

DCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes October 30, 2024

Date and Location

Wednesday October 30, 2024

11:30 AM

6067 Decatur Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Brittney Kalmas

Sam Moya

Julie Pitts

Allyson Strother

Bernice Garcia

Joey Wright

Others Present (Staff, Public)

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader

Julie Fenton, Director of Student Services

Cora Collier, Instruction and Accountability Director

Dr. Jim Dalton, DCA Superintendent

Octavius Molton, CFO Damar Services

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Associate

Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 11:34 am.

A quorum was present, and minutes from the August 2024 meeting were approved.

Operation Highlights

Damar Charter Academy commenced the end of the first quarter on Friday, October 11th. Students were on Fall Break October 14th-18th, and returned to class on Monday, October 21st.

The first funding count of the year, Membership Enrollment, occurred on Tuesday, October 1st. 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 2nd. As a reminder, DCA's enrollment target is 180 students.

DCA's charter renewal through OEI is currently in progress. DCA is scheduled for a **Renewal Capacity Interview on October 29th, 2024, from 2:00 to 4:30pm** at the Indianapolis City-County Building. This will be a chance for OEI to provide feedback, as well as ask questions about the application in preparation for the final hearing.

The final **Renewal Hearing will occur with OEI staff on December 11th, 2024, at 6:00pm** at the Indianapolis City-County Building. DCA will have a short presentation and we are hoping to have a full house.

Based on the outcome of the renewal hearing, OEI's director will present the renewal report to the Mayor. A renewal contract will then be composed and communicated.

Curriculum and Programming

The IDOE has provided a document for all newly enacted laws 2024 Indiana Legislative Education Guidance Overview.pdf - Google Drive which continues to be updated as more guidance becomes available. Numerous additional requirements have been added, centering around IDOE's 2024 legislative priorities which include: Ensuring students are reading by the end of third grade.

Cora Collier, Director of Accountability and Instruction, has been meeting with each of DCA's academic teams to encourage collaboration and ensure the various curriculum resources are being implemented with fidelity. Additional trainings regarding curriculum implementation have also been provided to the teachers and interested TAs.

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

DCA students participated in Red Ribbon Week October 21st-25th. The school nurse, Ms. Mackenzie, organized a presentation for all students regarding the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, along with spirit week activities including various dress up theme days, in-class activities, and raffle drawing prizes.

School Safety

The School Safety Committee met over the summer to review current and proposed safety protocols and procedures. Officer Hurt, DCA's former School Resource Officer, drafted a crisis management plan which was presented to the committee during the meeting. Revisions were discussed, and an updated version was created. The committee will meet to review the plan, and once a final version has been drafted, all staff will be trained to begin implementation.

Leadership/Personnel

DCA is currently looking to hire a replacement for the School Resource Officer position.

Grants/Fundraising

As DCA prepares to close out another round of grants, including the last of the ESSER III funds, Admin continues to collaborate with Damar Services to ensure deadlines for applications, expenditures, and reimbursements are met. DCA has been awarded multiple grants, including the 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, to provide staff training, and to fund the Social-Emotional Learning Specialist position.

The next round of grant budget applications were submitted to IDOE. A revised School Improvement Plan was also drafted. Areas of focus in the new plan include literacy instruction, social/emotional education, and work-based learning, which align to the needs of the school, as well as the priorities recently identified by IDOE. The new grant funding will be budgeted to support these initiatives.

DCA received a \$50K Planning Grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. to better understand and complete a vetting process of what appears to be a promising opportunity for its students – the expansion of cooperative and engaged vocational partnerships (local companies, organizations, etc.) for DCA student experiences and application of training skills. Planning grant dollars would be used to engage a consultant and for related staff expenses (time on the project, mileage, etc.). It is expected that initiation and expansion of these opportunities would include experiences for students while still in school, and basic employment opportunities post completion of school at DCA. It is also anticipated that through the study, vetting, and exploration of local vocational and practical experience partnerships, additional information will be gained about opportunities for DCA's special student population's post-secondary successes. Any newly gained information will assist DCA in consideration of Phase II and Phase III opportunities through the Marion County Public School's Initiative. Phase II of the Endowment project may qualify DCA for up to \$550K and for Phase III (the larger and more expansive project), up to \$6M.

Governance

The Governance Committee met on Wednesday October 30, 2024. Members include Joey Wright, Dr. Jim Dalton, Julie Pitt and Aimee Brown.

Governance continues to oversee the DCA renewal process and support the application interview scheduled for 10-29-24.

All Board seats are filled and active.

The vetting process for potential expansion continues. Some information is expected to be provided through the DCA renewal process.

Finance

The Finance Committee met Wednesday October 30, 2024. Members include Lyle Coleman, Dr. Jim Dalton and Octavius Molton.

Financials were shared with the members.

Financials continue to be stable. The Staff of DCA and The CFO continue to meet and monitor financials for DCA.

DCA Community/Advocacy Committee

The committee met Wednesday October 30, 2024. Members in Attendance were

Julie Fenton, Chair

Amber Fields

Brittney Kalmas

Bernice Garcia

Meeting Goal: to identify ways the committee can support DCA's current focus areas:

- 1. Social/Emotional Wellness**
- 2. Work-Based Learning**
- 3. Literacy Instruction**

Suggestions

- **SEL/Family Engagement**
 - Organizing the sponsoring of families at Christmas
 - **Board Chair, Joey, will organize donations to be used toward gift cards for families**
 - Attending one of our parent-led Family Engagement Group meetings and hearing directly from them what resources they would like to see/know/have access to/etc.
 - Hosting a community resource fair for families
 - Assisting with our EOY family engagement event
- **WBL/Community Experiences**
 - 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
- **LI/Donations**
 - Book donations for the Family Literacy Night in December
 - Amber will assist with Insperity book donation
 - Developing partnerships with community agencies that provide literacy instruction and support for families.

The DCA Board of Directors will meet Wednesday December 17, 2024 at 5 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm.