

BlueSky Online Mid-Year Report 2023-2024 School Year

School Name: BlueSky Online
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The purpose of the IQS Charter School Mid-Year Report is to provide schools with a summary of the IQS Cadre Team's observations and findings during the current academic year. This report provides schools with formative feedback on the progress towards meeting target benchmarks on the ScoreCard.

Category 1: Mission/Program Model

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- BlueSky's primary changes in program model this year include Tier 2 interventions supported through training with the U of M - Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, a streamlined referral process for all students which included merging behavioral and academic interventions, and an improved Child Find process that continues to make ongoing improvements. The schools 2023-2024 Strategic Plan supports the schools model and delineates each of the five areas (student success, finance and governance, high performing workforce, technology, and community partnerships) with tangible ways to maintain and thrive in all areas. School leadership is well versed in each area and able to show how their vision, mission and strategic plan is showcased daily through student learning, staff development and school wide operations. Blue Sky is on point with building relationships with both students and staff while offering quality online instruction.
- A major project this school year has been providing training on inquiry based learning across all content areas. There have been four successful training sessions thus far. This work is a continuation of last year's focus on moving to a more inquiry based mindset that values creating learning experiences instead of traditional assignments and work completion. The rationale behind these trainings is to make both teachers and students more aware of larger learning experiences and how they can benefit from them.

Opportunities for Improvement

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

Category 2: Governance

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- The Blue Sky board is high functioning. The agenda and materials are provided ahead of time and Robert's Rules are followed. All committees bring reports to the board and a full school reporting system is in place including a director's report, student activities

report, student assessment and student support services report. The discussion is rich and orderly.

- School Board policies are posted on the school website and the school has a policy committee that meets monthly. The Board has begun reviews of policies that require annual reviews, per MSBA guidelines. The school has a review calendar with the goal of reviewing every policy at least once every three years. This year's focus is on 600 and 700 series policies.

Opportunities for Improvement

- A strategic plan (two page graphic for 2023-34) is found on the school's website. Information on page two of this is incomplete on the website. The website does not reflect any SMART goals but the school does have those and reports them in other ways. The school might consider strategic goals for the board related to training and/or policy review.

Category 3: School Performance

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- Reading growth from fall to spring was 57.4% for FY23 and math growth was 55.3%. Both of these have exceeded the schools benchmark goal of 53%.
- MCA math proficiency FY23 percentile change was 0.23 higher than the state change which meets the schools benchmark goal.
- BlueSky sets aside time for every grade level to work on career related assignments and plans. The school set a goal to have 60% of students to complete the assigned grade level work and roughly 85% completed this in FY23, which is much higher than the schools goal.

Opportunities for Improvement

- MCA Reading Proficiency for FY23 shows BlueSky's percentile change was 9.14 lower than the state change. Reading took a decline due to low participation rates; parents opting out and weather playing a role.

Category 4: Finance

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- The school's finances are managed very well by a contracted financial manager and the finance committee. Financial reports are presented to the board after a thorough review by the finance committee on a monthly basis. All bills are paid within 30 days. The school has received the 2023 MDE finance award for FY22 reporting.
- The school has a very healthy General Fund balance of 45%. The school has a General Fund balance policy and it is posted on the school website with a goal of maintaining a 15-25% unassigned General Fund balance, which it has achieved.

Opportunities for Improvement

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

Category 5: School Operations

Observed Areas of Positive Performance

- The school has a highly qualified staff with 75/76 Tier 3 or 4 licensed staff. They have a licensure committee that follows up with the staff licensing and offers required training.
- Job descriptions are reviewed every 3 years and new ones are created as needed. The school uses an internal rubric for evaluation of staff. The employee handbook was recently updated in July 2023 and is posted on the school website. The school uses the following committees to help manage the school: Professional Development, Finance, Human Resources, Curriculum, Diversity and Equity, and Library.

Opportunities for Improvement

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

General Comments: Looking Ahead -

BlueSky is a high performing charter school that has seasoned leadership and a well functioning board. The school has a waiting list for student enrollment and has implemented many program changes this year that will enrich student learning and drive demand for the schools programming into the future. Excellent financial management has been a priority to the school with the General Fund balance far exceeding the schools policy and the benchmark goal. It is always a pleasure to work with the school Superintendent and support staff.