

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

March 21, 2025

Upcoming Events:

Monday-Friday, March 24-28 ~ No School - Spring Break
Monday, March 31 School Resumes

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*

Whew! The week before spring break is usually pretty fast paced and filled with learning and activities that staff want to get in before the break. Staff, students, and families have been hearing spring break calling, and it is finally here!

Please, please, continue to have your child read over the break. We appreciate this support from home! Remember that students can earn tickets for the Tickets To Treasure program through reading! We hope that everyone has a safe and happy break! We look forward to the return of K-5, Seedlings and Saplings on Monday, March 31.

BGCS School and Community Service Staff: Please do whatever makes you happy over the break! Thank you all so very much for everything that you do for Birch Grove ~ you are all amazing!



This program is on FIRE!



CAMPSITE KIDS ~ SUMMER 2025 Almost Full!

Information and registration forms for Campsite Kids have been emailed home. If you need us to send home paper copies, please let us know. There is no other program quite like Campsite Kids in either Cook or Lake County, making it very popular! Space is limited.

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Campsite-Kids>

The April hot lunch menu has been posted on the school website at: www.birchgroveschool.com. Here is a quick link that will take you directly to the menu: [April-2025-Menu.pdf](#)

We anticipate sometime in the month of April to be the last Lantern Lunch of the year, at which time we will switch over to lunch outside under the pavilion area or at The Campsite. Looking forward to it!



SPRING BREAK

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 – it's a good time to earn Tickets To Treasures! School resumes on Monday, March 31.

KINDERGARTEN ROUNDUP

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!



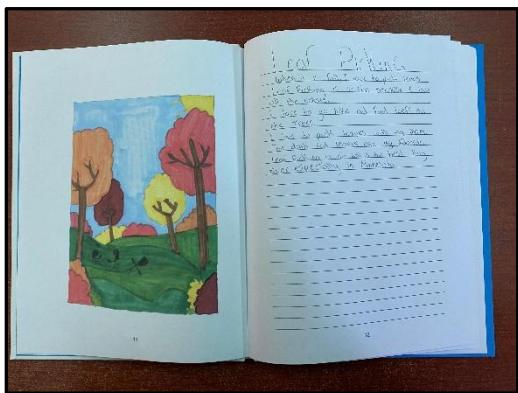
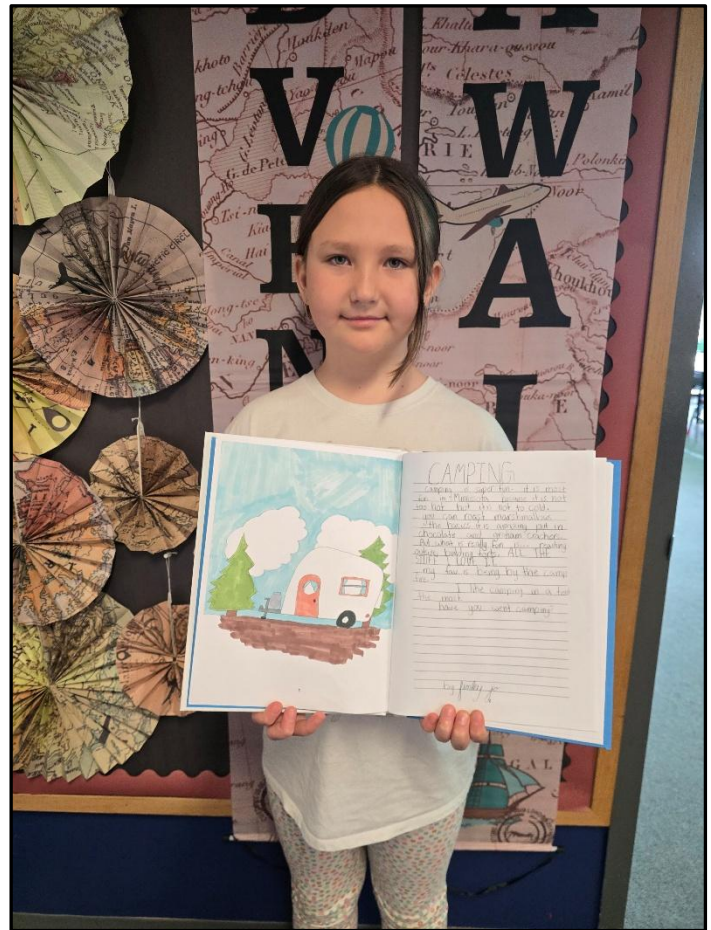
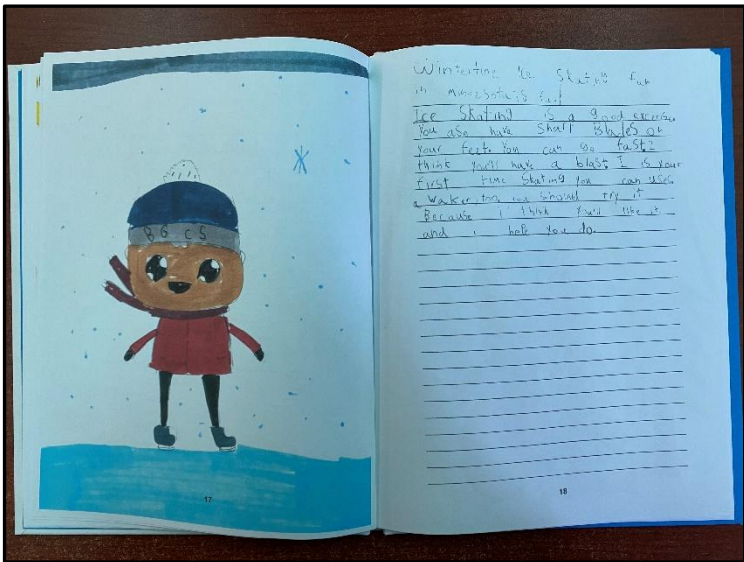
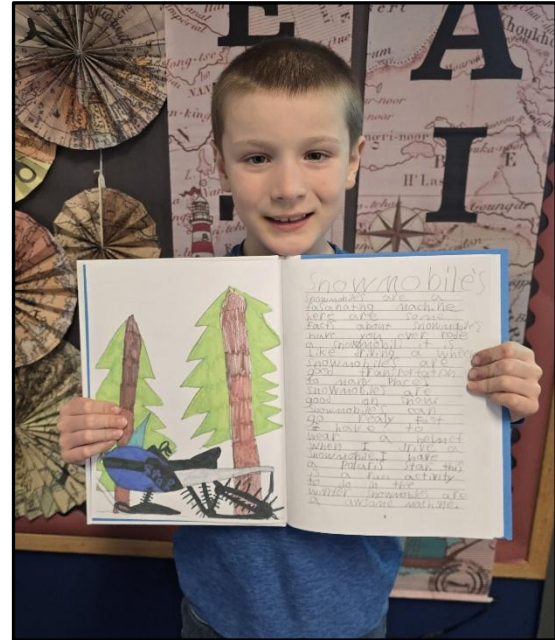
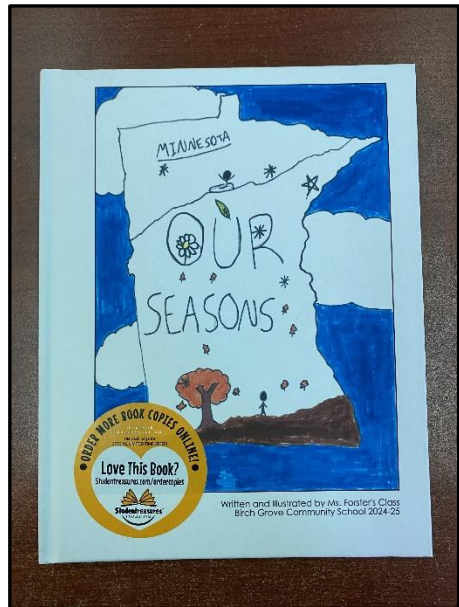
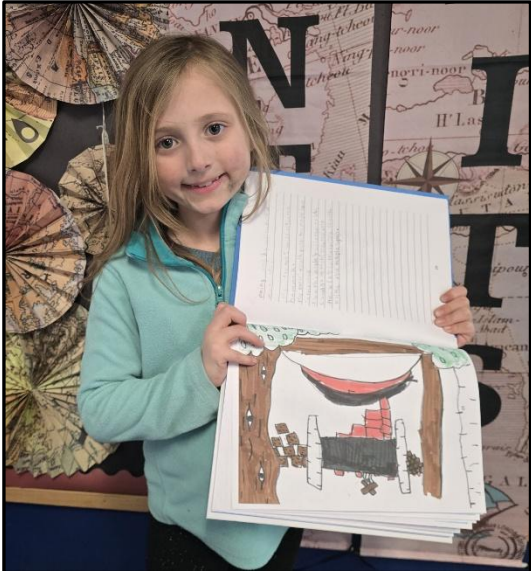
The last Birch Buddies ~ DODGEBALL! after school special with parents was SO Fun! Thanks for joining us! We will definitely do something similar to this again – the children have already been asking for it!



Pat and Tracy Scully gifted a special ice cream treat to add to lunch today for St. Patrick's Day! They also handed out coins, necklaces, and York mints! Angie had the kitchen window decorated with shamrocks, duckies, and coins! The fabulous lunch was topped off with green milk! We hope everyone had a happy St. Patrick's Day!



Ms. Forster's class created a book titled, "Minnesota: Our Seasons"! Everything was 2/3's ideas down to the cover, activities, and seasons. Students learned all the important steps that illustrators and authors go through while publishing a book including outlining, rough drafts, sketches, and final drafts. This was a multiple week project after months of preparing on how to write a paragraph and they were able to see a real-life representation of what writing can be. We have lots of potential authors in the making! 2/3 families can purchase either a soft or hardcover copy of this book - for details, reach out to Ms. Forster! The classroom copy will go to the school library at the end of the year!



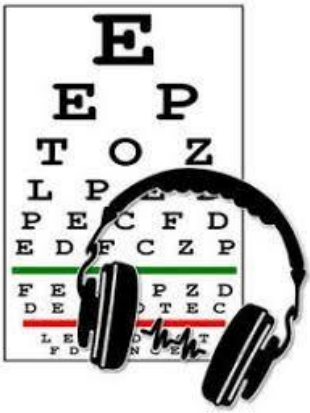
New flooring will be installed in K/1, 2/3, 4/5 classrooms and the library over spring break. We can't wait to see it upon our return on Monday, March 31! Thank you to Tofte Township, the building owner, for this new upgrade in the classrooms and library!



"If you have to put someone on a pedestal, put teachers. They are society's heroes." - Guy Kawasaki

Birch Grove's educators are incredible ~ you all deserve to have the best spring break ever!





Sawtooth Mountain Clinic conducted hearing and vision screening last week for Saplings - 5th grade. Emails were sent out today to families of children where a recommendation to re-screen with the family physician was made. If you did not receive an email, your child passed both tests. If not, please check your email. Thank you!

Today was *Lights Out! Pajama Day!*, the last day of school before spring break! It has become a tradition to spend the day in pajamas with the lights out, using flashlights and lanterns while we work and have fun. In the afternoon, K-5 watched *The Lego Movie* all while sporting glow jewelry and waving foam glow sticks! Happy spring break, everyone!



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.logosoftware.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off
Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)



From Ms. Emily VanDoren

Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

This week was all about St. Patrick's day and the color green! We sang songs and rhymes that had a focus on leprechauns and shamrocks during our morning snack time. We read *Color Dance* by Ann Jonas and *Little Blue and Little Yellow* by Leo Lionni. Both books show how primary colors can be mixed together to create a secondary color. This was a great way for us to begin to talk about the color green. When we read other books throughout the week, I would point out objects in the book that were green. I also created a shaker with a bottle filled with dry pasta that had been dyed green that they could use to create music.

The older Seedlings enjoyed new sensory activities this week. Sensory bags filled with baby oil and pom poms and another with water and sequins provided a mess free activity for the Seedlings to enjoy. They also painted a shamrock with green taste safe paint that was made using flour (baked to eliminate bacteria), salt, water and food dye. They loved being able to paint and there was no need to worry if they decided to taste it.

A basket filled with green foam shapes and green hand puppets, a frog and a parrot, were also set out this week for the Seedlings to explore. We not only learned about the shape names, but it was also a great way to practice following the directions for "in", "out", "up" and "down". The hand puppets provided entertainment for the older Seedlings as they "fed" them different play foods and also for the younger Seedlings as they tracked the movement and smiled to the sounds that we gave the puppets.



I hope you have a wonderful spring break and we will see you again on Monday, March 31st!

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From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

Saplings had a week of shamrock fun as we celebrated St. Patrick's Day! We briefly explored Irish culture, learning about the holiday's meaning, and having lots of green and lucky fun! Saplings practiced counting with gold coins and dropping the amount into the pots with the corresponding number. St. Patty's Day snack was magically delicious as we had Lucky Charms, where they sorted out the lucky marshmallows.

We experienced lively Irish music and participated in a lively dance party. They crafted their own lucky shamrocks and colorful rainbows using paint and a squeegee. Various prewriting and reading activities were employed from the story *There was an Old Lady who Swallowed a Clover* by Lucille Colandro. Our letter focus was S for shamrock, C for clover and R for rainbow.



We then leaped into spring the rest of the week with a reading of *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle, illustrating the life cycle from seed to flower and back. This was followed by splatter and sponge painting of a sunflower. Subsequent to the reading of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, we analyzed the definitions of new vocabulary words, including harp, Ogre, stalk, widow, market, stall, and beanstalk. We also examined the emotional states of the characters, exploring feelings such as anxiety, fear, worry, delight and confusion. Furthermore, we introduced fractions using a manipulative activity to measure Jack's ascent up the stalk. We utilized the giant's and Jack's footprints to measure various classroom objects. Each student then planted their own beanstalk and learned about the components of a bean seed.

Saplings tested the efficacy of the newly placed stumps around their campsite by roasting marshmallows and making s'mores!

Friday we'll be doing some spring cleaning in our room with a Lights Out P.J. day!

Wishing everyone a rejuvenating spring break!

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1st Grade Elementary Teacher

March has truly gone by quickly. We have been busy learners in K/1! Thank you to everyone for meeting during conferences. Every student is making great growth towards their goals! Continue to reinforce reading and math at home!

We reviewed shapes, and numbers this week in math. Kindergarten learned about 3d shapes and enjoyed making the shapes in play dough! 1st grade learned about 2d shapes and the characteristic of those shapes. They build shapes using a geo-board this week! In language arts, we discussed sequence of events and cause and effect. Kindergarten reviewed the alphabet and 1st grade reviewed blends and vowel sounds.

Over spring break please continue to reinforce and practice math and reading skills at home. Make sure to continue to read for 20 minutes every day. Every student can read out loud to you if the right book is chosen. Make sure to be logging this time spent in the reading/math log for tickets to treasure. The students can earn prizes at the end of the year with their tickets. Please use the online resources and read over the break!! We have had such great growth this year and I want to continue that!

Have a great spring break!

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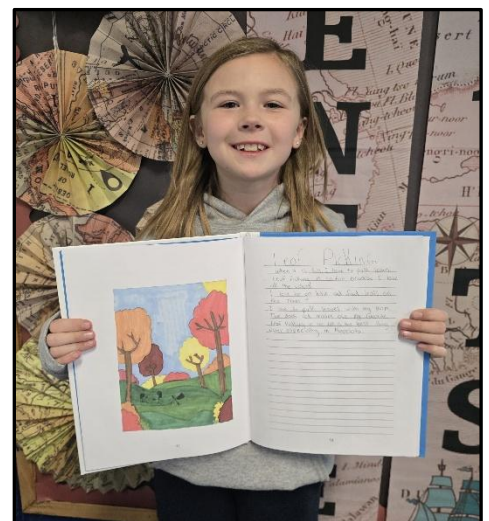
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From Ms. Samantha Forster

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

This week has been great preparing for our long spring break! We did an art project based around the Australian artist and illustrator Bronwyn Bancroft. This is our last week in the Australian continent before we move into Africa, our last continent! We have been busy writing a FIVE paragraph essay about a famous person. Every student is at a different spot so we have been having lots of writer's workshops in the afternoons. I swear your children are destined to be authors as they have taken to writing with such optimism and dedication. We will continue this project after spring break with a timeline, PowerPoint, and sketch of our person. We were able to fit in time for lots of fun with two movies. We watched The BFG as we just finished



reading this book in class. I started "The Tale of Despereaux," one of my childhood favorites and by a very beloved author.

In reading, second grade had their first taste of narrative nonfiction about a goat that has their wool turned into a Navajo rug. It is told from the point of view of the goat which makes it an interesting twist for a nonfiction book. Third grade read about a wooden statue that hitchhiked across the southern states. It was told by letters between a little girl, the transporters, and her uncle. It was such a fun way to express a fantasy story. Students practiced fluency with an article about John F. Kennedy. My focus with fluency passages is nonfiction as this where most students in the United States are lacking comprehension skills. As always, we focused on discussion around words we didn't know and coming up with sentences to build understanding. Students learned about the word part vis or vid and how that is incorporated into the English language. It was so much fun building words (and sentences again) to help solidify the meaning.

Both grades are finishing up their grade level material for math. We will be spending our April revisiting complex material that we need more practice on and test prepping. I will ensure to include manipulatives, visuals, and other fun engagement tools to ensure that we have strong understanding before testing!

I sent home another letter about ordering a book that we created. Of course, no pressure at all but I had lots of questions after I submitted the order about being able to order one. There is a pin number on the bottom of that sheet that links it to the correct book. It was such a fun project and the students were so proud to be able to see their book in hardcover! Thank you for meeting with me this week and last week for conferences. I love my job and the biggest part of my job is your children so this makes it one of my favorite conversations! As always, please reach out with anything you need or may come up after the fact!

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From Ms. Sara Silence

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

4/5 has been fully involved in fractions this week. We used clay to visualize fractions getting bigger when we add them, but smaller when we multiply. It was also a good review on how to draw/use models to help us solve math problems. This morning, we had a fraction of a treat, since we have spent the whole week using pies and brownies in our examples. This fraction unit was pretty easy as far as concepts, a review of basic addition, subtraction, and multiplication, but ended up being very heavy in necessary vocabulary to understand the steps or directions. We will continue to work on those words as we move on to the geometry unit after break.



Speaking of after break, this week we actually took a sneak peek at what we would be working with. Students were tasked to build a series of skyscrapers using the classroom Legos. Today we used their models to practice measuring in inches, centimeters, and millimeters. We also used our skylines to calculate area, perimeter, and volume. They may be around for a while!

In reading we focused on reading and spelling unfamiliar three syllable words. Students are doing great using the foundation skills they have learned and applying them to unfamiliar words like cameo and perforate. This week we also watched the movie *The BFG*, based on the book written by Roald Dahl. Ms. Forster's class and ours recently finished reading the book, so we watched the movie together. 4/5 created a compare and contrast map and discussed the similarities and differences between the book and the movie.

Looking ahead, April will be focusing on any problem areas and working through content review before the MCAs in late April. Please help your child grow over spring break by asking them comprehension questions about what they are reading or about life around them. All online platforms will be functional over spring break. Students usually "Log in with Google." They sign into their account everyday so they should be able to type in their email (student first [name@birchgroveschool.com](mailto:student@birchgroveschool.com)) and their password (they know it). If you have any problems, please feel free to email me.

Reading:

Getepic.com

Lexiacore5.com

Readworks.org

typing.com

Math:

ixl.com

code.org (mathematical thinking, not math calculation)

Have a great spring break!

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