

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

February 20, 2025

Upcoming Events:

- Monday, February 24 ~ Birch Buddies ~ Dodgeball! After School Program
- 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
- 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*

K-5 winter assessments in math and reading were completed and discussed this week. Assessments ended up a little later than normal as we are still getting used to FastBridge (versus NWEA-MAPS). Growth discussions on each child were had. While we know that the school year is not over yet, we like to assess mid-year so that we are able to discuss where each child is and make a plan for the rest of the year, including strategies and interventions to increase growth. If you ever have any questions about your child's academic growth, please contact us as we are happy to talk with parents about their child! As always, attendance plays a part in growth, so please know where your child stands as far as absences go – they can add up before you know it! 😊



Birch Buddies ~ DODGEBALL! After school special! K-5 students that are registered will have a snack in the Community Room prior to hitting the gym. Pick up time is by 5:00pm. Please be on time. Snacks and some unbelievable dodgeball all provided for \$6 a day!
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Birch-Buddies>



DODGEBALL days:
 *Monday, February 24
 *Monday, March 3
 *Monday, March 10
 *Monday, March 17

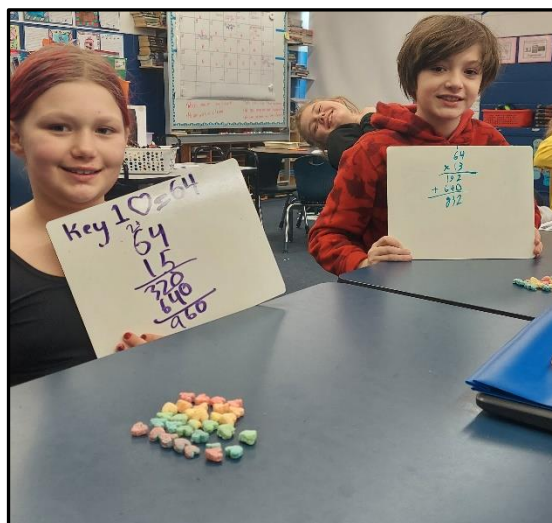


Kindergarten Round Up is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15 this year. If you know of a child that will be eligible for Kindergarten next year (must be 5 by September 1), please recommend this special day to them where they can experience BGCS. We appreciate all parent recommendations!

2/3 learned about Ojibwe constellations for social studies last week and spent time looking at the names and the Greek counterparts. They also had discussions about the stories and the importance of them within the Ojibwe culture. This was paired with read alouds and their own poster of the constellations of their choice. Students did an amazing job with this unit!



Last Friday, Birch Grove celebrated Valentine's Day and the 101 day of school (there were lots of 101 Dalmatians roaming the building)! Card exchanges, games and activities, arts & crafts, and a special heart shaped lunch were a few of the highlights of this busy day! More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/birchgrovecommunityschool/>



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](#)



From Ms. Emily VanDoren

Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

Giddy-up! This week's theme was the Wild West. We had a fun time listening to and dancing along to *She'll be Comin' Round the Mountain* and *Ride a Little Horsie*. Both of the songs had fun actions to get our bodies moving. The Seedlings also enjoyed bouncing along on my knee to the songs.

We read a book about baby horses to introduce what a horse looks like and used horse figurines to bring the book to life. We also used a horse hand puppet and "fed" the horse different foods from our play kitchen. We used a wood drum to create the sound of hoofbeats and each of the older Seedlings took a turn.

To add the fun, we created a tent with the wood climbing triangle and a blanket. With the addition of a few of our floor cushions and some of our favorite books, it created a fun new space to read. It also led to quite a few rounds of hide and seek.



Have a good weekend!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Presidents' Day was commemorated by Saplings at the beginning of the week, marking a day to honor the nation's leaders and delve into U.S. history. I acquainted them with the two most prominent presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. We discussed the president's role and responsibilities, and I inquired about their aspirations if they were to become president of their school. Wednesday marked a Teddy Bear day to commemorate the 26th president, Theodore Roosevelt, who inspired its namesake.

The Dramatic Play area was redesigned to resemble the White House, where they developed their writing skills in the oval office. Focusing on the letter P and tracing of President names.

A discussion on the value and presidential figures of the penny and quarter was facilitated through their use. The coins were organized by size, color, and matching facial features. Saplings arranged the coins in various patterns. Coin rubbings were also conducted.



Saplings utilized creativity in constructing log homes with the Lincoln Logs. Named after Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States. Lincoln is known for his humble beginnings living in a log cabin during his youth.

An Andy Warhol-inspired art collaboration was created with watercolor paintings of George Washington. Abraham Lincoln art involved practiced skills in gluing and curling his beard. Teddy Roosevelt art was a practice in scissor skills, with a recall writing prompt.

A JaZZy little lesson commemorating Black History Month was initiated for the remainder of the week. We listened to jazz music and read about Louis Armstrong "Satchmo" and Ella Fitzgerald. We investigated jazz music and its considerable impact on American music and various Disney songs. We discovered the concept of Scat singing and made an effort to generate our own rhymes. Then, students designed a jazz-inspired collage incorporating instruments and painting while listening to jazz music.

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1st Grade Elementary Teacher

K/1 worked with our classroom robots last week and this week. They practiced coding, measuring, angles, and programming when playing with the robotic 'Finch.' We programmed them to write letters, go through an obstacle course, and do a fun dance. K/1 is always engaged in educational play!

In language arts, Kindergarten practiced letter formation. We practiced writing letters, making letters with wiki sticks, and building letters with pipe cleaners. Using different mediums both spikes the interest and promotes more learning! First graders read a biography and discussed sequence of events! They also learned about the vowel teams oa and ow. We do lots of phonics work throughout the week including sorting, fill in the blanks, and spelling. In math, Kindergarten is comparing numbers. We practiced using the 'comparing alligator' to show greater than, less than, and equals too. 1st grade finished a unit about place value and will be learning about graphing and data next.



Continue to read, practice math skills, and write at home with your child!

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**From Ms. Samantha Forster**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

This cold short week has been jam-packed with education! We finished many projects up from last week including book pages, paragraph writing, and constellation poster. We have gotten so good at our routine that each day is meaningful. We did an Asian inspired art called Suminagashi with centric circles. This was amazing. We also did income, resources, and what consumer vs producers is. This was a great social studies topic that opened up lots of discussion. We continue to incorporate language art games into our afternoons. We have also been incorporating technology for math activities. After this book project, we are going to be starting a big biography research project that has many components and will take us to testing season.



In reading, we did a class reader's theater and acted out an old myth called the "Two Bear Cubs." This was new and different from our normal literacy block but it was so much fun to see the students perform! We focused on the characters and theme with this myth which helped build understanding of the story. We, of course, had our normal word study and fluency.

In math, second grade mastered unit 5! This was all about time and graphs. They took their assessment this week and are on their way to the next unit which is focused on computation with bigger numbers. Third grade has been working on area and perimeter this week. They spent lots of time reinforcing these skills as we used white board graph material to create rectangles and solve area and perimeter word problems.

As it warms up a little bit, I will be utilizing the outdoors to do different day to day activities. This will be fun and students are ready to bring their classroom activities outside as they are responsible and know the expectations. We will also make sure to include some afternoons doing outdoor recreation while we still have winter!

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From Ms. Sara Silence

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

This week we had our first student reach their end-of-the-year goal in Lexia. The reward, besides having more free time in the classroom was a treat of their favorite candy bar! You may imagine that this has energized the rest of the class to focus on accomplishing their weekly unit goal or beyond! We will likely have a few more goal achievers shortly.

For the last three weeks, we have been completing a focused reader that helps deepen comprehension. This week's story has shown that our understanding is greatly improved! This "Write in Reader" has also allowed us to practice replying in full sentences and checking our work for accuracy.

We have spent some time wrapping up our All About Me slideshow while learning about making slideshows. We added images of our house and bedrooms after we practiced drawing 3D shapes.

We combined science and social studies as we left Hershey, Pennsylvania by doing some chocolate science! Now that is a lesson that the whole class can enjoy!



The last bit of big news this week is that both grades began units on algebra using variables. Math definitely started to look different this week! We handled it like champs though and the feedback

overall was that the students enjoyed working with variables and "solving the puzzles." I hope their enthusiasm continues as the lessons get a little more complex.

Have a great weekend, and as always, don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

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