

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

February 27, 2025

Upcoming Events:

- Monday, March 3 ~ *Dodgeball!* After School Program
- Monday, March 10 ~ *Dodgeball!* After School Program
- Wednesday, March 12 ~ Hearing & Vision Screenings
- Thursday and Friday, March 13 & 14 ~ No School – Staff PD and Workshop
- Monday, March 17 ~ *Dodgeball!* After school Program
- Monday- Friday, March 17-21 ~ K-5 Conferences
- Friday, March 21 ~ *Lights Out! Pajama Day!*
- Tuesday, March 18 ~ School Board Meeting at 4:00
- Monday – Friday, March 24-28 ~ No School – Spring Break

Mission Statement:

Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting to prepare students to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners.

From Ms. Diane Blanchette:

*School Director, Birch Grove Community School
Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service*

This was the last week of February and next week is March! Wow, time has been flying by and we have been busy making plans to see us through the end of the school year – it will be here before you know it!

Please continue to have your child read at home – this kind of support from home greatly increases academic growth. Please also make use of the on-line platforms that all K-5 have available to them. We are really focused on delivering all of the standards and benchmarks that need to be covered for this school year and your help and support from home is greatly appreciated!

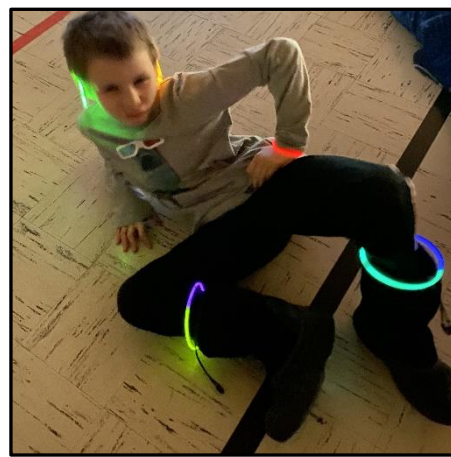


Your child's progress this school year will be discussed at the upcoming parent-teacher conferences that are scheduled for the week of March 17-21. Please watch for sign up information from your child's teacher coming soon. We look forward to seeing our K-5 Birch Grove parents!

Please note that there is no school on Thursday and Friday, March 13 & 14. These are workshop days for teachers as they complete end of quarter 3 report cards for all of their students and prepare for conferences the following week. As always, if there is no school for K-5, there is no Seedlings or Saplings.



Lights Out! Pajama Day! is on Friday, March 21, the last day of school before Spring Break! K-5 and Saplings can come to school wearing pajamas and can bring a flashlight on this day (please mark it with your child's name). Children will be reading and doing work by flashlight/lantern in the morning with special activities. In the afternoon K-5 will be meeting in the gym for BINGO and a movie all while sporting glow jewelry and waving giant foam glow sticks! Exciting!



Spring Break ~ March 24-28. We hope all of our K-5, Seedlings and Saplings families enjoy! Please keep your child reading over the break. School resumes on Monday, March 31.

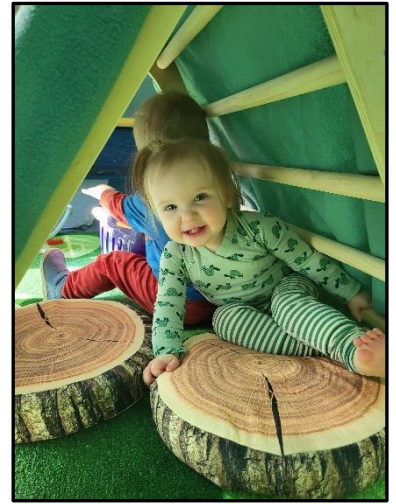
Kindergarten Round Up is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15 this year. If you know of a child that will be eligible for Kindergarten next year (must be 5 by September 1), please recommend this special day to them where they can experience BGCS. We appreciate all parent recommendations!





The newly opened Seedlings program (primarily for ages birth-3) is full and a waiting list has been started. If you, or someone you know, would like to get a child on the waiting list, please email birchgrove@boreal.org

For more information on the program go to:
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Seedlings-Program>



K-5 conferences are the week of March 17-21. Please watch for sign-up information from your child's teacher. We look forward to seeing all of our Birch Grove parents!



The Sapling program (primarily for ages 3-5) has a few slots available. Please recommend this program to any who may be looking for care for their little. Thank you!

For more information on the program go to:
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Saplings-Program>



CAMPSITE KIDS ~ SUMMER 2025

Inquiries about Campsite Kids continue for this coming summer from non-Birch Grove families. The first day of Campsite Kids (for K-5, must have completed K) will be on Monday, June 9 and the last day will be Thursday, August 21. Enrollment is offered to Birch Grove Community School families first, as always. If there are slots open after that, we will open the program to the general public. There is no other program like Campsite Kids in either Cook or Lake County ~ registration forms will come out in March! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Campsite-Kids>



Everyone got out on the ice rink last week on Friday at some point - thank goodness, as the ice is not faring so well this week with the warmer temperatures! This was another great North Shore day at Birch Grove! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/The-Great-Outdoors>



3rd grade is LOVING utilizing manipulative for building understanding with fractions. This week they are focusing on equivalent fractions and the visuals are wonderful with this skill. Working hard at Birch Grove!



In recent weeks 4/5 has participated in some cross-curricular learning with chocolate. Using reading comprehension, history of the industrial revolution, and science they were able to make lasting connections in learning and get a treat too!

Students add a bit of water to melting candy bar to see the sugar and cocoa fat separate and seize. Then hot water was added attempting to "fix it," making a chocolate paste that could be added to warm milk for some delicious hot cocoa!



Please have your child read (or be read to) 20-30 minutes per day/night (or more!). If there is one thing that you can do at home that has a huge positive impact on your child's academic growth, this is it! Happy reading!



If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us:

birchgrove@boreal.org ~ 218-663-0170

Website: www.birchgroveschool.com

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftwear.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off and free shipping for orders over \$125

Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)



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**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Our theme for this week was Dr. Seuss. We read *Dr. Seuss ABC*, *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*, *Wacky Wednesday*, *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?* and *The Cat in the Hat*. These books have fun rhyme schemes to introduce colors, numbers, and letters.

We added "Row, Row, Row Your Boat", "Boom, Boom Ain't it Great to be Crazy", and "The ABCs" to our song playlist this week. I like to turn on our playlist whenever I see that we need to get our bodies moving and we have a dance party.

To work fine motor skills, we picked up small pictures of fish and placed them onto a picture of a fish bowl. We also used felt cutouts to create our own green eggs. We practiced celebrating each other's hard work by clapping for each other and saying "Good Job!"

The beautiful weather this week allowed us to get outside for short walks. The fresh air was wonderful!

Have a good weekend!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

To commemorate Black History Month, Saplings began the week by delving into the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. An obstacle course was created to mimic the treacherous path from south to north. Saplings were blindfolded to recreate the darkness of night, and a "conductor" escorted them through the course. This activity encouraged teamwork and cooperation.

For math and art, Saplings explored the significance of quilt patterns in the Underground Railroad and their role in conveying hidden messages. They then collaborated on a paper Freedom Quilt project, contributing individual pattern squares to a larger class quilt, each symbolizing a different Underground Railroad code. Additionally, Saplings practiced recognizing uppercase and lowercase letter Q and developed letter Q discrimination skills.



As a multifaceted learning experience, Saplings produced peanut butter, an activity that concurrently functioned as a history and STEM lesson and a means of refining their fine motor skills through the process of cracking open peanut shells. During our celebration of Black History Month, we delved into the contributions of Dr. George Washington Carver, a notable Black scientist of the early 20th century, who was widely recognized as "The Peanut Man".



We ended the week with the running of the John Beargrease sled dog marathon. We learned the different roles and positions held by dogs in dogsled teams. Each dog has a different role and strength.... Yet they must work together as a team in order to be successful! For example, a wheel dog is often a source of great physical strength and endurance. A lead dog possesses leadership qualities and is a good listener and able to infer and sense where a trail may be.

We subsequently became familiar with mushing terminology, including Gee, the right turn command, Haw, the left turn command, Mush! and Hike!, the commands to start the team in motion, and Whoa!, the command to bring the team to a halt, accompanied by heavy braking.

A Veterinarian Clinic was set up in the Dramatic Play area, complete with stuffed dogs and kittens, for the examination of sled dogs. The connecting Library was transformed into a

waiting room, offering books about various pets, including dogs and cats.

Thursday marked the day of the Ikidarod, where the Saplings emulated mushers and sled dogs, racing across the trail. With one child seated in the sled, the others took on the role of sled dogs, pulling them along. At the checkpoint along the trail we had snack and a discussion about the Beargrease and the Iditarod. This enjoyable experience incorporated implicit learning, as the children acquired knowledge about the sport's history and culture.

Take your children to go cheer on the mushers this Sunday! The Beargrease begins in Two Harbors at 11am, with expected arrival times in Finland at 3pm and Sawbill at midnight.

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From Ms. Sara Knottski
K & 1st Grade Elementary Teacher

This week, Kindergarten learned about the letter sound TH! They have been busy learning 6 new sight words weekly for the last 3 weeks. We are practicing blending words and reading every day. We are getting better at fluency and understanding. Keep practicing at home! 1st grade read a story, "Rabbit's Tale" that is similar to Chicken Little. We used those two stories to practice comparing and contrasting. We practice identifying the parts of a story. We also learned about dialog. In math, Kindergarten is finishing a unit about 3d shapes and adding and subtracting. 1st grade started a unit about graphs!

K/1 practiced social and emotional learning this week! Our subject was all about teamwork and belonging. We practiced conversations with a game we called 'convo catch.' We practiced taking turns asking questions and answering. We also played team games and practiced good sportsmanship and teamwork. K/1 loves learning about emotions and practicing our social skills!



As a reminder, students have a lot of resources they can access at home. They have assignments that are more tailored to each student in Freckle. Students can practice reading on Raz Kids and Lexia. Make sure to keep logging reading and math practice for Tickets to Treasure!

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**From Ms. Samantha Forster**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

I can't believe how quickly this year is flying by! We have spent time creating maps for various fairytale stories this week. This meant reading the book, creating the map, and writing directions for the characters in the story. This helped with cardinal direction and comprehending settings in stories. We also did Elephant art to close out our unit about Asian. We also had some outdoor playtime and language arts games in the afternoons. We will be starting our biography research project next week!

In reading, we read a fantasy story about a dog hero and a nonfiction story about Antarctica. We spent time bringing in background knowledge to both of these topics to help build understanding. We have been working on phonemic awareness and phonics in some groups and conducting a book club with others. Each of these skills are based on what students need to continue to progress with their reading abilities. The second grade book club is "Tracker" by Gary Paulsen and the third grade book club is "Because of Winn Dixie" by Kate Dicamillo. Of course, we have been practicing our fluency with a non-fiction passage that they read with partners.



In math, we are working on fractions and multi-digit addition and subtraction. I have incorporated fraction manipulatives to help students with equivalence and comparing. We will continue to work through this as we start to prepare for MCA's this spring. I have been continuing to pull smaller groups in the afternoon according to the needs of each child.

The spring conference link will be going out soon. Please be on the lookout for this as I am very excited to talk about your child's growth with you!

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From Ms. Sara Silence
4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

The highlights of our week have been doing "Group Jams" for math, having a "Stuffy Day" on Tuesday, where our favorite stuffed animals got to do school all day with us, completing another edible chocolate experiment, and making pencil toppers in art.

Fourth and Fifth grade have worked through identifying situation and solution equations in math. These can be so tricky! We have been doing amazing though. We used our Stuffy Day on Tuesday to

practice coming up with possible equations using variables. Fifth graders have continued using multiplication and division with fractions. Adding this twist to word problems took some serious brain power. We worked great as a team though!

Our focus on reading has been using text features in non-fiction texts. Our readings have focused on the topics of animal ecosystems and the industrial revolution. Two completely unrelated topics, but they are current high interest and fit nicely into our work. As we took a look at the first factories in the northeastern U.S., the students were highly intrigued by all things Industrial Revolution. Our next few stops in our social studies country tour will take us through the events of the American Revolution. Friday we will work on a scavenger hunt outside, reading clues about the constitution.

It has been a busy week with some extra fun. Kids have worked hard to complete work on time and ended up earning an extra block of "Free Time."

Continue to practice math facts at home! It is the key to math success and eases frustration.

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