

DCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes June 26, 2024

Date and Location

Wednesday June 26, 2024

11:30 am

6067 Decatur Blvd.

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Board Members Present

Lyle Coleman

Berenice Torres

Brittney Kalmas

Sam Moya

Julie Pitts

Allyson Strother

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 Assistant

Approval of Minutes

A quorum was present and Minutes from the April, 2024 Meeting were approved. The meeting came to order at 11:43 am.

Operation Highlights

The 2023-2024 school year wrapped up on Friday, May 24th. Following the summer break, all teachers and staff will return for two days of training and preparation on Monday, August 5th, 2024. A Back-to-School Night for students and their families will be held on Tuesday, August 6th, and classes will resume on Wednesday, August 7th.

Graduation was held on Friday, May 17th. Four students earned their high school diplomas, and 17 others received their Certificate of Completion. Next year, DCA anticipates having several students earn the Alternate Diploma in lieu of a Certificate of Completion as we continue to adopt the criteria. Per Indiana law, schools may count 1% of students earning an Alternate Diploma toward their graduation rate, versus no students earning a Certificate of Completion.

DCA is undergoing various improvements this summer, including the replacement of carpet in classrooms with new tiling and new paint throughout. The floors of the bathrooms, stairway areas, cafeteria, and several classrooms that had old tile were already replaced two summers ago, and new carpet was installed in the hallways over the winter break. All classrooms received new furniture last summer. Many of these projects have been supported by a portion of the ESSER II and III Covid-relief grants DCA received, which require the school to use the funds to improve the health and safety and reduce learning loss for students.

DCA's annual lottery was held virtually on Wednesday, May 8th. At that time, over 200 current waiting list entries were randomly assigned a number via an excel formula and then ranked according to that number. All new enrollments for the 2024-2025 school year will utilize this waiting list order. Notifications to selected families have begun and will continue throughout the summer, until all openings are filled. Any remaining students will continue to be on the waiting list for the year until an opening becomes available.

Damar's annual prom was held on Thursday, May 9th at the Shops at Perry Crossing Event Center. Students were dressed in their finest attire and transported via limo from Damar Services. It was a wonderful evening filled with dinner and dancing!

As a reminder, DCA is in the process of applying for a charter renewal through OEI. • An Intent to Renew letter has been submitted.

The renewal application is in process and will be due at the end of August.

OEI's team will review the renewal application and will schedule DCA for a Renewal Capacity Interview sometime between October 23rd and November 3rd, 2024. 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 either December 10th or December 11th, 2024. 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

As a reminder, per recent legislation: ○ (IC) 20-32-8.5-2, public schools where fewer than 70% of students who achieved a passing score on IREAD-3 must: ■ Use a curriculum that is based on science of reading and approved by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).

To further strengthen the professional knowledge of educators with an existing license covering the pre-k-5 grade span or special education licensure, a literacy endorsement requirement will exist for all Indiana educators renewing a Professional Educator License that includes these specified grades and content areas after July 1, 2027. Of DCA's current teachers, 11 out of the 12 will be required to obtain this literacy endorsement to renew their licenses.

HEA 1001-2023 allocated funding to support educators required to earn the literacy endorsement by securing a provider for the required 80 hours of professional development at no cost to the educator and covering the cost of the licensing exam required to receive the literacy endorsement. Additionally, eligible educators will receive up to \$1,200 in stipends as they progress through the

80-hour course titled, “*Keys to Literacy*.” The majority of DCA teachers signed up to participate in this opportunity.

In addition to the teacher literacy training, DCA’s Teaching Assistants participated in the Orton Gillingham reading instruction training program earlier this summer. Per their website, “The Orton-Gillingham Approach is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling does not come easily to individuals, such as those with dyslexia.”

Beginning with the graduating class of 2029, the SBOE voted to update Indiana’s diploma requirements. ○ Options will include ■ **Indiana GPS Diploma** - a more flexible, personalized version of the current Core 40 diploma

Indiana GPS Diploma *Plus* - requires high-quality work-based learning and a credential of value (educational attainment)

The Alternate Diploma will continue to be an option for those who qualify.

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 met earlier this summer to review current and proposed safety protocols and procedures. Officer Hurt, DCA's School Resource Officer, drafted a crisis management plan which was presented to the committee during the meeting. Revisions were discussed, and a final version will be ready for the start of the new school year. All staff will be trained during the back-to-school professional development days to begin implementation.

Grants/Fundraising

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.

Governance

The Governance Committee met June 26, 2024. Members include Joey Wright, Dr. Jim Dalton, Julie Pitt, and Aimee Brown.

Monique Johnson was introduced to Joey Wright, Amber Fields and Dr. Jim Dalton for a seat on the Damar Charter Board. After the process of vetting, Monique was recommended to the DCA Board on June 26, 2024 to serve as a member. **Motion was made by Allyson Strother and Seconded by Lyle Coleman. All members approved.**

DCA Community/Advocacy Committee

The Community and Advocacy Committee met June 26, 2024. Members include Julie Fenton, Amber Fields, Brittney Kalmas, Bernice Torres

Meeting Focus: to identify ways the committee can support DCA

- New Business/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

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
 - 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)
- 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 Berenice Torres volunteered to join the Community/Advocacy Committee

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met June 26, 2024. members include Lyle Coleman Dr. Jim Dalton and Octavius Molton.

The Financials remain healthy and on budget. Staff and CFO Octavius Molton continue to meet and monitor the state of the financials.

The Finance Committee will recommend to the Board an Investment Structure Plan. Discussions and information will be presented at the upcoming board meeting.

The 2024-2025 Budget was presented to the Board. **Motion was made by Lyle Coleman and seconded to accept the budget as presented. All members approved.**

New Business

The Board suggests Key Indicators be added to the report. Staff will add the additional information.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 pm.