

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

March 6, 2025

Upcoming Events:

Monday, March 10 ~ *Dodgeball!* After School Program

Wednesday, March 12 ~ Hearing & Vision Screenings from Sawtooth Mountain Clinic

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

Friday, March 21 ~ *Lights Out! Pajama Day!*

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*

March is here and spring break fast approaches! All of the classrooms have been busy getting academic work in, knowing that next week is a short week with only 3 days of school, and spring break is right around the corner.

K-5 teachers will be completing student report cards next week on Thursday and Friday as well as preparing for parent-teacher conferences, so there will be no school. Their plates are pretty full right now, so we will not be issuing a weekly newsletter next week. K-5 families will all get additional updates from teachers during the upcoming conferences!



It seems as if we have had several illnesses going around for quite a few months now – strep throat, colds, coughs, the flu, etc. Please monitor your children at home and remind them to wash their hands with soap and practice the appropriate way to cough or sneeze at home and at school. If your child is ill, please keep them at home. The advice of planning for your child to be ill 10 days in the school year is paying off for some families now! 😊



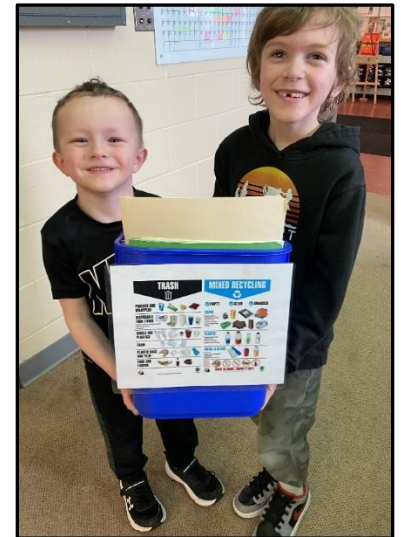
🔥 This program is on FIRE!

CAMPSITE KIDS ~ SUMMER 2025 for K-5! Enrollment starting!

Information and registration forms for Campsite Kids will be emailed to all Birch Grove families tomorrow, Friday, March 7. 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>

Recycling at Birch Grove!

Once or twice a week, paired students in K-3 visit all of the building rooms to collect and then separate recycling. These two charmers were on duty this week taking their responsibility seriously and with big smiles! 5 of 5 stars was given for excellent customer service!



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. As always, if there is no school for K-5, there is no Seedlings or Saplings.

K-5 conferences are the week of March 17-21. Sign up information has been emailed to all families. If you did not receive an email, please reach out to your child's teacher. We look forward to seeing all of our K-5 Birch Grove parents!



Birch Buddies ~ DODGEBALL! after school special is SO Fun! This is one program that has no cap, so if you would like your child to join, please sign up. Parents are invited to play with us on the last day, Monday, March 17 from 4:30-5:15. Come and play with us! We dare you! 😊

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Birch-Buddies>



The WISE (Women's Initiative for Service & Education) NORTH grant is a grant opportunity given to teachers in Cook County annually! This year Ms. Foster wrote a grant for flexible seating in her 2/3 classroom. Pictured here are some of her students enjoying the seating. Many thanks to WISE NORTH for including Birch Grove Community School in your annual support of Cook County schools! They do great work!





Tickets To Treasure continues! Please be sure to encourage your child to earn tickets at home for this program, especially over spring break. The newest prize has been added – a gumball bank!



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

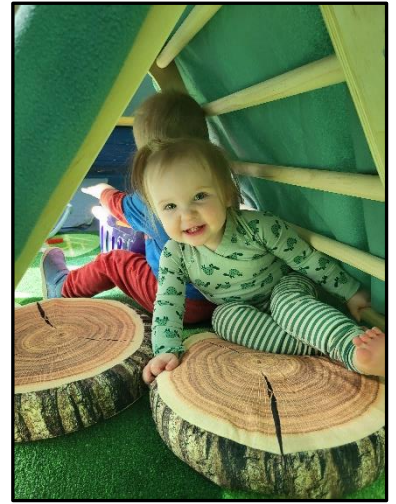
Kindergarten Round Up is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15 this year. If you know of a child that will be eligible for Kindergarten next year (must be 5 by September 1), please recommend this special day to them where they can experience BGCS. We appreciate all parent recommendations!





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>



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>



Last week 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, they 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. <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Saplings-Program>



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](#)

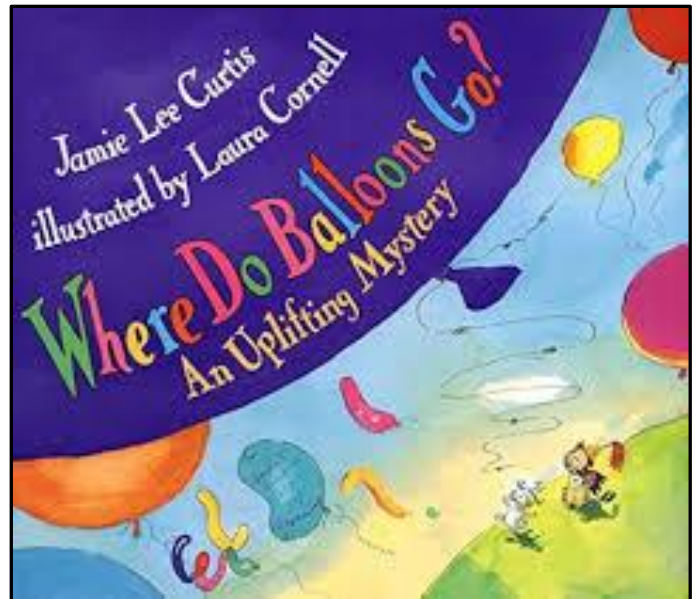


From Ms. Emily VanDoren

Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

The theme for this week was "Up in the Clouds". We did lots of fun activities that centered around things that are in the sky or can "reach" the sky such as bubbles, balloons, and mountains.

We practiced pointing up and followed that with tossing a ball up. We also used balloons for this activity and had fun tossing them high up in the air and watching them float back down. The triangle climbing frame became a "mountain" and was used to strengthen muscles and coordination by climbing to the top of the mountain. We explored a new texture as we played with cotton ball "clouds" and worked our fine motor skills by dropping them through a paper towel tube. We finished our week with some bubble fun in the classroom. The Seedlings enjoyed watching the bubbles float and had fun trying to pop them before they landed on the floor.



We read *Where Do Balloons Go? An Uplifting Mystery* by Jamie Lee Curtis. This book explores the mystery of what happens when a balloon floats up to the sky. By reading this story, we were able to see lots of things that are in the sky such as birds, airplanes, clouds, and stars. We sang songs that had a sky theme this week. We sang "Mr. Sun" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star".

Our new activity mats arrived for the younger Seedlings this week. They enjoyed having a new space and new toys to explore. This is a great addition to the classroom that will make tummy time a more enjoyable experience.

Have a good weekend!

218-663-0170 ext. 7

emily.vandorenbgcs@gmail.com

From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

The Seussville Saplings room celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday with a Seusstastic week, kicking off with a *Cat in the Hat* themed pink slime activity. The sensory-rich experience developed fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and tactile exploration through the act of manipulating the gooey substance. Alphabet stamps added to the pink slime facilitated letter recognition. Red lines painted on white hats highlighted patterns and repetition, emulating the iconic *Cat in the Hat*, for an art project. A *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue* activity served as snack. A multitude of manipulative and sensory activities incorporating Dr. Seuss themes provided learning opportunities in counting correlation and letter recognition.



The Saplings were enthralled by the story of *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, which recounts the tale of King Derwin's desire for novelty. Seeking to transcend the monotony of rain, sunshine, fog, and snow, he enlists the expertise of his royal magicians to create an extraordinary occurrence. The outcome is a storm of sticky green goo, referred to as Oobleck, which subsequently brings devastation to his kingdom. Nevertheless, with the discerning assistance of Bartholomew, the king learns that the simplest phrases can sometimes resolve intricate problems. Moreover, our experiment with creating Oobleck yielded positive results. Observations revealed that Oobleck behaved like a solid when prodded, struck, or lifted, whereas it exhibited liquid properties when poured or left undisturbed. Furthermore, when squeezed, Oobleck's viscosity increased, prompting a transformation from a liquid to a solid state.

Wacky Wednesday offered the Saplings a chance to showcase their personalities through zany attire. Our reading of *Wacky Wednesday* entailed uncovering the comical discrepancies on each page, which enhanced the Saplings' capacity for observation. We also read *There's a Wocket in my Pocket*, which embodies a classic Dr. Seuss theme of self-sufficiency and confidence. For art, we utilized our manipulative skills by sewing a pocket and placing a wocket inside.

On Thursday, the Saplings rounded out the week with a read-aloud of *Daisy-Head Mayzie*, paired with a writing activity that invited students to contemplate their response if a daisy were to sprout on their head. This was followed by the preparation of *Green Eggs and Ham* as a snack. Building on our reading of *The King's Stilts*, which underscores the importance of balancing work and play, we proceeded to practice stilt-walking through the flooded area to refine our large motor skills.

We wrapped up the week by creating puppets and practicing rhyming words, tongue twisters, and engaging language, emphasizing the lightheartedness of *Fox in Sox* while focusing on pronunciation and articulation skills through puppetry.

Next week, our focus will be on the letter 'L'. As the March proverb states, 'In like a lion and out a lamb'. We will also have a Llama Llama Red Pajama day on Wednesday!

218-663-0170 ext. 6
pam.holmbgcs@gmail.com

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

This week, Kindergarten is practicing letter sounds and reading words. We have learned about all of the letters of the alphabet and are working on solidifying it! We have been working hard on writing. We practice writing at least three times a week, focusing on sounding out words, spacing, letter size, and punctuation. We are getting better every day! The first graders learned about drawing conclusions. We also practice reading words with bossy r.

In math, we are learning about data and graphing. Both Kindergarten and 1st grade participated in class polls about our favorite things. We put the information we collected in bars and pictographs. This led to lots of math talk about the graphs! We compared and contrasted, counted, and identified what was our favorite!

As a reminder, keep logging reading and math practice on the log sheet for tickets to treasure. If you need a new one just let me know or send the full one to school and I will switch it out!

Have a great weekend!

218-663-0170 ext. 2  
[sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com](mailto:sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com)

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From Ms. Samantha Forster
2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

We started our big research project this week! Each student chose a notable person throughout history and they will conduct a research paper, timeline, portrait, and slideshow for this person. At the end, they will dress up (if they want) and present their person to the class. This is a huge project

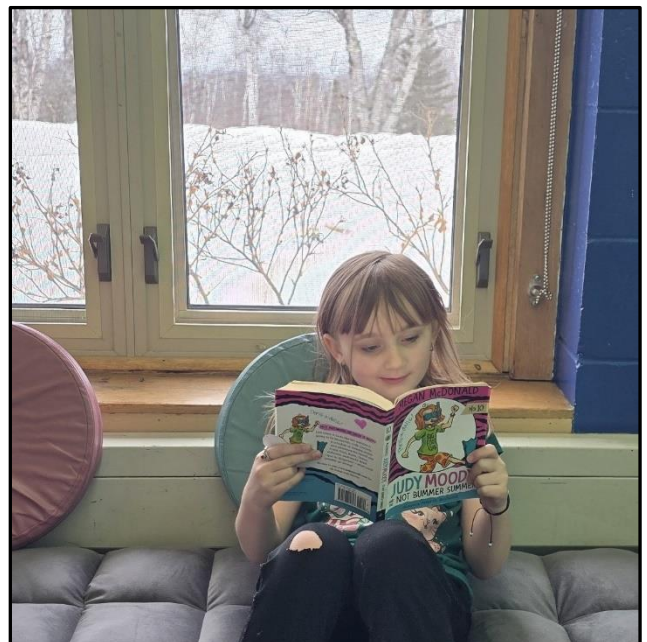
and we will take it in bite size pieces as we go. I gave students a printed article and a book to begin this research then we will finish up by learning to get details on the internet. We traveled to Australia for our continent of the month. This will bring Australian facts and art throughout the month.

Each grade took a unit assessment this week. It allowed me to understand where each student is at. We will enter our review phase in the coming months as we approach testing season. This review includes multi digit addition and subtraction, time, money, graph, and fractions. Students may be receiving more direct instructional time as I want to make sure everyone has the skills perfected by the end of the year!

In reading, we read a narrative nonfiction book about Penguins and a historical fiction book. This was matched with text evidence and summary writing. We also started a small poetry unit and talked through a specific type of poetry. For word study, we have been focusing on Greek and Latin word parts. This week's part was "script." We had a discussion about how word parts help us decipher new words in texts.

Quarter 3 is almost wrapped up and with that comes spring conferences. I will be sending out a link on Friday March 7th for parents to sign up. I have 3 days that I am conducting conferences; All day on March 13th (please note it is virtual only!), March 19th and March 20th after school. If none of these times work for you, please reach out as I can potentially make something else work. You should also expect scores from winter assessments and report cards. As spring continues to progress, we will be doing more of our class work outside. We do live on the great North Shore and it may get chilly sporadically. Keep sending warm and dry clothing to school.

218-663-0170 ext. 3
samantha.forsterbgcs@gmail.com



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

Most days, the student's interests are piqued by some tidbit of information that is part of our daily lessons. When these lessons lead us astray from our original purpose, we call them "bunny trails." Just like a zig-zagging bunny on the trail, we do come back to our original trail. Current bunny trails involve questions about how items are shipped around the world, because of our vocab word: freight. Others involve specifics on how states became part of the U.S. Our bunny trails were a little bittersweet this week, as I shared that Chubs, the Birch Grove class bunny for many years had finally died. He was old and had been very ill, so it was a relief for those in my house, but we all thought of him several times this week. We took an honoring bunny trail looking back on some of his Birch Grove highlights.

In math we have finished up our unit on algebraic thinking and word problems. These problems can be especially tricky because kids have gotten into the habit of quickly looking for numbers and interacting with them. Sounds good, right? It is! EXCEPT they also need to make sure they are taking the time to comprehend what is happening in the story. We are making great progress so far and we will continue to review them through the end of the year.

Our reading focus has been identifying the theme or lesson of the story. We have done with both short and long stories. Most kids have made selections on a few book club books that we will be reading for the spring. We also continue to read spelling word lists daily to practice reading new and grade-level words. When these are sent home at the end of the week, it will take just a moment to have your child read these words to you.

Remember to continue practicing math facts and reading at home.

218-663-0170 ext. 4

[sara.silencebgcs@gmail.com](mailto:sara.silencebgcs@gmail.com)