

# BlueSky Online February Newsletter

## Principal's Message



We have some big news to share as we begin the second half of the school year. First, I want to express my pride and gratitude for our students having a successful first semester. We continued to see great improvement in our course passing rates and had 113 students make the honor roll. We are so proud of all of our students! Of course, this wouldn't be possible without the support of all our parents and guardians. Thank you.

As we begin second semester, I want to remind parents that BlueSky is focused on supporting students in their social and emotional learning. We are currently focused on supporting students in developing responsible decision making skills. Future areas will include self management, self awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills. These are critical skills that students need for college and career readiness and overall life success. Please review this [document](#) or this [video](#) on how you can support your child in developing social and emotional learning skills at home.

Did you know that BlueSky was started 20 years ago this March by a parent in search of a high quality online program for her daughter? Our first students started five months later in the fall of 2000. Although we've had some significant changes take place in the past 20 years, our focus has remained on bringing high quality online education to diverse learners through individualized learning and building strong relationships with our students. As part of our 20 year celebration we will be moving our district office and student learning center to a new location in Bloomington, MN. Our new, state of the art facility will be conveniently located directly across the street from the Mall of America and will have ample parking and easy access through public transportation. Stay tuned for more information on our grand opening this summer. We're excited to see where the next 20 years will take us and our students.

We are happy to announce that we were approved by our Authorizer, Innovative Quality Schools, and the Minnesota Department of Education to expand our program to include 5th and 6th grade. Next year will be focused on planning and curriculum development for 6th grade so we can start enrolling students for the 2021-2022 school year. The launch date for the 5th grade program has not been determined.

Scheduling for the fall term will begin at the end of February and into March. Our course catalog is available on our [website](#). Please check back before making schedule requests as we will likely be adding some new elective courses in the coming weeks. You may also want to consider working toward completion of a [Career Academy](#). Students that complete a Career Academy will have a special seal on their diploma and get to wear green cords at the graduation ceremony. Please talk with your counselor if you have any questions about scheduling or Career Academies.

Spring testing is fast approaching with the upcoming NWEA MAP tests, MCA tests and the ACT. It is important that every student comes prepared and does his or her best on these assessments. The results from these tests provide detailed information to your child's teachers that helps guide instruction and improve your child's learning. The results also provide you with information on your student's growth and progress. Assessment results are also a primary measure of BlueSky's overall student achievement and are used by our authorizer and the state in determining the effectiveness of our programs. We appreciate your support in helping prepare your student for these important assessments.

Last, I want to personally invite all parents and students to our Family Fun Night on Thursday, February 20th. Students and families will have the opportunity to meet each other and we'll have an interactive performance by ComedySportz. Read below for more information.

As always, thank you for allowing us to work with your student!

Daniel Ondich  
Principal/Assistant Director  
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## Upcoming Events

- February 17th- No School
- February 20th- BlueSky Family Fun Night- Doors open 4:30 pm
- February 25th- ACT Testing at BlueSky Office

## February Family Fun Night

Join us for BlueSky's February Family Fun Night featuring an interactive performance by [ComedySportz!](#)

When: Thursday, February 20th  
Doors open 4:30 pm for a 5 pm- 6 pm showtime.  
Join us afterward from 6 pm- 7 pm for beverages, pizza, and socializing with BlueSky staff, students, and families!  
Where: BlueSky West St. Paul office located at 33 Wentworth Ave. E., Suite 100, West Saint Paul, MN 55118. BlueSky can be accessed from the rear of the building, using the Wentworth Center entrance.

This event will take the place of our traditional February parent/ teacher conferences. All BlueSky staff will be on-site to participate in the fun and meet students and families face to face!

As always if you have any concerns with your student's academic progress please feel free to reach out to BlueSky staff at any time.

**Pre- Register [HERE!](#)**

## Parent Connect

Have you ever checked out the Minnesota Department of Education website for [family resources](#)? Here is a great article on [Ways Families Can Support Their Children's Education](#). This article is also translated into [Somali](#), [Spanish](#) and [Hmong](#).

## Counselor Corner

**PSEO:** There will be a PSEO meeting held online on Tuesday, March 3 at 12 noon. PSEO (Post Secondary Education Option) is an opportunity for students who excel in their high school classes to take college classes for free while still in high school. Any students and their parents/guardians who are interested in learning more about PSEO are welcome to attend this online meeting by joining via this link: [PSEO Meeting](#). For more information about PSEO prior to attending the meeting, check it out on BlueSky's website: [High School Courses](#).

### Featured Career:

Featured Occupation: Phlebotomist--Phlebotomists draw blood from people to be analyzed or donated.

- Wages: \$37,000 a year
- Growth/Outlook: 26% growth with 268 annual openings in MN
- Education: Varies-- 1-year certificate programs are available as well as 2-year Associate Degree programs.

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## Social Work Spotlight

At BlueSky Online we recognize that parents are the first to be a student's teacher, you are the foundation for learning. BlueSky has been focusing on Social Emotional Learning and our commitment to being a Compassionate School.

This month we wanted to feature helping and motivating your student at home. We acknowledge that learning in a home environment presents some unique challenges. Especially in these dreary, overcast, winter days. Some researched suggestions:

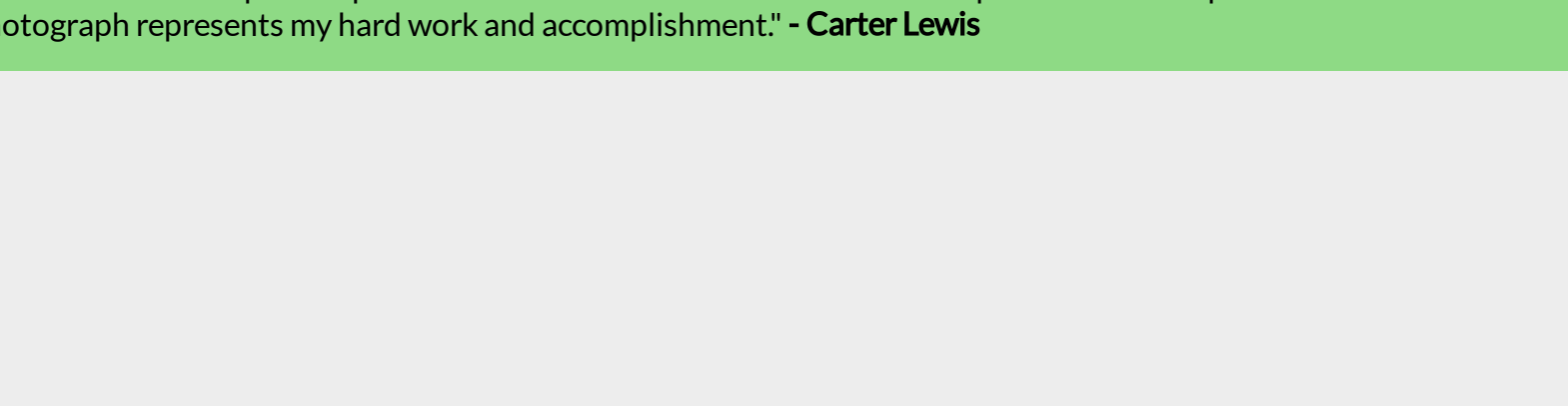
- Set proper expectations
- Help your child set small, achievable goals
- Show your child that you think school is important
- Support your child's learning style
- Speak the language of encouragement
- Reinforce learning at home and in the community
- Encourage your child to be resilient, pushing through when challenged. Remembering that students have a team of staff accessible for obstacles and barriers
- Have set times for school work. 9:00-3:00 is an ideal time for students to work and be able to reach teachers. Students should be working at least 5-6 hours a day.
- Check in frequently through the Parent Portal, instructions can be found [here](#). (4 minute video tutorial)

At BlueSky we always suggest that learning take place outside of a student's room, (keep that space for sleeping. Even a small corner, kitchen table, or other area free of distractions, can be set up as a school area.

## BlueSky Chicken Cam

### LIVENOW- BlueSky Chicken Cam!

Seventh grade science students at BlueSky are beginning a unit on the structure of living organisms and their growth, development, and reproduction. As part of the unit, students are able to observe an incubator with eggs that are due to hatch right before our February Family Fun night. Students have many questions and ideas and are trying to figure out why some eggs become chickens or other living things. This unit illustrates how we can help students explore the growth of living organisms through pursuing questions and ideas for investigations raised by the students, rather than needing to teach them about the related science before they plan and conduct such investigations. Watch along with us on Youtube Live!



## BlueSky Stars

The BlueSky advisors have chosen to recognize these students for their hard work and dedication.



**Luke Patwell**  
Luke Patwell is a shining example of a BlueSky Star because he is a wonderful student AND a wonderful human being!  
Luke is new to BlueSky and online learning as he started with us this year. But he quickly adapted and has fully embraced the online learning culture. He works hard daily in his courses and puts forth much effort! He is also very communicative with his advisor and teachers on both an academic and personal level. Luke is motivated, organized, dedicated, and driven to succeed! And personally, he is positively kind and outgoing!! He is positive, happy, and appreciative. Luke is a model student and young man who I am grateful to work with each week!

-Nominated by Danielle Fackler



**Zach Barclay**  
Zach Barclay is a great example of everything we look for in a BlueSky student. An 11th grader, Zach has shown a willingness to communicate and collaborate with his peers, his teachers, and myself (his advisor). Between attending school trips such as the Learning Jet, to his nearly perfect attendance record, Zach's academic commitment and consistency has been nothing short of amazing. He credits his success to being able to eat freely, the guidance from his mother, and the otherwise flexible scheduling that BlueSky offers.

Outside of school Zach enjoys exploring his creative side through listening to records, assembling elaborate LEGO sets, and drawing. He also enjoys spending time with his new mini Australian Shepherd Poodle mix puppy, Poppi. While both hard work and dedication are evident in his academic efforts, it is his kindness and overall positive attitude that shines through the most in our conversations. Thank you Zach for being a great advisee and a BlueSky Star!

-Nominated by Kyle Felder

## Student Art



This month's student work was created by **Carter Lewis** for Digital Photography class.

### Accomplishment

"The history behind this photograph is simple. I was in Boston last weekend and I had a goal. This is my first goal as a Junior Mullet hockey player. When a player has their first goal or has a hat trick a Captain will take the game puck and give it to the trainer who writes on it and then they give it to you. On mine it says, "First Junior Goal vs Thunder 01/03/20". I made this into a dark black and white photo because it represents that my hockey is black and white. I work hard and it pays off and it is as simple as that. I made the puck that I had a goal with propped up like that because you can see more of the writing. I like how the knicks on the pucks can be seen. It shows that they are used a lot. I cropped the picture close because I wanted the puck to be the main focus. I like how when you glance at the picture quickly it almost looks like the bottom puck is a reflection, like it's on ice. I took the photo up close because I wanted to be able to see the pattern on the tape too. My photograph represents my hard work and accomplishment." - **Carter Lewis**



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