

IQS Annual Review FY24

School Name: BlueSky Online

Report Date: June 17, 2024

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The contract between Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) and the school outlines the criteria for the annual school review. In part, it states that IQS will evaluate whether the:

- a) school has been faithful to the terms of the agreement regarding the implementation of the school's design and the learning standards of the Commissioner. (Mission/Program Model)
- b) Board is performing its governance responsibilities. (Governance)
- c) performance of the students and the school meet the expectations as provided in the contract. (Student and School Performance)
- d) school is using its resources in compliance with the law and is planning for the future. (Finance)
- e) school is meeting the administrative requirements of the law relating to charter schools. (Operations)

In carrying out this responsibility, members of the IQS Leadership Team held several meetings with members of the school leadership team to discuss issues and concerns related to school operations. Members of the IQS Cadre conducted numerous site visits and several virtual reviews of school records. IQS also sponsored three teacher/leadership conferences and one board training conference, all designed to provide the school with opportunities to grow professionally in support of the school program. Below is a summary of findings in each of the above noted performance areas based upon observations and direct interactions with the school.

Category 1: Mission/Program Model

Rating: 4.0

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- The director reviews the school mission every year with the board. This year there is a section on the school's website for the newly formed Esports teams. Blue Sky's mission and vision are clearly articulated on their website which brings quality online education and diverse learners together. This year the student body reflects a diversity of sexual orientations, typical and non typical learners, geographic and regional areas, languages, socioeconomic status and racial/ ethnic groups. Despite all of these groups, Blue Sky is able to develop and maintain individualized learning plans for each student. Along with the school mission and vision, Blue Sky's Values and Beliefs outline how everyone involved should interact with each other. These values and beliefs strengthen and promote the schools vision and mission.
- Blue Sky continues to do a good job at promoting and following their Compassionate School implementation timeline (2015-2025). This model includes the following areas: explicit SEL instruction, SEL integrated with academic instruction, youth voice and engagement, supportive school and classroom climate, focus on adult SEL, supportive discipline, a continuum of integrated supports, authentic family partnerships, aligned community partnerships, and systems for continuous improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement

- There are no observed opportunities for improvement at this time.

School Improvement opportunities identified through the oversight process or scoring less than 3.0 to be included in the contract required annual school improvement plan (SIP):

None.

Category 2: Governance

Rating: 3.8

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- Board meeting dates, agendas and minutes are posted on the school's website. Committee meeting dates and minutes are posted as well which is an exemplary practice. All board members are listed and contact information is provided. Board officers and the director have a strong understanding of Roberts Rules and open meeting law which result in well run meetings.
- All board members have completed the required board training which is tracked by the school. Board training is also included in regular board meetings a few times during the year and all training is reported in the school's annual report.

Opportunities for Improvement

- There are no observed opportunities for improvement at this time.

School Improvement opportunities identified through the oversight process or scoring less than 3.0 to be included in the contract required annual school improvement plan (SIP):

None.

Category 3: School Performance

Rating: 4.0

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- BlueSky's Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) passing rate was 84% last year with a target goal of 80%. This trend suggests that BlueSky is shrinking the achievement gap in part by supplying students in remote and/or rural areas with access to technology and the internet, including through hot spots.
- In March, BlueSky held a successful college and career activity fair with 21 colleges and universities represented and all career clusters were offered. The student participation was fantastic. Each session had 20 to 25 students in attendance. The fair was open to all grades 6 through 12.

Opportunities for Improvement

- There are no observed opportunities for improvement at this time.

School Improvement opportunities identified through the oversight process or scoring less than 3.0 to be included in the contract required annual school improvement plan (SIP):

None.

Category 4: Finance

Rating: 3.8

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- The school’s main budget priority after employee compensation is technology which aligns with the mission, vision, and goals of the online school. It is important that technology is reliable, good quality, and updated frequently. The school is planning to partially spend down the very healthy General Fund balance of 47% at the end of FY23 on employee stipends and student laptops.
- BlueSky’s director and board continue to do a superior job managing public resources and keeping stakeholders informed of school finances, policies, and operations in general.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The FY23 financial audit reported one deficiency in the school’s internal control over financial reporting that was considered to be a material weakness. This was a material audit adjustment the auditors proposed to reduce the year-end receivable and related revenue for general education state aid by \$462,603. The school should work to eliminate any financial reporting weaknesses in the future.

School Improvement opportunities identified through the oversight process or scoring less than 3.0 to be included in the contract required annual school improvement plan (SIP):
None.

Category 5: School Operations

Rating: 4.0

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- BlueSky has consistently maintained a website that meets all statutory requirements.
- The school uses Q-Comp for staff evaluations in addition to an internal rubric. The school has committees that help with internal operations. The committees keep meeting minutes and the director includes them in the monthly executive report at board meetings.

Opportunities for Improvement

- There are no observed opportunities for improvement at this time.

School Improvement opportunities identified through the oversight process or scoring less than 3.0 to be included in the contract required annual school improvement plan (SIP):
None.

Overall Performance Summary

BlueSky has consistent enrollment, governance, and leadership which has served the school well. They continue to improve in areas such as intervention, policy, cybersecurity, curriculum development, and student social opportunities. BlueSky regularly receives the Top Workplaces award from the Star Tribune, is a MACS innovation award candidate, and a REALM award winner for SkyWriting blog. In FY24 the school developed BlueSky lettering criteria for esports, NHS, and academics. They hosted the esports banquet, developed gifted and talented program requirements, and implemented a new special education service delivery model. In FY25 BlueSky will be implementing action items on their MnMTSS plan and working towards creating guidance for teachers related to online Tier 1 interventions. The school is financially healthy and a good steward of public funds. The leadership team is terrific to work with and provides a solid foundation for the school and all stakeholders.

Reasons for celebration this year include:

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- Top workplaces award recipient
 - Developed BlueSky lettering criteria (esports, NHS, academics)
 - Hosting esports banquet
 - Developed gifted and talented program requirements
 - Implemented new SPED service delivery model
 - MACS innovation award candidate
 - REALM award winner for SkyWriting blog

New initiatives for FY25 include:

- Beginning action items on our MnMTSS plan - working towards creating guidance for teachers related to online Tier 1 interventions