audiovisual system powered by a wide range of educational applications. Aside from obvious pedagogical uses, (the) system can be used for a variety of purposes, from cinema-quality movie nights to dance parties and professional presentations. Each Lü system includes a high-definition laser projector, a movement detection camera, a powerful sound system and a fully automated multi-colored lighting system to create immersive magical environments." The LU activities have quickly become a favorite amongst staff and students, and DCA looks forward to showcasing this incredible system during the December Family Engagement Night!

- DCA continues to utilize the following curriculum resources:
 - **Into Math/Reading** (elementary)
 - **Edgenuity** (high school diploma-track)
 - **Life-Centered Education** (high school vocational-track)
 - **Unique Learning System** (life skills)
 - **Moby Max** (elementary)
 - **Learning A-Z** (elementary)
 - **Google classroom** (various curriculum for all levels)
 - **Community-Based Instruction (CBI)**
 - **Onsite Job Skills**

For the first time ever, DCA students working toward their high school diploma had the opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test as an option for meeting the Post-Secondary Readiness Competencies requirement for Graduation Pathways. Of the nine students who tested, four of them received a score meeting the minimum requirement for the graduation pathway (this does not in any way obligate the students to enlist). Students will have an opportunity to retest in the spring, and again in subsequent years if needed.

School Safety

The School Safety Committee continues to meet and has worked to address areas of concern. Updates needed for the camera software and missing camera views have been made; mandatory emergency drills have begun; sex abuse and child trafficking training for staff and students is in process; the backdoor has been fixed; and the paging system has been updated to correctly connect users to the intended classrooms. The committee will continue meeting at least monthly to review policies and procedures and to develop solutions to any identified safety concerns.

Leadership/Personnel

Teacher Lori Murray resigned, therefore once again creating an open teaching position at the middle school level. A substitute teacher has been covering the class, along with the teaching assistant, while the search continues for a teaching candidate. DCA is hopeful that the position will soon be filled.

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.

With the use of Title II funds intended for staff training and development, administrator Cora Collier and teacher Vanessa True recently attended the Social Thinking annual conference on December 1st and 2nd in San Francisco, California. They were provided practical lessons for supporting different types of learners using Social Thinking Vocabulary, visual teaching tools, and evidence-informed strategies that they will be sharing with the rest of the staff. In addition, a portion of the Title II funds will be used to cover the cost of the child trafficking and abuse prevention staff training presented by the Indiana Center for Prevention of Youth Abuse and Suicide on January 3rd.

DCA plans to use Title I funds to hire a contracted Social/Emotional Interventionist to provide social/emotional education to all students and serve as a member of a crisis intervention team when needed. The job description is currently being developed, and the position will be posted early in the new year.

Governance

The Governance Committee met December 14, 2022 in attendance was Dr. Jim Dalton, Aimee Brown and Joey Wright.

As the Board is aware, the Governance Committee is actively recruiting and vetting interested candidates for open DCA Board seats. Recently, Governance has been introduced and has been vetting a potential Board candidate. After continued vetting and meetings in December and January, Governance will likely be recommended at least one new member. As is typical, other board members may be asked to participate in meetings with the potential member and continued vetting.

Governance is continuing to oversee the work and ultimate publication of the DCA Board Manual. The Manual is in the final phase of rough draft and will be presented to the Committee in January for edits and recommendations. It is expected that the Board Manual will be presented for Board approval at the February meeting.

Finance

The Finance Committee did not meet this period.

The financials continue to be ahead of budget. The cash on hand is 256 days.

Other Business

The Advocacy Committee met December 13, 2022. Julie Fenton, Amber Fields, Brittney Kalmes and Karen Snyder attended.

Meeting Focus: to identify ways the committee can support DCA

- Suggestions
 - Organizing the sponsoring of families at Christmas
 - Attending one of our parent-led Family Engagement Group meetings and hearing directly from them what they would like to see/know/have access to/etc.
 - Helping compile a list of community resources and/or helping families connect to them
 - Hosting a community resource fair for families
 - Assisting with our EOY family engagement event
 - Developing partnerships with businesses that would like to donate money, resources, and/or the opportunity for students to become employed
 - Helping DCA promote the Dragon Works program and increase its scope... and also helping DCA to develop an actual enterprise out of student made products (similar to Purposeful Design <https://pdindy.com/>)
 - Assisting with fundraising efforts and/or donor connections to eventually provide DCA with new or additional space to grow programs

- Additional discussion/follow-up
 - Amber suggested providing blankets to families as next year's Family Night take-away
 - Amber will contact Guild member, Linda, to see if she may be able to assist
 - Amber would like to see the Guild be more involved with DCA
 - Amber will provide an email introduction with Guild President, Jeannie, to initiate communication
 - We discussed the possibility of having the Guild assist with DCA's EOY family event, a teacher supply drive, etc.
 - Karen suggested DCA securing a vendor booth at local professional conferences and various craft fairs to sell Dragon Works items
 - She also suggested setting up a booth at the Gala
 - Brittney suggested working with Meijer (a new Damar partner) for donations and employment opportunities
 - Brittney will look at providing a resource list for services
 - Amber shared that Providence Cristo Rey sends out a large number of students for employment each week
 - Amber will reach out to a contact there to see if we could meet and get ideas
 - She will also reach out to a contact at the Chamber of Commerce
 - The committee would like DCA to survey the families to identify specific needs

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.