

DCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes October 25, 2023

Date and Location

Wednesday October 25, 2023

11:30 AM

6067 Decatur Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Brittney Kalmas

Sam Moya

Bernice Torrence

Others Present (Staff, Public)

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader

Julie Fenton, Director of Student Services

Cora Collier, DCA

Dr. Jim Dalton, DCA Superintendent

Octavius Molton, CFO Damar Services

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant

Approval of Minutes

A quorum is present and Minutes from the August 2023 Meeting were approved.

Operation Highlights

Damar Charter Academy commenced the end of the first quarter on Friday, October 13th. Students were on Fall Break October 16th-20th, and returned to class on Monday, October 23rd.

The first funding count of the year, Membership Enrollment, occurred on Monday, October 2nd. As you may recall, this is a change in statute from prior count days which were held the second Friday in September, in order to align with federal data counts. DCA will receive funding for the 180 students who were actively enrolled on that date. The first Special Education (SE) count day is scheduled for December 1st. As a reminder, DCA's enrollment target is 180 students.

DCA will observe Thanksgiving Break November 22nd-24th.

DCA plans to host another Title I Family Engagement evening on Wednesday, December 20th. The past two years' events have been a huge success and plans for this year's event are underway. More information will be shared as details are finalized. As always, the DCA Board of Directors are encouraged to attend and share in this wonderful evening of celebration with our families.

Curriculum and Programming

Cora Collier, Director of Accountability and Instruction, has been meeting with each of DCA's academic teams to encourage collaboration and ensure the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity. New ideas for programming and evaluation have been discussed amongst the academic, vocational and life skills teams. Of note, the academic team has been working together to provide more targeted, grade-level instruction in math and language arts to groups of students across their four different classrooms. Each teacher is responsible for planning and implementing lessons for a particular academic level span, and then students are assigned to collaborate with those teachers based on their academic levels. The feedback so far has been highly positive from the teachers, and the students already seem to be making higher gains.

- DCA continues to utilize the following curriculum resources:
 - **Into Math/Reading** (elementary)
 - **Imagine Learning (formerly 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**

School Safety

The School Safety Committee has resumed meetings to discuss any outstanding areas of concern and review safety policies and procedures in need of updates. Discussions with Damar's Vice President of Operations, Donnie McCoy, have been held to identify potential gaps in the current safety plan and to see about the possibility of having an onsite risk assessment completed. Crisis management plans from both ABA and the residential campus have been shared, and DCA administration will be working with Damar's communications team to create an updated version for the school.

The installation of a video intercom system which requires visitors to be buzzed in from outside the front of the building has now been completed. Visiting Damar employees will continue to sign in on paper upon entering the building, and all outside visitors will still need to present their drivers licenses to be run through the Safe Visitors program which provides an immediate check against the sex offender registry.

Leadership/Personnel

Bella Brown joined DCA as the Social-Emotional Learning Specialist this year. In an effort to help all students learn self-awareness, self-control, and people skills, Bella has been conducting individual and small group sessions as well as whole class lessons. She recently attended a two-day training

session for a new curriculum she plans to implement and has already begun making an impact on the social-emotional development of many DCA students.

DCA will once again be evaluated on the Mayor's Office's Accountability Framework **Core Question 4: Is the school providing appropriate conditions for success?** This area of the performance framework examines the results of an external site visit against a rubric performed by an OEI-approved independent evaluator of the school's choosing. During the term of its initial charter, a school contracts with an evaluator to perform a site visit in the second, fourth and sixth years. The fourth-year comprehensive review culminates in a school's mid-charter review, while the sixth-year visit serves to inform charter renewal decisions. In subsequent years, schools are evaluated against Core Question 4 in years three and six. **DCA will be audited by a team from Marion University, led by Dr. Jacob Tandy, on October 31st and November 2nd,** and the results will help to inform the school's second renewal (third charter term). Going forward, DCA hopes to be able to take advantage of the newly passed legislature allowing for a 15-year charter term instead of the current 7-year term.

Grants/Fundraising

DCA Admin and Damar's CFO, Octavius Molton, continue to meet monthly. 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. Applications for the next round of federal Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, IDEA 611/619, and NESP grants are in process.

Governance

The Governance Committee met October 25, 2023, Members include Dr. Jim Dalton, Aimee Brown.

As the calendar year closes there are some reminders for Board members related to terms. Board members are elected/appointed to 3-year terms. Presently, there are no term limits in the bylaws. While there is a risk to having the majority of board members on the same date terms, because there are no term limits, the risk of several board members voluntarily resigning from the board is low. Thus, Governance is not recommending any changes to term limits or term dates currently. Governance annually reviews this issue.

Elected Board Members to 3-Year Term Damar Appointed Members to 3-Year Term

Joey Wright Karen Snyder*

Lyle Coleman Dr. Sam Moya*

Allyson Strother Bernice Garcia*

Julie Pitts Amber Fields*

Brittney Kalmás

*Even though members are elected/appointed to three-year terms, Damar appointed members are re-appointed annually. This occurs at Damar's annual Board Meeting in November of each year (for which all DCA Board members are invited to attend).

Finance

The Finance Committee met October 25, 2023, Members include Lyle Coleman, Octavius Molton and Dr. Jim Dalton.

There continues to be a strong balance with not much of a change. DCA Staff and CFO Octavius Molton continue to meet to ensure financials are reviewed and statements are up to date.

DCA Community/Advocacy Committee

The Community Advocacy Committee met October 25, 2023, Members include Julie Fenton, Amber Fields, Brittney Kalmas and Bernice Torrence

Old Business

Formulate new committee goals that are more reflective of the work the committee is focusing on (in process).

Potential goals to be discussed further:

Contributing info and resources to the DCA monthly newsletter.

Brittney offered to share the newsletter they currently publish.

Increasing family engagement and access to resources during our 3 annual family nights (back-to-school night; December event; year-end events).

Joey would like to see increased board involvement at school events; assign specific responsibilities to board members.

The Committee discussed polling the board to see if they would like to be assigned specific tasks at events; board members' feedback was indifferent; will give them the option to float or assist with a specific station at the upcoming Winter Fest.

Amber would like us to develop an information packet that could be sent to potential business partners, after an initial conversation has been had with them (in process).

New Business

Brittney inquired about families' needs.

Resources for mental health care and medication management were discussed.

DCA will refer families to Damar Health Services as a potential option for care.

Julie shared teachers need resources for dealing with student mental health issues.

Amber will share information for TrueU Timeout Session on mental health.

Information has been provided regarding all TrueU classes available for staff.

Brittney offered to share extra Peyton Manning/St. Vincent Thanksgiving meal vouchers with DCA families in need.

DCA Winter Fest will be held Wednesday, December 20th. All Board members are invited to attend

Discussed securing donations for family gift of Polar Express book.

Amber will contact Barnes and Noble (emailed 10/25/23; waiting for response).

Amber suggested board members donate; waiting to hear back from Barnes and Noble before moving forward with board member donations.

Board Member Bernice Torres volunteered to join the Community/Advocacy Committee.

