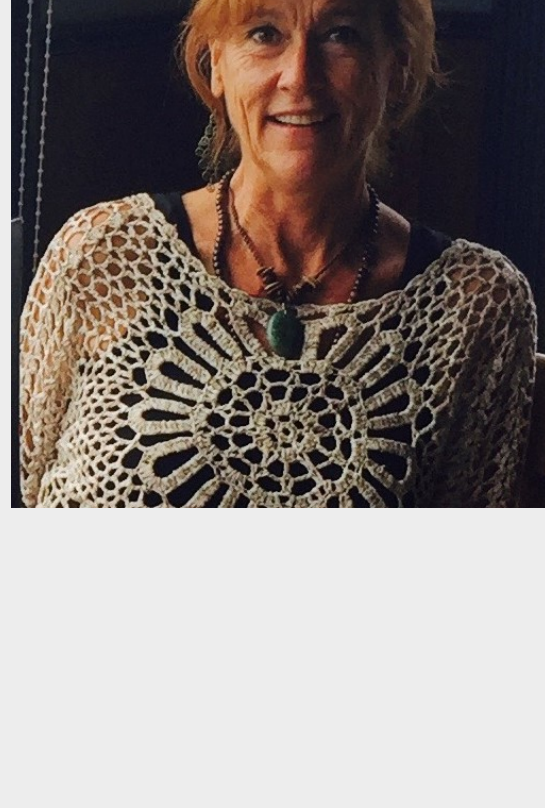


# BlueSky Online April Newsletter

## Principal's Message



Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are sensitive to the past weeks of social distancing and the psychological effects on families and individuals. This includes our staff. As we stumble through this pandemic our school remains in full swing with added efforts to help other school districts with distance learning, offering a social work group specifically regarding the stress of the pandemic, and supporting our staff and students in complying with all the directives of the CDC. Please watch for communication updates regarding our spring events, including graduation. As we travel together through this unprecedented time, we consider all of us to be a BlueSky Family and we can support one another to become resilient and compassionate partners.

There are many resources available and I am putting in just a few for ideas to be at home with your children. We personally have dusted off the board games, have been spending lots of time with our animals who are thrilled, completed long overdue home projects, started writing letters, holding fun meetings with family and friends on google hangouts, put together a gratitude jar, started writing songs together, taken up bird watching, joined our community facebook group to help elders get the supplies they need, and tuned into the online exercise classes locally. If you search there are so many sites for families giving ideas and resources during this time.

- <https://momypoppins.com/>
- [Common Sense Sources for Families](#)
- [How to Answer your Kids Questions](#)
- [125 Things to Do With Kids During Coronavirus Pandemic, Quarantine and Social Distancing](#)
- [Free workout classes online](#)
- [Easy economical pantry meals](#)
- And finally :- ) [Alternatives to Toilet Paper](#)

As always please contact us with any concerns about your situation. Our student services staff can help find resources that may be available to you. In all of this ambiguity please know that we share this situation together and with our entire planet. It is a time to find compassion for all of us deep in our hearts. Wishing you wellness and safety as we journey in this unprecedented time.

### State Testing Updates

The US Department of Education announced on March 20th that they were going to allow students to bypass the statewide standardized assessment requirement by opening up a waiver process for each state to apply. Minnesota did apply for that waiver and recently learned it has been approved. This means that Minnesota school districts will not be required to administer MCA tests this school year. Find more information about this on MDE's website under the [Federal Waiver Application](#) section.

What does this mean for you?

You are no longer required to travel to your MCA testing location in the month of April and will not be taking the MCA test(s) this school year.

Each year, BlueSky organizes multiple MCA testing locations throughout the state and assigns students to a specific site nearest them. We mail "save the date" postcards with the student's specific date, time, and location for their test. BlueSky staff also email out testing location information and send reminders. This year, students will NOT be required to drive to those locations and complete the MCA test. You can disregard any message you have already received about your MCA testing date.

If you have any questions or concerns know that my virtual door is always open:

Renee Parcheta  
Principal/ Student Services Director  
651-249-8386  
[renee.parcheta@blueskyschool.org](mailto:renee.parcheta@blueskyschool.org)

## Upcoming Events

- April Virtual Student Day Planting Activity- April 17th
- BlueSky Class of 2020 Graduation Ceremony- June 6th @ Noon

## Parent Connect

What David Cutler so eloquently put into words in the article [What Teachers Want Parents to Know](#) reflects the feelings of BlueSky staff as well.

- We care about your child's well being
- We want your child to succeed
- We know that learning is difficult
- We know your child has other responsibilities
- We care deeply about what we teach

## April 17th "Grow with Us" Virtual Student Day Activity

Get prepared to celebrate Earth Day 2020, by joining our virtual gardening event, Friday, April 17th at 11am!

We will learn 5 gardening methods for success. Then we will spend some time planting a bulb or seed. You are invited to plant using your own supplies or we can send you a small planting kit. No previous gardening skills required!

What is Earth Day? "Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First celebrated in 1970, it now includes events coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network in more than 193 countries." (Wikipedia)



[Click to Join via Zoom on Friday, April 17th](#)

Students are encouraged to RSVP for the event [HERE](#). Students who need a small planting kit can request one in the RSVP form.

## Social Work Spotlight

We know stress and anxiety is high with the current Coronavirus Pandemic. As your support team at BlueSky, we want to share resources with you during this time. We also want to encourage everyone to be practicing good self-care and allow yourselves some grace as many families will be home together navigating a new home schedule. Please click on the following two links to learn more about talking with your child about the Coronavirus and mental health supports. We also included an additional link that has over 30 Virtual Field Trips to offer something fun to do at home right now. Please encourage your child to reach out to their school social worker or outside mental health professionals if additional support is needed.

[Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#)  
[Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting from COVID-19](#)  
[Over 30 Virtual Field Trips with Links](#)

Please encourage your child to reach out to your school social worker. Contact information for the members of the Social Work team can be found [HERE](#).

## Counselor Corner

### Summer School:

Information and registration for summer school classes will be going out Mid-April. Watch your email for more information, and contact your counselor with any questions. (Reminder: you must pass at least 1/2 of your classes 2nd semester to be considered for summer school class. Students who qualify can choose to do 1 class each session, for a total of 1.0 credits, or they can do one class that stretches over both sessions for .5 credit.)

- Summer Session 1: June 8-26
- Summer Session 2: July 6-24

### Featured Career:

Featured Occupation: **Diesel Mechanic**

In this automotive trade, the focus is on inspecting, repairing, or overhauling large vehicles with diesel engines such as trucks, buses, and rolling machinery used in mining or construction.

- Salary: median income \$47,350
- Education: Although certification isn't legally required in this field, many employers will hire someone who has taken the time and effort to become certified over someone who hasn't.
- Outlook: 9% grown from 2016 - 2026

Carla Anderson-Diekmann - [carla.diekmann@blueskyschool.org](mailto:carla.diekmann@blueskyschool.org)

Grant Cameron- [grant.cameron@blueskyschool.org](mailto:grant.cameron@blueskyschool.org)

Amy Chicoine - [amy.chicoine@blueskyschool.org](mailto:amy.chicoine@blueskyschool.org)

Dawn Mensing - [dawn.mensing@blueskyschool.org](mailto:dawn.mensing@blueskyschool.org)

## BlueSky Stars

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



**Alivia Johnson**

Alivia Johnson is a new freshman BlueSky star and demonstrates true BlueSky qualities shown by her excellent quality of work, her positive communications with staff and how hard she works to stay on pace. When asked how she stays successful here at BlueSky, she replied: "I am successful at BlueSky because of the ability to set my own schedule and work at my own pace. I also thrive here because of the great teacher interactions and support when I need it. Following my to-do list helps me stay on track and I love that I have the option to get ahead. I am challenged by the autonomy of making my own decisions and being independent, focused, and determined helps me be successful. I like that I am challenged and have creative projects that use my thinking skills and creativity at BlueSky. I enjoy being able to take breaks when needed, work in different locations, and not have traditional school distractions. I also like the user-friendly program and curriculum at BlueSky. Overall, I love that I can work at my own pace and have the flexibility and independence that I would not have in a traditional classroom."

-Nominated by Dawn Nicol



**Nadia Pakhnyuk**

Nadia joined BlueSky this fall to have a change of pace from her previous middle school experience. She is an 8th grade student who experienced some adjustment issues with moving to online learning, which from her team of teachers do. With help from many team of students, Social Worker and School Counselor, she was able to rise to the challenge and flourish in the online environment. Nadia said "The teachers are really nice", this was a positive change from previous school settings where she did not feel as supported. In Nadia's free time she enjoys gymnastics. Her grades have improved significantly and she reports she is "really proud of herself". I am proud of her too!

-Nominated by Dawn Mensing

## Student Artwork



BlueSky Art Teacher, Nicole Petersen, encouraged students to submit artwork that they created over Spring Break. Students were encouraged to explore their artistic abilities with some suggestions such as:

- Create art of any kind! A fun website is Let's Create Art! Search the site for free tutorials and give one a try!
- Being creative doesn't just involve paint and clay! Some ideas might include: drawing, painting, photography, digital art, sculpture - (recycled art, found objects, clay, paper, cardboard, clay, playdough, homemade playdough, woodwork, whittling, whatever you can think of, etc.)
- Create art with the children under your care! Finger paint, color, create art of any kind!
- Search the internet for art tutorials and give one a try!
- Create a video tutorial yourself! It can be just a few minutes long!
- Create an art teaching video of you working with others creating art!
- Create a card or artwork for an elderly shut in or anyone you can think of who needs encouragement!

The featured student work is by Miriam Harvey from Modern Art and Abby Neimi from Art Appreciation.

