

March 2021 BlueSky Online Newsletter

Superintendent's Message

School Choice in Minnesota
We appreciate you choosing BlueSky for your student's education! There are many Minnesota families who are not aware that they have many options for where and how to educate their students, including online learning programs like BlueSky. Misinformation can sometimes be given to families, but you as BlueSky parents, are excellent advocates for school choice in Minnesota and can help spread the word!

Students in Minnesota have school choice options by law. These options include open enrollment, charter schools, and approved public online schools. Many districts also offer unique program options such as magnets, gifted and talented, targeted services, alternative learning, English Learner (EL), special education, and online or blended learning ([MDE website](#)). The specific needs of your student will help determine which type of educational option is best for them. If you have family or friends who are looking for an alternative option for their student, the [Minnesota Department of Education website](#) is a good place to start to find more information. You can also [contact a BlueSky administrator or school counselor](#) who are always willing to help find a good fit for Minnesota students. Feel free to refer your friends or family to us or the Minnesota Department of Education for more information.

Honor Roll Students
Congratulations to our BlueSky honor roll students! A list of Semester 1 honor roll students can be found on our [website](#). These students have really earned this recognition and we are so proud of their hard work!

MCA Testing
The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), which are required assessments for students in grades 7, 8, 10, and 11, will be given this year only at our BlueSky campus in Bloomington. In the past, we have offered the test at many locations throughout Minnesota to accommodate our students who live in various parts of the state. However, with COVID restrictions, we are unable to secure testing sites at libraries and other public facilities which requires that we only have the one testing location option this year. Testing information along with a sign up form will be emailed to you in early March. We realize this will be a hardship for many families to make the drive to our campus and expect that you will not be able to travel. If this is the case, please inform us of this on the sign up form. This will allow us to better plan for a number of students who will be able to participate.

21-22 Class Scheduling Has Begun
BlueSky counselors are starting to schedule students for their 21-22 fall courses and have emailed out information regarding this. You can read more about this in the Counselor Corner section of this newsletter.

21-22 School Calendar
The BlueSky Board of Directors has approved the [21-22 School Calendar](#). You can find a printable copy of this calendar on our website.

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

Amy Larsen
Superintendent
651-202-2090
amy.larsen@blueskyschool.org



Amy Larsen
Superintendent
651.202.2012
amy.larsen@blueskyschool.org

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Minnesota Department of Health Recommendation



COVID-19 Testing for Kids & Families
STAY SAFE MN

COVID-19 Testing for Kids and Families
MDH announced a recommendation for all school-age youth returning to school, youth sports, or extracurricular activities, and their families, to get tested every two weeks through the end of the school year. While it is not a requirement, regular testing complements other safety measures already in place, such as masking and social distancing.

Schools and youth organizations can send messages and resources available on [COVID-19 Testing for Kids and Families](#) to families to encourage testing. Getting tested every two weeks from now until the end of the school year can help keep schools open and sports operating, and ensure we are limiting the spread of COVID-19.

STAY SAFE MN



Registration for Next Year: We will begin registering for classes for next year on March 1st. Watch your email for more information. Here is [BlueSky's Course Catalog](#), so you can check it out and begin planning your elective classes. Be sure to also check out the information about [Career Academics](#).

Counselor Corner

Featured Occupation

- **Recreation and Fitness Worker**
- **Education Required:** Certifications
- **Outlook:** Over the next 10 years, expected to increase 12.5% (99,000 new jobs openings)
- **Median Wages:** \$30,500
- **Overview:** Recreation and fitness workers work hard to help people who are playing hard. They ensure safety in public places; oversee activities such as hiking, horseback riding and kayaking; serve as a yoga instructor in a local studio or even oversee the running and care of public recreation and park facilities. Professionals who fall under this umbrella term include aerobics instructors, camp counselors and directors, recreation leaders, and recreation and park directors. The settings they work in are equally varied – from outside at a summer camp, to inside in an office cubicle, to sailing the seas on a cruise ship. Still, there are some commonalities among this group of professionals. These workers are usually social people who like interacting with a kaleidoscope of personalities. They are also great communicators and problem-solvers, whether they're helping a student master a tough Pilates pose or instructing a child learning to swim.

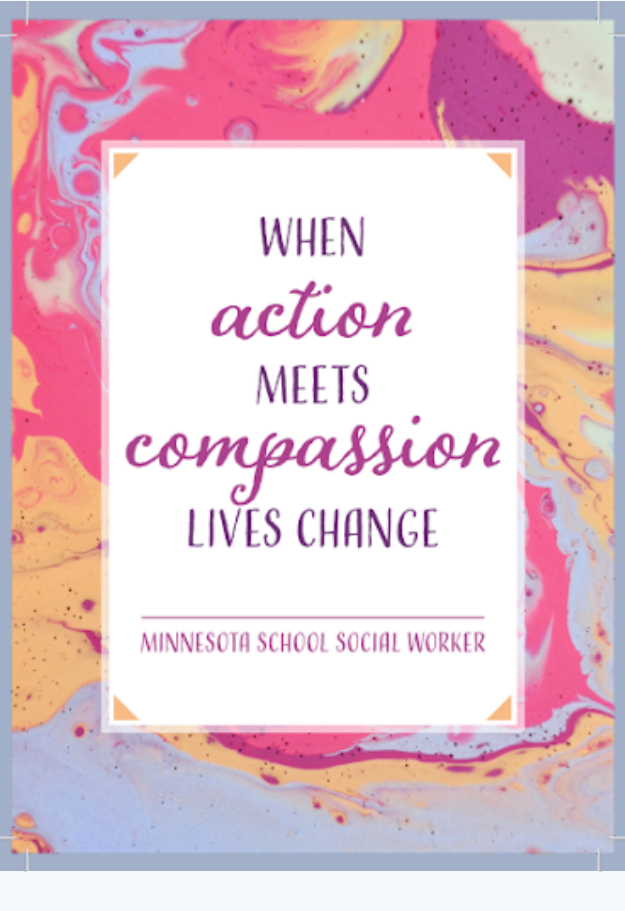
Summer School: It's only March, but it's not too early to be thinking about Summer school! Reminder: students MUST pass at least 1/2 of their classes and semester to be considered for summer school classes. More information about summer school will be coming out in April, but if you have questions, please contact your BlueSky counselor.

Social Work Spotlight

2021 School Social Work Week – March 7-13, 2021

"Beacon of Hope: School Social Workers – Lighting the Way" is the national theme for School Social Work Week 2021. In this school role, School Social Workers are able to light the way, emphasizing the whole child, collaborating with other professionals, linking students and families with needed services, and advocating for the profession. Happy School Social Worker Week to all of the BlueSky Social Workers. Please contact your School Social Worker to learn about ways we can work with students at BlueSky. We are always here to support you.

~Casie Hammel, Carolyn Disch, April Scharnberg, Lynn Riebe, Cayla Rother



Supplemental



Hello Supplemental students and families! Spring break is right around the corner (yay!), and we recognize BlueSky's spring break dates (March 29 – April 2) may not match yours.

High school students, you may work ahead. If you do not work ahead in your BlueSky classes, make sure you have a plan to catch-up upon your return. Keep in mind that BlueSky teachers will not be available to grade work or address questions until we return on Monday, April 5.

For middle school students, things are a bit trickier. If you plan to be gone a week in March, the last day of Quarter 3 is Friday, March 26, and you will want to have all of your Quarter 3 assignments done by then. In other words, there will not be an opportunity for you to catch-up on any work during BlueSky's spring break.

Bottom line, please communicate with us if you plan to be gone a week in March. Middle schoolers, we can help you prepare to get things completed on time. High schoolers, communicate your plans with us if you anticipate any significant time away that will affect your academic snapshot.

Online Activities

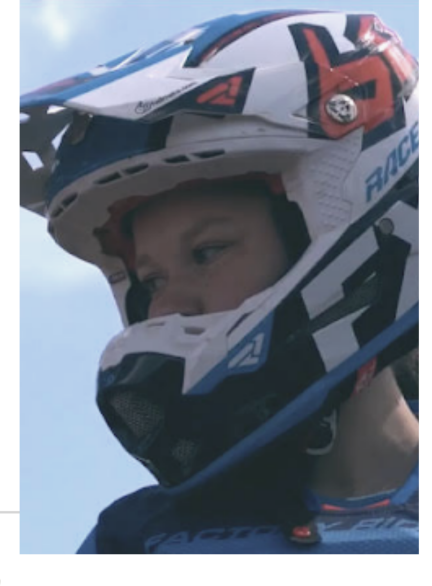
Don't forget to tune in Thursdays at noon on Zoom for Lunch Bunch! Each week, a staff member will host a lunch-time hangout with a different theme. The Zoom link and themes will be on the BlueSky Student Google Calendar.

Check out [this document](#), that lists non-BlueSky virtual events that can help your student stay involved and make the cold days cozier!



BlueSky Stars

BlueSky Star
Jenna Ettesvold



Jenna Ettesvold has been enrolled at BlueSky since fall of 2019 and has been doing awesome work in her online courses ever since. She came to BlueSky so that online learning could allow her more time to train and practice for motocross races. When she isn't doing her schoolwork, Jenna is racing in various locations around the country or riding her mountain bike. She is an outstanding example of a student who utilizes BlueSky's flexible learning model to continue their high school coursework while also devoting more time to interests outside of school. Jenna's advice to other online students is to work hard and try to get extra work done this week so there aren't so many assignments to do next week. We wish Jenna all the best as spring unfolds and she continues training and competing in motocross races!

~ Nominated by Laura Welciek

Shoutout to our awesome students!

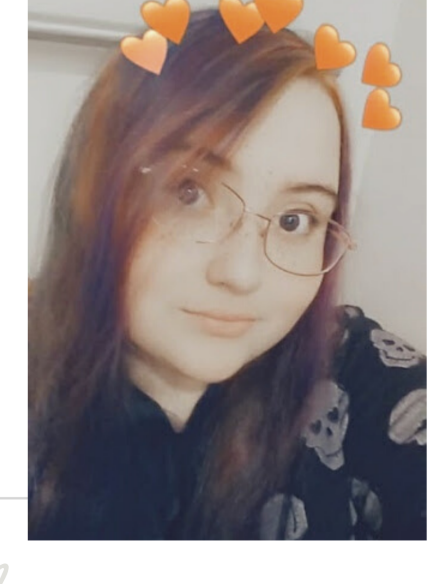
Brix Jacobson is featured this month as a BlueSky Star because she is not only very self-motivated to excel in her classes, but she does so with what I call an inner shine. I always feel better after talking with her as she speaks in an upbeat manner even about struggles she may be having. See below for what Brix has to share about her experience here at BlueSky:

"What I love about BlueSky is that it has given me the room I need to grow. I'm in both college and high school thanks to the PSEO program, and I wouldn't have been able to do this without the school. They have an accepting place free from bullying, and the teachers are really kind and friendly. They are by far the most accepting school I have ever been in. BlueSky doesn't leave their students hanging, and they advocate hard for their students. I haven't seen a school push so hard for their students, and it is absolutely wonderful. Best school I have been in hands down.

I think what makes me a good student is the fact I am really determined. I know what I want in life, and I have made sure to take every step possible to achieve that goal. I have high standards for myself and my grades. I also advocate for myself a lot, and I think that that is really helpful."

~ Nominated by Dawn Nicol

BlueSky Star
Brix Jacobson



Resources

Contact Information for Questions and Resources
Main Line: 651-642-0888
[Staff List with Contact Information](#)

Authorizer - Tom Tapper (651)-234-0900
Innovative Quality Schools



Office - enrollment, transcripts, record requests
Amy Larsen - Superintendent/Executive Director
Dan Ondrich - Principal & Assistant Director
Renae Parcheba - Principal of Student Services
Director
Cathy Parker - Dean of Students
Heidi Alexander-Hansen - Director of Special Education
Suzie Her - Student Information Specialist
John Mizour - Registrar
Melissa Vaag - Testing Coordinator

Counselors - scheduling and class changes
Dawn Mengire
Grant Cameron
Amy Chicoine
Jennifer Anderson
Cath Anderson-Bickmann

Advisors - navigating school, Laura Welciek, Danielle Fackler, Dawn Nicol, Carrie Ostman, Sean Miller, Jennifer Hardline, Kelly Hanson, Hanna Cookman

Social Workers - school, family, and personal concerns, web-being, crisis assistance
Casie Hammel
Cayla Rother
April Scharnberg
Lynn Riebe

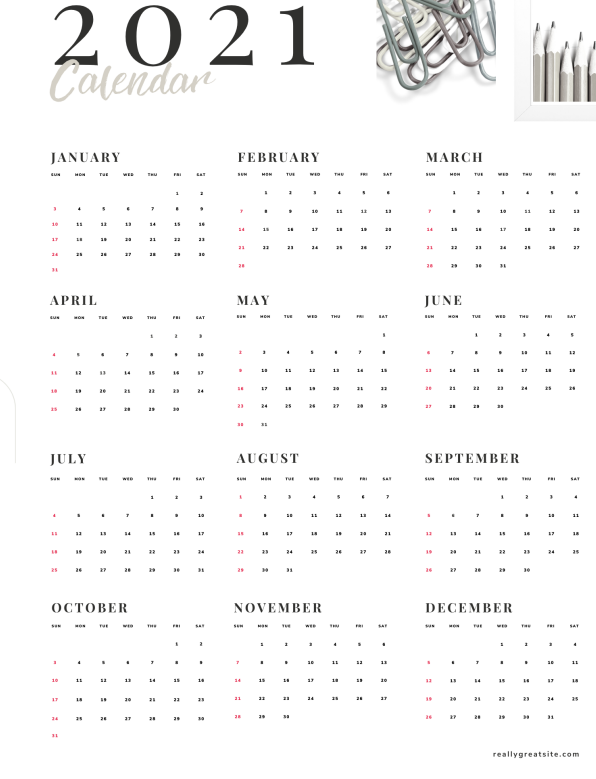
Supplemental
Heidi Housh
Hill Hunt

Mark Your Calendar

- March 26, 2021: Last day of third quarter
- March 26, 2021: Half student day
- March 29, 2021 - April 2, 2021: No school
- April 5, 2021: First day of fourth quarter
- May 13-14, 2021: No school (staff only)
- May 31, 2021: No school
- June 3, 2021: Last day of school
- June 12, 2021: Graduation

*Changes have been made to the 2020-2021 calendar, please make sure to check out the updated calendar!

[READ MORE](#)



COVID-19 Updates

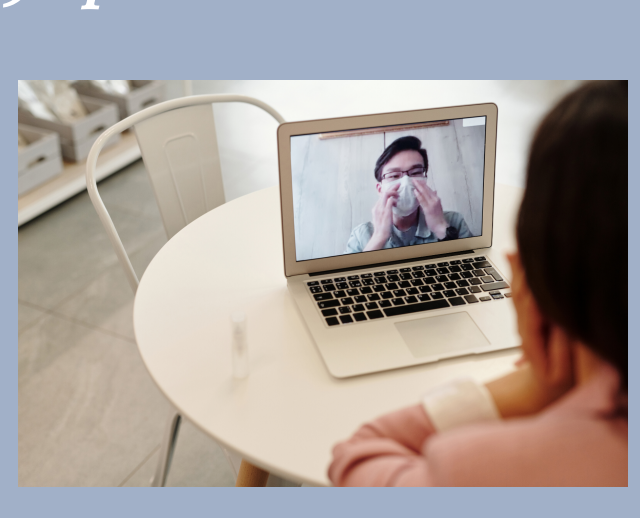


Staying Sanitary

Staying healthy and safe is our number one priority for staff, students, and parents and guardians. At the office, we are practicing social distancing and keeping surfaces and offices sanitary.

Remember to check the CDC's guidelines and Governor Walz's regulations to stay safe!

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.htmlhttps://mn.gov/governor/covid-19/news/>



Coming to BlueSky

In our current scenario, we are only having essential staff on site. If there is an essential need to come in, there is a form on Moodle for students to fill out if you are coming in. It is called "Learning Center Registration" and it is on the homepage under the "Student Learning Center" tab. Once they have filled it out, Katie Shealy will reach out to you to confirm if the time and date will work. Katie will also send out a reminder of the COVID protocols and other information for the Learning Center.

We will be requiring masks, sign-ins, and pre-screening for symptoms for everyone's safety!

[BlueSky 2020-2021 COVID-19 Plan](#)