# April 2026 BlueSky Online Newsletter

## Director of Special Education's Message


Mandy Kasowicz
Director of Special Education
651.202.2009
mandy.kasowicz@blueskyschool.org

### BlueSky Parents & Guardians:

We hope your family had a relaxing and enjoyable spring break! It's hard to believe we're already heading into the final stretch of the school year. The last quarter always brings a mix of important milestones and exciting events, and we're looking forward to what's ahead.

Statewide MCA testing will begin in April. All full-time students in grades 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11 will participate in these assessments. MCA results give us meaningful information about student learning, help guide instruction, and support our school's overall progress.

Students will be assigned a testing location based on where they live. Please watch your email for details about your child's testing date, time, and location. To help your child feel confident and prepared, we recommend a good night's sleep before testing and a healthy breakfast the morning of. If your child is scheduled for more than one test in a day, packing a lunch for their break can also be helpful.

In April of each school year, our Board Development Committee seeks strong candidates to serve on our Board of Directors. This year, we will be seeking to fill 4 vacancies among teacher, community, and parent members.

As a parent of a BlueSky student, you have an in-depth view of our educational platforms and processes. Sharing that perspective with the BlueSky Board helps us to improve the programs we currently offer. Please consider volunteering for a 2-year term on the BlueSky Board of Directors. You can find additional information about the roles and responsibilities, as well as an application, on our website. Please email Amy Larsen if you are interested and/or if you have additional questions about this opportunity.

The Board of Directors election will be held in the first week of May, and all parents and staff will receive an electronic ballot via email.

In April, we will send out our annual satisfaction survey to families, students, and staff. This is an important opportunity to share your experiences and insights.

Your feedback plays a key role in shaping decisions for the future and helps us continue to improve. We truly appreciate you taking the time to participate.

As we move through the final months of the school year, please keep an eye out for updates about testing, end-of-year activities, and other important announcements.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. We're excited to finish the year strong together!

## Counselor Corner

**April 26-May 2 is National Apprenticeship Week!** BlueSky offers a Youth Apprenticeship program, and we're having an informational meeting on **April 16th at 12:00.**

It's great for 9th and 10th graders (and their parents/guardians) to attend, as there are electives that need to be completed before being eligible for doing the Youth Apprenticeship class. Please join us to learn more!

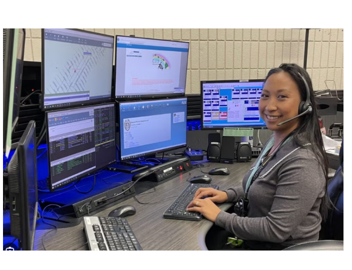
Youth Apprenticeship Program Informational Meeting

Summer School this year is available for our current students. The session starts on June 15th and runs through July 31st.

Detailed information will be emailed out to all students in mid-April. So keep an eye out for that information if you are interested in taking classes this summer.

**Featured Occupation: Dispatcher**

- **Education Required:** High School Diploma, customer service skills, and 4 months to 1 year of on-the-job training
- **Outlook:** Above average
- **Median Wages:** $56,940 annually
- **Job Duties:** Emergency dispatchers play a vital role in keeping communities safe, and while their exact duties can vary by location, their core responsibilities are consistently fast-paced and impactful. They answer 911 calls, gather critical details about emergencies, provide help with emergency medical care over the phone, and quickly dispatch the appropriate police, fire, or medical personnel. Throughout each call, dispatchers stay calm under pressure, offering reassurance while managing multiple tasks at once. They coordinate closely with other dispatchers during high-stress situations, ensuring a smooth and effective response. In addition to handling calls, they carefully record and document each incident, maintaining organized records that are essential for follow-up and reporting.



**National ACT Testing Information**

Use https://www.act.org/ to sign up for a testing location near you. If you have questions about the ACT, please contact your BlueSky counselor.

ACT.org

2025-2026 NATIONAL TEST DATES SCHEDULE

| TEST DATE | REGULAR REGISTRATION (Late fee applies after this date) | LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE | PHOTO UPLOAD & STANDBY DEADLINE |
|---|---|---|---|
| April 11, 2026 | March 6 | March 24 | April 3 |
| June 13, 2026 | May 8 | May 29 | June 5 |
| July 11, 2026+ | June 5 | June 24 | July 3 |

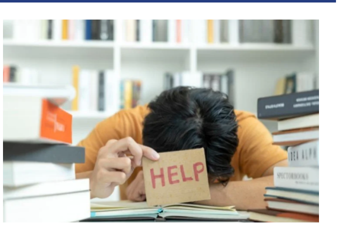
## Social Work Spotlight

As the month of April rolls around, so does MCA Testing.

For students who experience Test Anxiety, this could mean a feeling of panic or even dread. Here is a list of 10 tips to help students overcome Testing Anxiety.

The tips don't guarantee a perfect score, but they will help!

10 Tips to Overcome Test Anxiety




## BlueSky Library Bookshelf

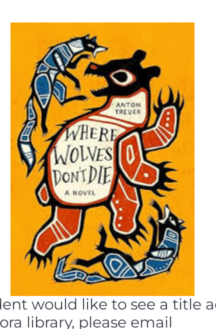
**Hello again from the BlueSky Library Bookshelf-**

Join the BlueSky community (adults included!) in reading the same book, Where Wolves Don't Die by Anton Truer.

This book as been honored with the MN Book Award for young adults. There are copies available in the Sora Library. Feel free to participate in activities about the book below. Hope you'll join us!

Meet the Writer

Where Wolves Don't Die Activity




If a student would like to see a title added to the Sora library, please email library@blueskyschool.org. Happy reading!

## Student Activities, Events, & Information

BlueSky may be virtual, but our connections are real. Each month, we gather for in-person events and activities that help students meet new friends, try new things, and share great experiences together.

Step right up for the Spring Middle School Meet-Up on **Thursday, April 30th**, from 11:00 AM to 3:30 PM at the BlueSky Campus. This year's theme is Carnival, and we have a full day packed with fun, laughter, and awesome activities with your classmates and teachers.

RSVP below by **April 17th** to indicate if you will attend online or in person

Middle School Meet Up RSVP

Prom is happening on **Friday, May 8th,** from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the BlueSky campus, and this year we are going all in with our theme: "Overdressed & Overstimulated".

Here is what you need to know:
• Tickets are $15 per person
• BlueSky students may bring one guest
• You MUST complete the RSVP & Dance Form before purchasing your ticket

All dance forms and ticket purchases are due by **3:00 PM on Wednesday, May 6th.**

Prom RSVP

Dance Form

BlueSky PayPal

This year's graduation ceremony will be held on **Saturday, June 6th, 2026**, at 12:00 PM (noon) in the auditorium of Thomas Jefferson High School.

Please complete the following graduation forms by the indicated due date. Please contact Sarah Miner with any additional questions.

Cap & Gown Form - Due April 17th

Graduate Slideshow Form - Due May 13th

Graduate Guest Seats RSVP Form - Due May 22nd

BlueSky is heading to Puerto Rico! Full-time and supplemental students, as well as alumni are invited to join us for an unforgettable spring break trip from March 27 to April 1, 2027.

Want to learn more? Join the informational meeting on Thursday, April 16th at 5:30pm. Reach out to Gabra Lokken with any questions.

Puerto Rico Informational Meeting

Since our students are all over Minnesota, we would love to hear from you. Let Sarah Miner know if you have a cool spot near you that would make a great BlueSky field trip. We're always up for a new adventure!

## BlueSky Star Students

Shoutout to our awesome students!

BlueSky Star
Hallie Hansen

It is my pleasure to nominate Hallie Hansen as a Bluesky star this month as she has truly utilized Bluesky's flexible and personalized program to make school work for her, done exceptional work within it, and even earned the rare approval from administration to graduate early.

Hallie had been struggling at her in-person school, where her grades were slipping and she found herself surrounded by the wrong crowd. Recognizing that a change was needed, she and her mom decided that switching to an online school like Bluesky would be a better path forward. Since making the transition, Hallie has found a supportive environment she truly appreciates. She loves how organized everything is and values how positive, welcoming, and encouraging the teachers and staff are. Their motivation pushes her in the right direction and helps her stay focused on making good choices for her future.

Outside of school, Hallie enjoys spending time with her family and caring for her pups and guinea pigs. She also loves playing video games, listening to music, and being outdoors. Looking ahead, Hallie plans to take a CDA class at the preschool childcare center where she currently works, with the goal of becoming a lead teacher and having her own classroom. She encourages other students to never give up and to always try their best, believing that the effort pays off in the long run.

It has been a pleasure having Hallie as a student here at Bluesky and it will be fun to see her shine in her bright future.

~Nominated by Laura Welciek

I am honored to introduce Yuvia, as a BlueSky star! As Yuvia's advisor I have gotten to know her as kind, thoughtful, and diligent. These qualities in combination with a lot of hard work make Yuvia excel as a student here at BlueSky.

After high school Yuvia plans to become both a cosmetologist and entrepreneur, and open her own beauty shop!

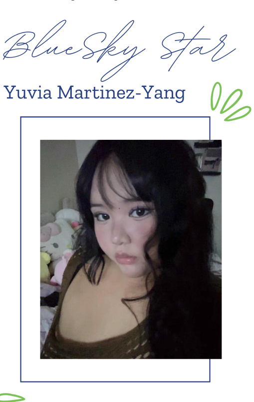
While learning how to be an online student Yuvia (like many others) noticed that procrastination can be hard to avoid. Yuvia managed to overcome this by building school work into her daily routine. She works on assignments early in the day and incorporates school into her morning. Yuvia also mentioned that feedback as well as positive comments from BlueSky staff are encouraging and motivating!

As a BlueSky star, Yuvia has some wisdom to share: "It is okay to take a break when you need it. Do not push yourself because that causes pressure and can tend to make you feel overwhelmed. It is okay to slow down."

Yuvia's advice serves as a wonderful reminder that you have to take care of yourself in order to learn your best. Way to go Yuvia, and congratulations on all your accomplishments!

~ Nominated by Abby Henderson

BlueSky Star
Yuvia Martinez-Yang



BlueSky Star
Briella Courteau

It is my sincere pleasure to present Briella Courteau as a Middle School Star. Briella came to BlueSky this fall as she was looking for something different and to be in an environment with fewer distractions. She shared that she likes the ability to choose how much work she does each day. Briella "likes to have Fridays off." She plans ahead and said "I get my homework done by Thursday and then get the study hall done, and then have the day off." Coming to BlueSky has been the right move, as Briella's grades have been positively impacted by this change.

Outside of school, Briella loves to spend time with her horses Crozier and Luna, she also has a new baby goat named Bucky Boone. She also calls him Bubbles. Her passion for animals extends beyond her home, Briella spends some of her free time working at a petting zoo. There are a variety of animals at the zoo including a coatimundi named Carlos, baby kangaroos, and baby alligators.. Her long term goal is to be a horse farrier or trainer. She has already started that path training her own horse.

Beyond animal care, Briella likes to draw, play video games with her sister and card games.

When I asked Briella what she likes best about BlueSky she said the access to help from her teachers. The ability to message her teachers for help makes a big difference. She said she can "private message my teacher saying I'm confused on this, and she'll come and help me." Her teachers also shared how she is a good self-advocate and a great addition to our school, I wholeheartedly agree!

~ Nominated by Dawn Mensing

## Resources

Contact Information for Questions & Resources
Main Line: 651-642-0888
Staff List with Contact Information

Authorizer - Laurie Schroeder
(651)-234-0900
Innovative Quality Schools

**Office - enrollment, transcripts, record requests**
Amy Larsen - *Superintendent/Executive Director*
Dan Ondich - *Principal/Assistant Director*
Cathy Parker - *Director of Student Support Services*
Beth O'Connell - *Dean of Students*
Mandy Kasowicz - *Director of Special Education*
John Mizeur - *Registrar*
Ben Jones - *Student Information Specialist*
Danielle Sanders - *School Operations Manager*
Sarah Miner - *Admin Assistant*
Christine Graupman - *Admin Assistant*

**Counselors - scheduling and class changes**
Dawn Mensing
Rashel Lane
Grant Cameron
Alisa Snyder
Jennifer Anderson
Carla Anderson-Diekmann

**Advisors - navigating school**
Hanna Coleman
Julie Endersbe
Danielle Fackler
Dawn Nicol
Carrie Ostman
Sean Miller
Laura Welciek
Abby Henderson
Chet Johnson

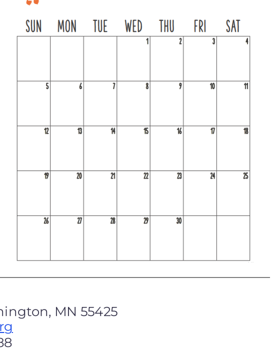
**Social Workers - school, family, and personal concerns, well-being, crisis assistance**
Casie Hammel
Cayla Rother
April Scharnberg
Lynn Riebe
Megan Andrews

**Supplemental - Students taking up to 50% of their courses at BlueSky**
Heidi Housh
Janette Willenbring

## Mark Your Calendar

- April 6, 2026: First day of the fourth quarter
- April 30, 2026: Spring Middle School Onsite Day
- May 1, 2026: No school (staff only)
- May 8, 2026: Junior/Senior Prom
- May 25, 2026: No school
- June 4, 2026: Last day of school
- June 6, 2026: Graduation

READ MORE





2001 Killebrew Drive, Suite 460, Bloomington, MN 55425
info@blueskyschool.org
Main Line: 651.642.0888
Fax: 651.642.0435


Stay up-to-date with current activities and future events by following us on your favorite social media channels.