

DCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes February 28, 2024

Date and Location

Wednesday February 28, 2024

11:30 am

6067 Decatur Blvd.

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Sam Moya

Allyson Strother

Bernice Torres

Joey Wright

Others Present (Staff, Public)

Aimee Brown, DCA, School Leader

Julie Fenton, Director of Student Services

Dr. Jim Dalton, DCA Superintendent

Octavius Molton, CFO Damar Services

Katie McCoy, Chief Executive Assistant

Approval of Minutes

A quorum was present and Minutes from the December 2023 Meeting were approved. The meeting came to order at 11:30 am.

Operation Highlights

DCA hosted its annual Title I Family Engagement evening on Wednesday, December 20th, from 6:00-8:00pm. Activities included signing up for library cards; writing letters to Santa; enjoying pizza, hot chocolate and popcorn; and watching a popular Christmas movie. All children received a free toy, courtesy of Toys for Tots, and thanks to an extremely generous donation by board member, Julie Pitts (coordinated by board member Amber Fields), each family in attendance received a hardback copy of the book *Polar Express*. Over 100 people attended, and the event was another huge success!

The second semester began as students returned to class on January 9th, following the staff training day for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) recertification.

The second membership (ME) census occurred on Thursday, February 1st, 2024. The targeted enrollment goal of 180 students was successfully met. The second special education (SE) count will occur April 1st.

DCA Admin met with the Mayor's Office's academic representative to review growth and achievement data and progress on goals. The charter renewal process was also discussed, and the following feedback was provided:

- In the spring, OEI will draft a renewal report based on all of the previous reports from the current charter cycle.
- Damar will submit an Intent to Renew letter—OEI will reach out about this letter in early May as a reminder. Typically, it is due to us by late May/early June.
- Damar will submit a renewal application which is typically due at the end of August.
- OEI's team will review the renewal application and call Damar in for a renewal interview in the fall. This is a chance for OEI to provide feedback, as well as ask questions about our application to prepare us for the final hearing.
- The final renewal hearing will occur with OEI staff in November or early December.
- 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.

School Safety

A full-time school resource officer has now been hired for DCA. Officer Ray Hurt from the Speedway Police Department began February 5th, and has acclimated well to DCA's climate, staff and students. His duties include assisting with arrival and dismissal, student searches, and crisis situations that may require additional resources and guidance. In addition, he will serve as an integral member of the safety committee, identifying areas of concern and offering suggestions for continually improving the safety and well-being of all staff and students.

Grants/Fundraising

DCA recently participated in a desktop audit for all federal Title grants. Compliance evidence was submitted at the end of January, and a full report should be made available to the administration the beginning of March.

As of the end of the first semester, all available grant funds with a December 30th, 2023 expenditure deadline were claimed. Reimbursement has been sought, and final reports have been submitted where applicable.

DCA Admin and Damar's CFO, Octavius Molton, continue to collaborate 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.

Governance

The Governance Committee met February 28, 2024. Members include Joey Wright, Dr. Jim Dalton and Aimee Brown.

DCA has an open Board seat (currently at 8 members). The open seat is a seat appointed by Damar Services, Inc. Presently, there are 2 individuals that have been presented to Governance and to the Damar Services Board for consideration. As vetting, visits and discussions progress, the DCA Board will remain updated. While the seat is appointed by Damar Services, the DCA Board must approve the appointment. Joey Wright and Dr. Jim Dalton will contact two candidates before the next meeting to discuss the seat opportunity.

DCA Community/Advocacy Committee

The Community Advocacy Committee met December 20, 2024 Members include Julie Fenton, Amber Fields, Brittney Kalmas and Bernice Torres

Old business includes,

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
 - We 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 includes,

- 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 shared 3 extra Peyton Manning/St. Vincent Thanksgiving meal vouchers with DCA for 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
 - Amber coordinated with Julie Pitts and secured Polar Express books for all DCA students
- Board Member Bernice Torres volunteered to join the Community/Advocacy Committee

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met February 28, 2024. members include Lyle Coleman Dr. Jim Dalton and Octavius Molton.

Financials continue to meet the budget set for the year. Staff and CFO Octavius Molton continue to meet and monitor the state of the financials.

The DCA will form a task force to look at timing and possible planning of expansion and growth.

New opportunities in the East Chicago Area are one option in the discussion now that Damar North has opened in the area.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.