

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

November 6, 2025

Tuesday-Friday, November 4-7 ~ K-5 Parent/Teacher Conferences

Tuesday, November 18 School Board Meeting at 4:00pm

Wednesday-Friday, November 26-28 ~ Thanksgiving Break

Wednesday, December 10 ~ Winter Musical * Performances at 1pm & 6pm

Tuesday, December 16 ~ School Board Meeting at 4:00pm

Monday, December 22 - January 2 ~ Winter 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 four day week was busy, and with conferences after school this week, it was particularly busy for our K-5 classroom teachers. Many thanks to this dedicated team for making Birch Grove a great place to be!

Many thanks also to the parents that have had their conference this week or will be having it tonight or tomorrow. Open communication with your child's teacher will help to support your child. We invite you to share, as you know your child best! Also, while conferences are a great time to connect, please feel free to do so throughout this school year.

Please be sure to mark your calendar for the annual musical ~ Wednesday, December 10 with two performances: 1pm and 6pm. Work on this has already started, but please contact your child's teacher if you know your child will be absent on



the performance day, as we will not assign these children a major part in the musical. This just makes sense. This year's musical is *Elfis and the Sleigh Riders!*

Birch Buddies ~ DODGEBALL!

Remaining days of this session:

Monday, November 10

Monday, November 17 (Moms can join us from 4:15-5:15)

Monday, November 24 (Dads can join us from 4:15-5:15)



A mini-session of Birch Buddies ~ ART! Afterschool program:

Friday, November, 7 ~ Weaving

Friday, November 14 ~ Beading/paracord bracelets

Friday, November 21 ~ Buffalo Hide Painting



Pictured is 2/3 reading-to-self, an important element in the reading journey. Please set aside consistent time at home for your child to read to themselves or to others in your home. Also consider having your child see YOU read at home too and be a great reading role model!

<https://www.readingrockets.org/.../10-things-you-can-do...>

You will find more pictures of the Halloween parade on the school Facebook page!

Many thanks to:

Tofte Circle K

Grand Marais State Bank ~ Tofte Branch

Tofte Forest Service (hosted by Superior National firefighters)





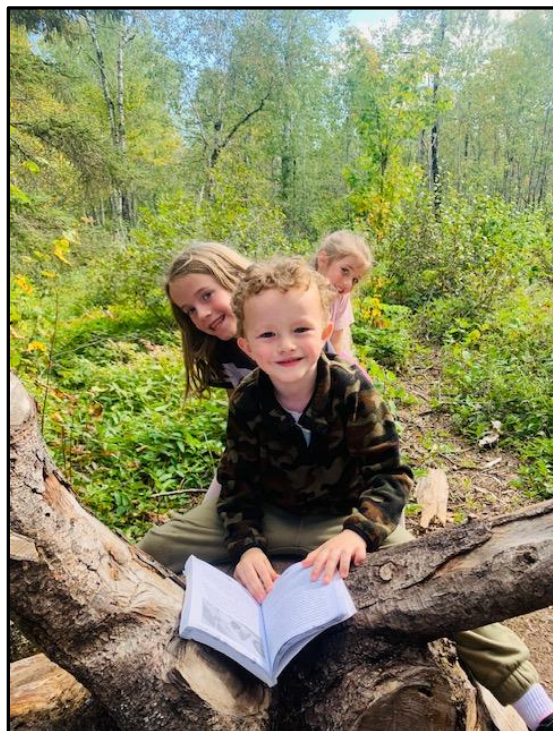
Please consider supporting **Birch Grove Community School/Services** through GiveMN and Give To the Max campaign at: <https://www.givemn.org/organization/Birch-Grove-Community-School>

Give to the Max's Early Giving period begins Nov. 1 and the campaign culminates on **Give to the Max Day, Thursday, Nov. 20.**

Each donation through [GiveMN.org](https://www.givemn.org) qualifies **BIRCH GROVE** for additional grants from the Give to the Max Day prize pool, thanks to the continued generosity of the Bush Foundation.

On Nov. 20, Give to the Max Day, GiveMN will award:

- \$500 Early Giving Golden Tickets daily on Nov. 1-19
- \$500 Golden Ticket prizes every 15 minutes on Nov. 20
- \$1,000 Hourly Golden Ticket prizes hourly on Nov. 20
- \$6,000 Power Hour Prizes, shared among the top three organizations based on the amount raised between 10:00-10:59 a.m. and 10:00-10:59 p.m.
- The grand prize of Give to the Max Day, a \$10,000 Super-Sized Golden Ticket, drawn from all gifts made Nov. 1-20. Additionally, dozens of regional prizes will be awarded to organizations across much of Greater Minnesota, thanks to the support of the Initiative Foundation, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and West Central Initiative.



Click on this link to support Birch Grove!
<https://www.givemn.org/organization/Birch-Grove-Community-School>

K/1 explored the power of the sun in their latest science unit. Students learned about the patterns of the sun, how the sun warms the earth, and how to read a thermometer. The unit concluded with a science experiment on using the sun to cook s'mores! Their experiment was both successful and yummy!



Halloween lunch called for a little bit more help - pictured: Angie Fernlund, Jessica Klemmer and Emily VanDoren! The witches hat pizza and frozen banana ghost were incredibly cute and tasty!
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/School-Lunches>



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!



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www.birchgroveschool.com

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftwear.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off

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*

This week in Seedlings we learned all about squirrels. We read books, both nonfiction and fiction, to learn about what squirrels look like, where they live, and what they eat. While on our walks, we kept our eyes on the ground and in the trees to see if we could find squirrels collecting food to prepare for winter.

The sensory table was filled with dried corn kernels for the Seedlings to scoop and pour. Funnels were added this week as an additional element to explore. The Seedlings worked their fine motor skills to fill the small jars in the table, as well as helping to clean up any kernels that fell to the floor while playing. A sensory bottle was filled with dry corn and acorns for our younger Seedlings to experience the sensory material safely. A squirrel puppet was used to discover what the fur of a squirrel would feel like as well as their fluffy tail.

Squirrel paintings were completed using cotton balls and brown paint. While painting we named the different body parts of the squirrel. Squirrel and acorn stamps and ink pads were used to create their own squirrel picture as well.



We continue to go on walks as the weather allows. If you would like, extra items can be kept in the classroom as each child has a labeled cubby to store items.

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From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

The *Fall Harvest* theme in Saplings this week served as a wonderful time to learn where our food comes from, how farmers and the land work together.

We launched into the week on Tuesday; Saplings were bustling with farmyard fun as we explored the classic tale of *The Little Red Hen!* We focused on story elements, identifying the main character (the determined Little Red Hen) and the setting (the farm). We practiced retelling the story using the Little Red Hen puppets we made and sequencing cards to help us remember the beginning, middle, and end. The repetitive phrases in the story helped them join in the reading and build early language skills. Saplings turned into little scientists by examining real wheat seeds and stalks using magnifying glasses, discussing how they grow. We also explored the "farm-to-table" process by learning how wheat is turned into flour and then bread. They used measuring tools in sensory bins with "wheat" (a rice and barley mixture) to practice counting and volume concepts. This story sparked important conversations about feelings and friendships. We talked about how the Little Red Hen might have felt when her friends refused to help, and how we can be good friends by working together in our classroom.



Special farm toys made an appearance in the sensory bin as we talked about farmers, harvest time and life on a farm. We prioritized the nutritional content of harvested vegetables and fruits, rich in fundamental vitamins and minerals. Letters S for scarecrow, H for hen, harvest and hay, and C for corn and cornucopia, were emphasized. Artistic endeavors involved designing Little Red Hen puppets, Pete The Cat scarecrows, hay shook in the full moon painting and cornucopias, fostering painting and cutting expertise.

During circle time this week the Saplings had a fun classroom hunting for objects and toys beginning with the letter sounds s, h and c. They then practiced letter formation of the uppercase and lowercase letters. Letter recognition is essential for reading competency, as alphabet letters constitute the fundamental building blocks of a child's future reading comprehension capacities.

The math and manipulatives tables provided opportunities for Saplings to participate in many seed counting, puzzle sequencing, shadow matching and color sorting activities.

Reminder: as temperatures drop next week, please continue to dress your child in layers. They often overheat indoors and outdoors, so sending a winter jacket along with a fleece or sweatshirt helps with this. We will begin wearing hats and mittens outdoors.

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**  
*K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

It has been a busy week! Thank you to all the parents for meeting during conferences. It was great getting to share what I see in the classroom and to hear what you see at home. I get a lot of good insight about every student by talking to you! If we did not get a chance to meet, feel free to reach out, and we can schedule a time!

We started a social studies unit this week about community! We learned about different jobs adults have in a community, and we wrote about what we want to do when we grow up. We also learned about the difference between goods vs. services. K/1 students were excited about the topic and brought new 'jobs' into our free play!

In language arts, we are focusing on reading strategies. We always look at the words and try to sound out words we do not know. We use pictures for clues and to understand a story better. Students should be practicing reading every day at home! In math, first graders are learning about missing parts in an equation. Kindergarteners are learning about numbers up to 20, shapes, and 5-groups.

Winter is approaching! Please make sure all outdoor gear is waterproof and your student has a hat, mittens, snow pants, and a proper winter coat every day!

Have a great weekend!

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From Ms. Samantha Forster

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

This week has been busy! We have entered into the South America continent for the month of November so we will be focusing on readings and projects around this continent. Frida Kahlo was our art inspiration and we did a portrait of her. Many of the students had a reading passage about her to help with background knowledge. We had a wonderful discussion about adversity and tenacity with this inspiring artist. We also did a trapeze science experiment where we created model trapezes out of string, binder slips, and pencils. This helped students make predictions about motion, gravity, and friction.



In reading, we had a few nonfiction articles about hippos and storms. Mars, the pygmy hippo, has been our favorite youtube star to watch in the morning so we compared and contrasted pygmy hippos and river hippos. Students also completed a graphic organizer with supporting details for the main idea. We also had a traditional text that had a theme of working hard and following your dreams. I also paired that with the main idea and supporting details graphic organizer to help students understand how to use this comprehension strategy with a variety of texts. In phonics, we focused on consonant diagraphs. A strategy I have been teaching students is to circle the diagraph to help them sound out the words. This has been working wonders. Lastly, our suffix for the week was -ing and the multiple rules that go along with that. We have been working on independent work and our 4 step asking questions strategy (read the directions twice, ask a friend, then ask the teacher).

In math, second grade has been focusing on measuring and shapes. We spent time measuring various things in centimeters and inches throughout the week. We have also started to understand the half inch as we are exploring measuring. Third grade is working on fractions. We introduce fractions then played "Fraction Scoot." This was a fan favorite. We will continue to work on fractions as this is one of the hardest things to start to understand in third grade and I want everyone to feel prepared for testing this winter!

Thanks for meeting with me this week. I loved the conversations that we got to have about your student. Please continue to reach out with any questions or concerns that you may have forgotten to bring up during conferences. Thank you!

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

Students in grades 4/5 had the chance to have a different teacher for art last week and it was a classmate! Thank you to Nova for helping us design our masks and teach us how to decorate them using paint, jewels, pipe cleaners, fur and other art supplies. It was a fun way to celebrate Halloween.

In reading we practiced hunting for cause and effect relationships in an informational story about tree kangaroos. Identifying cause and effect is not easy, but it was made more enjoyable by reading about a very unique animal that was new to many of us! In math class we learned how to write equations to represent a two step story problem that involved identifying extra information or hidden problems. It tested our math stamina, but everyone felt good about the challenge and doing their best. Next week we will wrap up our multiplication unit by solving and estimating two digit by two digit multiplication. We will take our unit test toward the end of next week and then we will move on to long division. During our afternoons we are shifting our focus from writing and social studies to science. Our first unit will be on the topic of food webs. We started this unit by thinking about a “world without ants” and how that would affect it’s ecosystem and then played a game called “Eat or be Eaten”! It was a fun way to learn about the energy transfer that happens within food chains.

Thank you to nearly all families for taking the time to meet for your child’s conference. I loved having time to spend celebrating the growth of each student and setting goals for the rest of the school year. If you had an online conference the handouts will be in your child’s take home folder on Friday.

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