

## Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

February 6, 2025

### Upcoming Events:

Friday, February 7 ~ No School-PD For Staff

Monday, February 10 ~ Birch Buddies ~ SKATE! After School Program

Friday, February 14 ~ Valentine's Day & 101 Days of School Afternoon Activities

Monday, February 17 ~ No School-Presidents Day and PD for Staff

Tuesday, February 18 ~ School Board Meeting at 4:00

Monday, February 24 ~ Birch Buddies ~ DODGEBALL! After School Program

### 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*

It was a short, but busy week! Remember that there is no school tomorrow, Friday, February 7. We hope that our families are able to get out and enjoy the Northshore!

Many thanks to the North House Folk School in Grand Marais for inviting our 4/5 students to participate in the Traditional Textiles program on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday this week. The students had a wonderful time and enjoyed learning and creating. 4/5 also spent some time at the Grand Marais library getting library cards, did some sledding, and made a stop for a sweet treat at the Dairy Queen! All in all, a great 3 days for these students! See the pictures of students in action later in this newsletter and on the school Facebook page.





Tickets to Treasures program update. Should any modifications be needed for specific students for this program, the classroom teacher will contact parents. Students do not need to do the full 20 minutes every time. For example, if your child only reads 10 minutes per night, for every two nights they read, log 20 minutes (equaling one ticket). Reading on the bus home counts! If you have an older BG sibling that reads to a younger BG sibling both count – credit is given to the reader and the one being read to (but please limit this as all need practice reading themselves). Happy READING!

There is no school tomorrow, Friday, February 7, as this is a scheduled professional development day for staff. We hope our families are able to get out and enjoy some new snow!



**Birch Buddies ~ SKATE!** after school special! The last day of this block is next week! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Birch-Buddies>

Remaining SKATE! days:

\*Monday, February 10

Please be sure your child has all of the necessary outdoor ware needed to stay warm and enjoy themselves. Happy skating!



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

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Seedlings-Program>



Last week on Friday, after working hard in the classroom, 2/3 went snowshoeing and then joined K/1 for a bonfire, making delicious s'mores! Enjoying the Great Outdoors!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/The-Great-Outdoors>



**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

4/5 spent 3 days in Grand Marais this week: North House Folk School, Grand Marais Library, Dairy Queen, and sledding!



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](mailto:birchgrove@boreal.org) ~ 218-663-0170

Website: [www.birchgroveschool.com](http://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*

We had new friends join Seedlings this week so we had a chill week getting to know each other. Our routine had a bit of a shakeup and we all had to make adjustments but we are slowly finding our new normal here in the Seedling room.

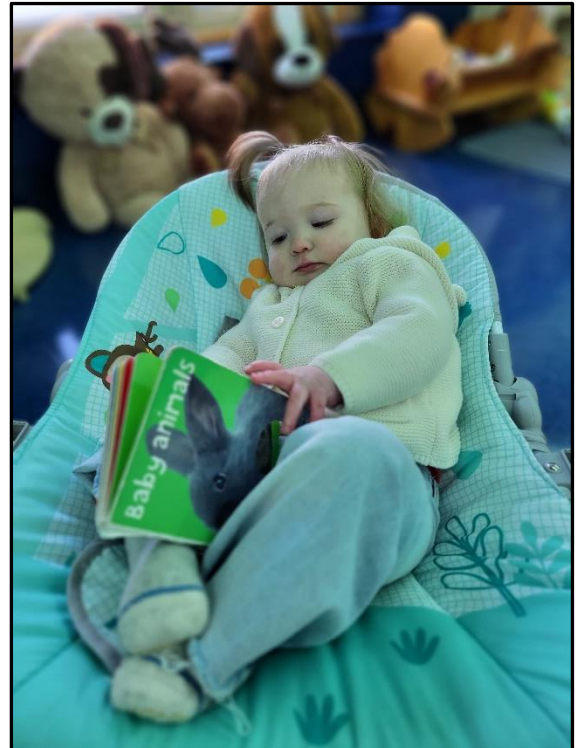
We have a new wood climbing frame that arrived last week that I will have assembled for use next week. I am very excited for this new addition to our room as it will allow for greater physical activity throughout the day.

While we have had some changes to our room and routines, we continue to enjoy a lot of our favorite activities such as reading books, singing songs, and cooking in our pretend kitchen.

Have a good weekend!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Saplings started the week off by celebrating Groundhog's Day. On February 2nd Punxatawny Phil came out and saw his shadow. It scared him to go back to his home and sleep for another 6 weeks. Monday featured a range of measuring, counting and science activities centered around groundhogs and shadows. Saplings carried out an experiment focused on casting shadows of different shapes and sizes. They not only created hand shadows but also used various objects, including animals and figures, in front of the light source.



The rest of the week we empowered ourselves with dental health awareness, as February is Dental Health Month. Saplings participated in various manipulative activities designed to promote healthy and happy teeth, including comparing toothbrushes, counting teeth, making patterns, and sequencing sizes. Letter recognition exercises focused on T for teeth, B for brush, and D for dentist. We continued working on writing and our pincer grip with a variety of prewriting practice line tracings from the toothbrush to the tooth.

Can you guess who these Saplings are just by their shadows?

During art we imaginatively flossed teeth with paint and developed our own special toothpaste (puffy paint) to brush our teeth, exploring our creativity. We also perfected our cutting and gluing skills by creating a mouth full of teeth.

A warm welcome to our three new friends who moved up from the Seedlings room!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**

*K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

There were some art projects happening in K/1 this week! We did two directive drawings and a Valentine's craft! We love using the "Art for Kids Hub" channel on YouTube for our drawing ideas. We learned about blending colors together and used oil pastels for more vibrant colors! There were lots of oohs and ahhs over the coloring changing when we blended it!

The Kindergarteners learned about the letter sound V this week. We practiced building letters with pipe cleaners! The first graders are learning about long vowels. We practiced identifying sounds for vowel teams. We read a story about a big trip a goat takes. We practiced our inferring skills to understand the story.

In math, 1<sup>st</sup> graders are learning about place value. We practiced identifying tens and ones in a number and adding tens together! Kindergarteners are learning about different ways to make ten, adding, and numbers up to 100. We played a variety of games to practice our math facts.

Reminder: Valentine's Day/101 Dalmatians Day is next week. K/1 will be having a card exchange on Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. If your child wants to make cards, I can supply paper and coloring materials!

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

It's February and we are embracing academics for this month! We are focusing hard at building all our skills. We are "in" Asia this month so we did a Marc Chagall inspired art. I am keeping all art projects and writing samples to make into one booklet so do not be alarmed when you don't see many art projects coming home! Tickets for Treasure has started, please ensure your child is reading each night to help earn those tickets. All of the students in second and third grade know how to read at this time so I would like for them to be reading aloud to you. Of course, there is an exception for audio books and being read aloud too but try to encourage independent reading as much as possible. We have been busy writing our book pages this week and will write our final copy next week. With that, I will be sending an order form home if you would like to purchase one. There is no pressure but I would like to give the option if you would like. The company is Student Treasures and there are examples on the website. I also sent home report cards on Monday. Please check to make sure you received it.



Reading is a big priority for our classroom. We have been working hard on vocabulary and fluency by incorporating a short passage with complex words into our fluency activity. These are many nonfictions that help build background knowledge, vocabulary, and context clue skills. We also started our prefix and suffix review by using word ladders to switch base words based on clues. I have utilized our FastBridge winter data to make slight changes in our reading groups to fill reading holes. Each student has taken this change with great positivity and enthusiasm.

I have spent the last two weeks reviewing old skills while slowly adding new ones in. Time, fractions, and graphs have been the biggest focus. I have started a small group in the afternoon on a few days to make sure that students have additional time to build understanding if needed. Second grade took their Unit 4 test and has started the short Unit 5 this week. Third grade will be finishing up Unit 5 and take their assessment next week. I will also be having students make their own pictographs to help enforce their understanding!

Please reach out with any questions or concerns. Thank you for ensuring your child has the winter clothing to be successful. Thank you!

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**From Ms. Sara Silence**  
*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

We have started our busy February with a great deal of excitement. The three day field trip to the North House was a success, students have shown a great deal of interest in textiles. We will use this interest to jump into some science, social studies, and create more free time options in class when work is completed. We have all the supplies already at Birch Grove. We will start weaving in class next week.

Wednesday, we spent some time at the Grand Marais Library, learning about how the libraries are connected.

Children in both Lake and Cook counties had a chance to check out books for the classroom or to take home with their very own library card. We also made a pit stop at Dairy Queen for a special treat. This is usually done on day 3 of the trip, but we had a little extra time on Wednesday.

With new snow on the way, we have planned several outdoor adventures. Today we went sledding before our time at the North House. Monday February 10th we will be back out on the ice for skating. Friday the 14th we will head to the campsite after we pass out Valentines.





All this in addition to going through all our learning goals! Like I said, it will be a very busy month!

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