

**June 2026**

**BlueSky Online Newsletter**



## Principal's Message

It's the last week of the school year, and we have a lot to be thankful for. Students have been working hard in their classes to finish up their final learning experiences and projects. Graduates are looking forward to our commencement ceremony, which will be held on June 6 at Jefferson High School in Bloomington, MN, and livestreamed on our BlueSky YouTube channel. We are so proud of our students and their accomplishments this past school year.



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Assistant Director & Principal  
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We are celebrating receiving an [Innovation Award](#) from the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) for our [Academic Snapshot](#). The Academic Snapshot has been a critical tool in meeting our vision of "bringing quality online education and diverse learners together" by providing a real-time view of grades, pacing, and learning experiences due during the week. It also provides direct access to teachers and support staff. We are honored to be recognized for this innovation

and want to recognize all of the staff, students, and parents that have helped make the Academic Snapshot what it is today.

Students are encouraged to stay active in their communities and at BlueSky over the summer. The Sora and MackinVIA digital libraries will remain accessible to all students throughout the summer. There are thousands of ebooks and audiobooks available to check out. Students can also participate in summer field trips - check your email over the summer for up-to-date information on upcoming activities! High school students can also participate in our summer school program, which begins on June 15. Check with your child's counselor to see if summer school is a good fit for their summer needs.

Last, I want to share that we still have openings for the 2026-27 school year. Many students and families hear about BlueSky through word of mouth, so if you know someone who is looking for a different school setting, please share your story and let them know about BlueSky.

Thank you for your continued support!

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## Tech Tidbits

### Student Device Refresh Update – Summer 2026

BlueSky will begin replacing student laptops this summer to help ensure all students have reliable devices ready for the upcoming school year.

To receive a replacement device, families will first need to return their current school-issued laptop using a prepaid return label provided by BlueSky. Devices may also be returned in person at the BlueSky district office in Bloomington. If you would prefer to return your device in person, please email [benoit.kabwar@blueskyschool.org](mailto:benoit.kabwar@blueskyschool.org) to arrange a drop-off date and time.

High school students will have the opportunity to choose between a MacBook Neo or an HP laptop for their replacement device. Laptop selections will be available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.

Please complete the survey below to select your preferred laptop option. Additional details and return instructions will be shared throughout the summer.

Thank you for your partnership and support.  
-BlueSky Tech Team

[Student Device Refresh Survey](#)

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# Counselor Corner

## Summer School

If you haven't registered but are still interested in taking classes this summer, please reach out to your school counselor no later than June 5th.

## Pass/No Credit Option

Every student at BlueSky has the option to request a Pass/No Credit grade for one class per semester. The form must be completed **no later than the last day of the class**. If you have questions about whether or not the P/NC option would benefit your student, please schedule an appointment with their BlueSky school counselor.

[Pass/No Credit Form](#)

## Class of 2027

Summertime is a great time to visit colleges and find extra activities to boost that resume!

The 33 colleges and universities of Minnesota State will waive application fees during Minnesota State Week, set for June 22-26, 2026. It's also a great time for those who haven't decided what they will do after graduation to explore one or more of the 54 campuses that are part of Minnesota State.



## More Information about Minnesota State Week

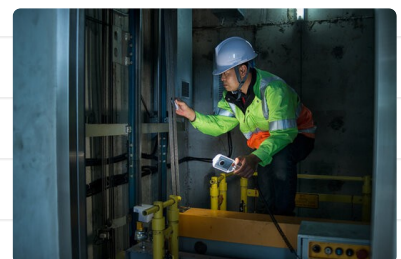
### Featured Occupation: Elevator & Escalator Installer and Repairer

**Education Required:** High School Diploma & Apprenticeship

**Outlook:** 5% growth

**Median Wages:** \$106,580 annually

**Job Duties:** Elevator and escalator installers and repairers play an important role in keeping people moving safely every day. These skilled professionals assemble, install, maintain, inspect, and repair elevators, escalators, moving walkways, chairlifts, and similar equipment. Their work includes reading blueprints, troubleshooting electrical and mechanical issues, replacing worn parts, performing safety inspections, and responding to emergency repairs. With many modern systems using computerized controls, workers in this field need strong knowledge of electronics, hydraulics, and electrical systems to keep equipment running smoothly and safely.



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# Social Work Spotlight



Summer is a great time to work on self-care. Here's an article titled, [15 Activities for Your Summer Self-Care Checklist](#) from

Mental Health First Aid. A few highlights from the article include:

- **Go for a stroll.** A long walk can be a great way to clear your head and enjoy a warm summer afternoon. You can also grab a friend and get your exercise while catching up.
- **Tidy one small space.** Perhaps a drawer or the top of your desk – even having one space clean and free of clutter can help you feel calmer.
- **Reconnect with someone.** Call an old friend – or even a grandparent or parent.
- **Look for things going on in your community.** Search online or in the newspaper for events going on around town. Consider outdoor movies, yard sales, festivals, farmer's markets, concerts or dance classes. Making fun plans can help you feel excited and give you something to look forward to.

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## BlueSky Library Bookself

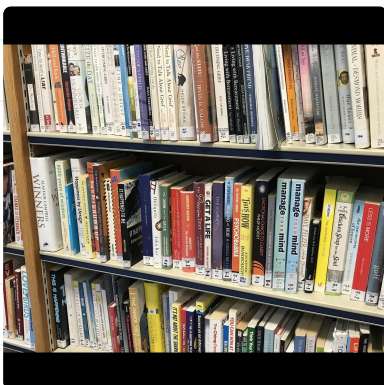
### Hello again from the BlueSky Library Bookshelf-

Summer is upon us....Let's keep reading 📖👉📱

- Check out your local library for summer contests and programs. You can use Libby or Hoopla to read ebooks or listen to audiobooks.
- Half Price Books has an at home [Summer Camp](#) program that families can sign up for to get discounts and activities emailed to them for summer reading.
- The [American Library Association](#) has reading lists targeted to specific grades. Need ideas for what to read check out their website!
- Parents of 6th graders: Check out [The Book it Program](#) and the [Barnes and Noble](#) summer reading programs. There are deals, activities, and book lists at these websites targeted for students in grades 1-6.



📖👉📱 Enjoy summer relaxation with a book for company



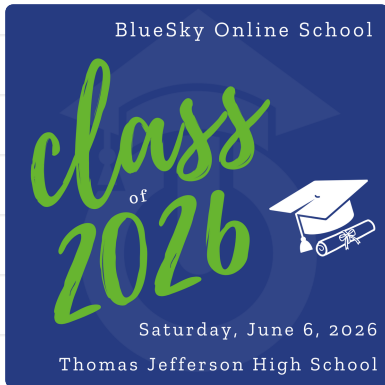
If a student would like to see a title added to the Sora library, please email [library@blueskyschool.org](mailto:library@blueskyschool.org). Happy reading!

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# 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.

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## Live Graduation Ceremony Schedule – Saturday, June 6th

- 9:30 am-10:00 am – Senior breakfast
- 10:00 am-10:30 am – Check in/cap & gown, tassel, and cord distribution
- 10:30 am-11:15 am – Dress Rehearsal
- 11:15 am – 11:45 am – Class Photos
- 11:45 am – 12:00 pm – Ceremony lineup
- 12:00 pm – Ceremony begins

**VERY important:** All grads need to be at [Thomas Jefferson High School](#) no later than **10:00 AM** and **check in when you get there.**

BlueSky will once again be live-streaming the ceremony this year so that graduates, family members, and friends who are unable to attend in person can still be part of this special celebration. Every student who graduated during the 2025-2026 school year will be recognized and announced, even if they are not attending the ceremony. Please feel free to share the link below with loved ones who would like to watch and celebrate from afar.

[Graduation Ceremony Live Stream Link](#)

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## BlueSky Takes Target Field

BlueSky is heading to a Minnesota Twins game on Thursday, July 9th, and you're invited to join the fun at Target Field!

- Game Time: 12:40 PM
- Cost: \$20 per ticket - includes \$10 food voucher



Limited spots are available and will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. To guarantee your spot, admission must be paid in advance through the [BlueSky PayPal](#). Please include the student's name and "Baseball game" when submitting payment. Tickets should be purchased through the BlueSky PayPal no later than Thursday, July 2nd.

BlueSky will provide transportation to and from the game from our district office using the METRO Blue Line Light Rail. Students should arrive at the BlueSky District Office no later than 10:45 AM on Thursday, July 9th. We expect to return for pick-up between 4:15 PM and 4:30 PM after an exciting afternoon at Target Field.

[RSVP Here](#)

[BlueSky PayPal](#)



### South Africa - Summer 2028

BlueSky Counselor Carla Anderson-Diekmann is participating in a trip to South Africa in the summer of 2028. If interested, check out the information below and/or schedule a time to [meet with Carla](#) to learn more!

This trip is open to any students, their friends or family members, and BlueSky staff. It is not a school-sponsored event, so literally anyone can join!

[South Africa 2028 - Information](#)

[Meet with Carla](#)

Since our students are all over Minnesota, we would love to hear from you. Let [Sarah Bliss](#) 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!**

### Lydia Phillips

Lydia Phillips is in the BlueSky Star Award Senior Spotlight! Adding to her many incredible qualities of perseverance, strong communication and organization skills is her strong writing. In fact, I will

let her tell the story: "I chose BlueSky because who doesn't want to swap a stuffy classroom for learning in pajamas! The freedom to follow my interests was a game-changer.

I found some amazing teachers and mentors who made the whole experience even better. My biggest teacher shoutout goes to the one and only Julie Endersbe. She's been amazing since day one—I couldn't have asked for a better advisor, mentor, or friend. Julie always goes above and beyond, and I feel lucky to have her in my corner. I also want to give a huge thanks to my counselor, Jennifer Anderson. Without her guidance and support, I wouldn't feel nearly as confident about my plans after high school. She's played a big part in my success and I'm really grateful for her help.

My biggest suggestion is to try something new! You'll discover new interests and meet some awesome people along the way. When it comes to registration, take your time and don't be afraid to ask questions — asking for help can feel tough, but there's always someone who has the answer and is happy to help. I love going on walks and have recently gotten really into photography—it's the perfect way to capture the beauty I see every day. Getting involved in the BlueSky community was easy because everyone here shares their passions and creativity, which made me feel right at home.

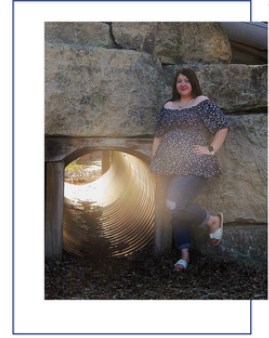
If I could talk to my 9th grade self, I'd say: Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and try new things—you'll discover passions you never expected and meet people who inspire you. Stay disciplined, even when distractions are everywhere, because managing your time and responsibilities will open up a world of opportunities. And remember, it's okay to ask for help—there are amazing teachers, counselors, and friends ready to support you every step of the way.

After graduation, I'm excited to go for my bachelor's degree in science at Purdue Global! I've always been interested in science and finance, and I can't wait to learn more and set myself up for success. With Purdue Global's online classes, I'll be able to study while still keeping up with everything else in my life. I'm looking forward to gaining new skills, reaching my career goals, and building a bright future!

~Nominated by Julie Endersbe

*BlueSky Star*

Lydia Phillips



*BlueSky Star*

Colten Mendiola



## Colten Mendiola

Colten Mendiola is featured as this month's BlueSky Star Student because he is a great example of a wonderful student AND person! Colten is a graduating senior this year! He's excited to earn that diploma. Colten works hard on assignments and he is good with communicating with teachers and support staff. Colten's favorite thing about BlueSky is the multitude of great resources and the excellent teachers. When asked what his favorite subject is, Colten responded, "All of them - they are all amazing and the teachers are great." And personally, in his spare time, Colten works very hard at McNeilus Steel building garbage

trucks! In fact, he's been such a dedicated worker that as an 18 year-old he has been able to purchase his own home! Wow! This shows his dedication and tenacity! After graduation Colten will continue with his career at McNeilus Steel. He was dabbling with the idea of joining the military as well but those plans are on the back burner for now. Colten has been an superstar BlueSky student for the past 2 years and thus his advice to fellow students is, "Pay attention - it's worth it in the long run. As much as you hate it, this is your future so shape it!" Overall, Colten is an excellent student who I am grateful to work with each week! He is a kind young man whose effort, hard work, and dedication are top notch!

~Nominated by Danielle Fackler

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## Thayer Hill

Thayer Hill has been a BlueSky student for two years. He moved to online school because his public school environment was not a positive learning space. Students were preventing teachers from providing instruction by frequently disrupting the class. Here, he has found it is much easier to focus on school and learning.

He has been a great student from day one. Always getting his work completed by Friday. Thayer likes to choose what assignments he wants to do each day. He shared that "normally [he] tries to do four or five assignments each day." When asked what advice he would give to a student coming to BlueSky, he said: "Try to get your assignments done on time so you don't fall behind, and you need to do more next week." He also said keeping your area organized is a big help.

In his free time, Thayer enjoys playing video games with his uncle because it's very relaxing. Additionally, he plays the piano and loves researching shipwrecks. Recently, he picked up a book about the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald. In addition, he is learning to play the song "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" by Gordon Lightfoot on piano. His favorite song is "On the Road Again" by Willie Nelson, which he has performed at a recital.

Thayer appreciates how our teachers are available to help when needed. He said he doesn't experience much stress with school, unless he has a piano recital but even then he makes sure he finds balance.

Thinking about the future, he is considering a career as a Zoologist. He loves animals and wants to care for them. This summer, he is looking forward to going swimming and seeing Willie Nelson in concert this August!

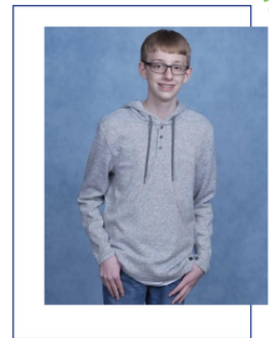
It has been a pleasure having Thayer as my student for the past two years! I'm glad he is continuing his BlueSky journey next year.

~ Nominated by Dawn Mensing

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*BlueSky Star*

Thayer Hill



## Mya Wooner

At BlueSky, we love seeing students discover a genuine passion for their coursework. For one of this spring's spotlights, we caught up with Mya W. who found her stride by blending wellness with a flexible schedule. She found that the highlight of her online learning experience was diving into the world of health and nutrition, which quickly became her favorite subject. Beyond the curriculum, her "favorite part of online school was definitely the flexibility and getting to do assignments on my own terms and being able to take my time on assignments."

~Nominated by Janette Willenbring & Heidi Housh

*BlueSky Star*

Mya Wooner



*BlueSky Star*

Ellee Corbin



## Ellee Corbin

BlueSky is also proud to highlight 10th-grade supplemental student, Ellee C., whose experience demonstrates the power of flexible learning environments in supporting student mental health. Ellee began her 10th-grade year looking for a way to balance her academic needs with her mental well-being. By choosing a hybrid online schedule, she was able to keep playing in her school's orchestra while moving some of her core classes to a more comfortable, low-anxiety online environment.

Since making the switch, Ellee has thrived. She credits the online format with helping her regain her focus and engagement. She shared, "Online learning has allowed me to be more comfortable, and I am able to do my school work on my own time. I am also able to work more hours at my job because I am done with my online assignments by midweek!"

~Nominated by Janette Willenbring & Heidi Housh

## 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](#)

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# Mark Your Calendar

- June 4, 2026: Last day of school
- June 6, 2026: Graduation



[Read More](#)



## BlueSky Online School

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