



Indiana State Board of Education
Request for Freeway School Accreditation
Board Date: August 7, 2013

School: Damar Academy (C257)

Education Director: Mrs. Erin Crick

Address: 6067 Decatur Boulevard
Indianapolis, Indiana

Grade Span: K-12

Public/Private: Private

Current Enrollment: 56

Targeted Population: Families seeking a faith-based non-public school environment

Identity: Damar Services was established in 1967. It is Indiana's oldest, private, not-for-profit provider of residential services for individuals between the ages of 6-21 that face life's greatest behavioral and developmental challenges. Damar is one of few facilities that specializes in the added challenges of severe emotional and behavioral challenges and has become a resource for hundreds of families. Damar has successfully served the children that other providers are either unwilling or incapable of serving, some of whom have experienced as many as 30 failed placements prior to receiving care at Damar. Because of Damar's services it provides to these individuals, more than 96% of those served achieve greater levels of independence and go on to become active members in their schools, workplaces and communities as well as a valued and integral part of our diverse society.

Curriculum: Damar Academy recognizes and supports the common core standards for our students, but acknowledges that all Damar students may achieve them on a limited basis. In each case, the curriculum set for each level of education is available to the students of Damar Academy, but not necessarily at the prescribed chronological time. Curriculum is introduced to students as individual capabilities allow according to each student's individualized education plan. Each student at Damar Academy has his or her



own education plan, teaching materials are also developed on an individual basis.

Testing History: Suppressed/Low Enrollment

Staffing: Professional staff members are selected through a traditional application process. With some exceptions (see Appendix B) teachers are required to be licensed by the State of Indiana. When selecting candidates for a teaching position at Damar, three areas are carefully considered: professional preparation, experience working with children and personality. A candidate must display an understanding of students who receive special education services and have an obvious desire to work with the students that Damar serves. Individuals must also complete a background check and fingerprinting as part of the hiring process. There are no more than 15 students assigned to a teacher's case load.

Waiver Requests: **IC 20-30-5-8 Safety Education**

"A course in safety educations for at least one (1) full semester shall be taught in grade 8..."

All students in Damar Academy have Individualized Education Plans (IEP) addressing his/her individual educational needs. Safety education is an important part of what students learn while attending Damar Academy, but the topic is not appropriate for all students "in grade 8".

IC 20-30-5-9 Hygiene

"The principles of hygiene and sanitary science must be taught in grade 5..."

All students in Damar Academy have Individualized Education Plans (IEP) addressing his/her individual educational needs. Students work on their hygiene skills at different levels based on the individual student's need and Individualized Education Plan.

511 IAC 6.1-5-0.5 (general curriculum principles)

Damar Academy recognizes and supports these principles for our students, but acknowledges that all Damar students may achieve them on a limited basis.

511 IAC 6.1-5-1 Kindergarten Curriculum

511 IAC 6.1-5-2.5 Elementary Curriculum

511 IAC 6.1-5-3-5 Middle School Curriculum



511 IAC 6.1-5-4 Minimum High School Curriculum

In each case, their curriculum set for each level of education is available to the students of Damar Academy, but not necessarily at the prescribed chronological time. Curriculum is introduced to students as individual capabilities allow according to each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

IC 20-26-12-24 *(local adoption process; adoption required from the state list)*

IC 20-26-12-28 *(waiver of adoption requirements)*

511-IAC-6.1-5-5 *(adoption required from state list)*

Each student has his or her own educational plan, as a result teaching materials are also developed on an individual basis. Materials are not adopted for the entire student body nor acquired in classroom sets to be used for several years at a time.

Issues:

None

Recommendations:

Full Five-Year Freeway Accreditation



1. Identify the school entity to be declared a Freeway School.

Damar Services was established in 1967. It is Indiana's oldest, private, not-for-profit provider of residential services for individuals between the ages of 6-21 that face life's greatest behavioral and developmental challenges. Damar is one of few facilities that specializes in the added challenges of severe emotional and behavioral challenges and has become a resource for hundreds of families. Damar Academy is a K-12 school operated on the campus of Damar Services. It is an integral part of the overall program and a major factor in the successful reintegration of students into their home and local public school. Damar has earned a reputation for providing high quality educational and therapeutic services to a diverse client population. Using seasoned staff experience combined with the most effective, knowledge-based and research-based behavioral intervention techniques, Damar is able to identify successful techniques within the individual in children and young adults with challenges too daunting for other providers.

Damar works with individuals and their families using an individualized combination of services to help students learn both adaptive techniques and academic skills that enable them to participate successfully in daily activities in work and play-working towards increased independence and improved quality of life.

Damar has responded to changing needs in the community with innovative solutions to fill gaps for some of Indiana and surrounding state's most at-risk children and young adults. A visit to the campus proves that the environment at Damar is considered just as important as the services provided. The care and respect Damar affords its residents is evident on campus in the attractive, well-kept environment centered around a large playground and framed by woods and attractive landscaped grounds. In addition to residential services on its 38 acre campus housing 145 students, Damar provides a full continuum of care, therapeutic and educational services to an addition 50 children with developmental and behavioral challenges who live in community-based transition homes.

For more than 40 years, Damar has successfully served the children that other providers are either unwilling or incapable of serving, some of whom have experienced as many as 30 failed placements prior to receiving care at Damar. Because of Damar's services it provides to these individuals, more than 96% of those served achieve greater levels of independence and go on to become active members in their schools, workplaces and communities as well as a valued and integral part of our diverse society.

Damar's programs draw their strength from the dedicated work of superior staff and volunteers. With an overall culture of quality, Damar staff members are highly trained and continue to receive ongoing training as new techniques and practices are developed. Although excellent skills are important, genuine interest and compassion are critical to successful care for residents and parents.

2. Identify the demographic data of the school and the community that it serves.

The mission statement of Damar Academy reads: "By integrating current academic instructional techniques with life skills education, Damar Academy ensures a better future for children facing life's greatest developmental and behavior challenges." This statement encapsulates what Damar Academy teachers do. The life skills students' needs are integrated with academic instruction geared to each individual student's ability in order to create a program of education that encourages and promotes each child's potential.

Damar Services are located on the South West side of Indianapolis. The student body is comprised of 19 girls and 63 boys between the ages of 6 and 21 years of age. Students come primarily from Indiana, but 3 other states are also represented. Crossing several socio-economic lines, the students are 5% African-American, 0.03% Hispanic and 78% Caucasian. The majority of students are admitted to Damar Services and Damar Academy by the decision of a student's case conference committee stating that the school corporation cannot meet the student's educational needs. An application for placement is then filed through the Department of Education, the case is reviewed and the student then is placed. A substantial number of students also come to Damar via the court systems (Probation or Department of Children Services).

The average duration of placement at Damar is 19-21 months during which students move through a variety of living and educational settings. As they progress through their treatment programs, less restrictive environments become necessary. At the conclusion of the treatment program, students return to their families and home schools or are placed in adult services with the opportunity for an appropriate living situation, additional education or a supervised work program.

Professional staff members are selected through a traditional application process. With some exceptions (see Appendix B) teachers are required to be licensed by the State of Indiana. When selecting candidates for a teaching position at Damar, three areas are carefully considered: professional preparation, experience working with children and personality. A candidate must display an understanding of students who receive special education services and have an obvious desire to work with the students that Damar serves. Individuals must also complete a background check and fingerprinting as part of the hiring process. The staff of 7 full-time teachers and 7 full-time teacher's assistants is

comprised of 7 males and 7 females. Together they teach 7 classes. There are no more than 15 students assigned to a teacher's case load.

3. Describe in detail how the school's curriculum will comply with the common core standards adopted by the state of Indiana.

Damar Academy recognizes and supports the common core standards for our students, but acknowledges that all Damar students may achieve them on a limited basis. In each case, the curriculum set for each level of education is available to the students of Damar Academy, but not necessarily at the prescribed chronological time. Curriculum is introduced to students as individual capabilities allow according to each student's individualized education plan. Each student at Damar Academy has his or her own education plan, teaching materials are also developed on an individual basis. Materials are not adopted for the entire student body nor acquired in classroom sets to be used for several years at a time.

4. Describe the plan allowing students to earn an Indiana Academic Honors Diploma where applicable.

Students attending Damar Academy all have developmental disabilities and receive special education services. Most of the students are on the certificate of completion track based on their individualized education plan. For students who are on diploma track they are enrolled in local public schools to receive credits towards their diploma. Students are also eligible to participate in online courses to receive credits per the case conference decision.

5. Freeway Accreditation requires educational benefits for students in the School Attendance Rate, Student Performance on the ISTEP+ and End of Course Assessments, and for High Schools, an improvement in graduation rates.

- Describe the school's strategies to meet these improvement in performance.
- Describe any additional measures that will be used to measure student achievement and growth.

Students attending Damar Academy and are identified as students who will participate in ISTEP+ or End of Course Assessments with or without accommodations per their individualized education plan will participate in the state assessments to assist in measuring their academic achievement and growth. Students will be proctored these assessments with their specified accommodations on an individual or in a small group setting to allow for the most success.

The majority of the students who attend Damar Academy are identified to participate in the ISTAR assessment due to their functioning level per their individual education plan. Teachers will complete this assessment during the identified assessment window to measure the students' achievement and growth.

6. Describe the curriculum strategies to address: Character Education; hygiene; alcohol and drugs; diseases transmitted sexually; honesty; respect and abstinence and restraint.

Character Education: All students at Damar Academy have both an individual education plan and an individual treatment plan which are supported and reinforced by the school and living units. These plans contain behavioral goals that are predicated on the development of individual character, honest and respect for others. In school, students read, perform research and write about people and situations where such qualities have made a difference. Through one-on-one counseling, students strive to improve relationships and interactions with others through honesty and mutual respect.

Hygiene: Personal hygiene is part of every student's day. Each student has a hygiene goal either in their individual education plan or individual treatment plan based on their appropriate level of need. Appropriate personal hygiene is a struggle for many students daily with severe disabilities. Counselors, unit staff and particularly teachers address these issues on an ongoing basis. Students are taught the importance of personal care along with whatever physical training might be required.

Alcohol and drugs: Education dealing with drugs and alcohol is presented to individuals by teachers and counselors and supported by unit staff and managers. All students are exposed to educational materials designed at appropriate levels for each student's abilities.

Sexually transmitted diseases, abstinence and restraint: These topics are part of the ongoing educational process at Damar Academy. Based on each student's level each student can comprehend.

7. Describe how students with special needs will be identified, referred to the local public school for testing and how IEP's for these students will be part of their instruction.

Students who attend Damar Academy have behavioral and developmental and behavioral challenges and already identified as a student who requires an individualized education plan.

8. Identify statutes and rules to be suspended as a result of this contract.

Damar Academy would like to suspend the following statutes and rules:

IC 20-30-5-8 Safety Education

“A course in safety education for at least one (1) full semester shall be taught in grade 8...”

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IC 20-30-5-9 Hygiene

“The principles of hygiene and sanitary science must be taught in grade 5...”

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511 IAC 6-7-6 Required Elective Credits

“...a minimum of thirty-eight (38) credits is necessary for high school graduation.”

511 IAC 6.1-5-0.5 (general curriculum principles)

Damar Academy recognizes and supports these principles for our students, but acknowledges that all Damar students may achieve them on a limited basis.

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- 511 IAC 6.1-5-2.5 Elementary Curriculum**
- 511 IAC 6.1-5-3-5 Middle School Curriculum**
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Each student has his or her own educational plan, as a result teaching materials are also developed on an individual basis. Materials are not adopted for the entire student body nor acquired in classroom sets to be used for several years at a time.

9. Describe how technology will be integrated into student instruction.

Damar Academy currently has available to them and utilizes iPads within the classroom for students with autism. Through use of the iPads students are able to participate in academic instruction through the applications installed as well as use of the communication applications. Some students have their own iPad available to them in means to communicate with staff and peers around them. Damar Academy also utilizes a computer lab to allow students to complete research and participate in academic work. Damar Academy will also begin utilizing Smart Boards within certain specified classrooms for students to engage in learning.

10. Describe Procedures/Plan to ensure a safe and disciplined learning environment.

Damar Academy maintains a one to four staff to student ratio in all classrooms in addition to the teacher and teacher's assistant. All staff working with these students are trained every six months on verbal de-escalation and physical intervention. In addition to these staff members, there is a resource team of individuals highly trained in verbal de-escalation and physical intervention that is available not only throughout the school day but around the clock. There are also cameras located within the classrooms, gym, other areas where classroom instruction occurs as well as the living units which are monitored around the clock. If needed, nursing staff is available to students 24 hours per day.

11. Describe plans for continuing staff development.

Damar Academy teachers, teacher's assistant and staff are required to complete a minimum of 24 continuing education units per year by participating in trainings. Damar Academy teachers and teacher's assistants are also able to participate in conferences that would allow them to further educate and assist the students they serve.

12. Confirm the school's Commitment to Indiana's minimum 180 instructional days for students.

Damar Academy follows a balanced calendar which includes 180 instruction days for students during the regular school year. Damar Academy also has available to the students a 40 day summer school session which occurs Monday through Friday for 5 hours a day during the summer.

13. Describe the school ability to produce and submit all required electronic state student data reports.

Damar Academy has been able to complete all necessary state student data reports through use of software called Harmony as well as through use of the application site and the Learning Connection site. Damar Academy will continue to be able to produce and submit all required electronic state student data reports.



Pre-Employment and Employee Background Checks

Policy # 1.HR.02 **Department** Human Resources
Effective 11/1/2011
Scope All employees of Damar Services, Inc. ("Damar" or the "Agency").
References

POLICY

The process of gathering complete, job-related reference information is a required part of the recruiting and hiring process at Damar because it supports the Agency's commitment to maintaining an effective workforce. In addition, Damar will recruit and hire employees in accordance with federal, state and Agency policies.

Damar's pre-employment process includes conducting various background and verification searches to determine if candidates are qualified to work at Damar and if they meet licensing requirements for employment. Damar operates under various licensing requirements due to the diversity of services we provide. Background checks will be conducted according to the licensure requirements of the program in which the individual is to work. Each employee is responsible for verifying compliance with licensure requirements prior to working in a different program.

Damar currently uses a third party to conduct some portions of the background screening for applicants/employees as well as conducting some portions ourselves. This background screening includes, but is not limited to, the following as required by law or licensure:

1. Social Security Number verification
2. National Sex Offender Registry search
3. Indiana State Felony and Misdemeanor Criminal History Report – This is processed via the State Police repository and provides a listing of criminal records, if any, in the state of Indiana.
4. County Criminal History Reports – Damar selects the counties to check based upon the listing of where an applicant/employee has lived in the last five (5) years per licensure requirements.
5. Indiana Driving Record Report – For those whose positions requiring driving
6. Employment/Reference Checks
7. FBI Fingerprint Criminal History Checks (per certain license requirements)
8. Child Protective Services Check (per certain license requirements)
9. Medicaid/Medicare Fraud Check via DHHS
10. State Nurse's Aid Registry (CNA) via Access Indiana

Damar will review any criminal history reports and sex offender registry reports to determine if the applicant/employee may be employed per relevant licensure standards. Per Indiana law, Damar will not employ persons convicted of a crime on the list below and reserves the right to not employ persons convicted of other crimes not included on the list below:

1. A sex crime
2. Exploitation of an endangered adult
3. Failure to report battery, neglect, or exploitation of an endangered adult or abuse or neglect of a child
4. Theft – If the person's conviction for theft occurred less than 10 years before the person's employment application date except as provided in Indiana Code
5. Murder
6. Voluntary manslaughter
7. Involuntary manslaughter
8. Felony battery or aggravated battery
9. A felony relating to a controlled substance
10. Causing or assisting suicide



Employee Handbook

11. Reckless homicide
12. Kidnapping
13. Criminal confinement
14. Carjacking
15. Arson
16. Incest
17. Child selling
18. Felony involving a weapon
19. An offense relating to material or a performance that is harmful to minors or obscene per Indiana Code

Applicants for employment will also be required to complete a pre-employment drug screen and physical prior to Damar confirming the final offer of employment.

Damar reserves the right to conduct background checks at any time during the course of employment.

Appendix B

Staff Name:	Role:	Teaching Area/Subject:	Indiana Educator License	Confirmation of Expanded Criminal Background Check:
Brett Wampler	Teacher	Works with middle school and high school students focusing on academic and vocational skills	License number: 1583269	Confirmed
Luke Koch	Teacher	Works with middle school and high school students with autism focusing on life skills and vocational skills training		Confirmed
Laura Berning	Teacher	Works with elementary and middle school students with varying disabilities focusing on academics and behavior		Confirmed
Cyrus Tudu	Teacher	Works with middle school and high school students with autism focusing on life skills and vocational skills training		Confirmed
Kyle Winton	Teacher	Works with middle school and high school students focusing on academic and vocational skills		Confirmed
Sarah Winn	Teacher	Works with middle school and high school students with autism focusing on life skills and vocational skills training	License number: 1616532	Confirmed
Steve Reed	Teacher	Works with elementary students with autism focusing on life skills		Confirmed
Erin Crick	Director of Educational Services	Director of Damar Academy K-12		Confirmed
James Porter	Physical Education Instructor	Physical Education and Adaptive Physical Education		Confirmed



**FIRE AND BUILDING
CODE ENFORCEMENT
INSPECTION REPORT
ORDER**

DIVISION OF FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
302 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, RM E241
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204
TELEPHONE: 317-232-2222
WEB ADDRESS: WWW.IN.GOV/DHS

Identification Number CI32029	Name of the facility DAMAR HOMES INC	<i>Overall Facility</i>	County MARION
Address of Property 6324 KENTUCKY AVE INDIANAPOLIS IN 46221		Name of the Contact JOE VANDIVIER	Telephone Number (317) 455-7116
Email joev@damar.org	Name of the Inspector ROB MILLER, II		Inspection Date 08/09/2011
Inspection Category CHILD CARING INSTITUTION	Inspection Type ANNUAL	Inspection Status: COMPLIED	

Facility Id CI32029	Received By Name	Signature and Date
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