

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

November 7, 2024

Dates to Remember:

Tuesday, November 5 – Friday, November 8 ~ K-5 Conferences

Tuesday, November 19 ~ School Board Meeting at 4:00

Wednesday, November 27 ~ No School – Staff PD Day

Thursday, November 28 & Friday, November 29 ~ No School-Thanksgiving Break

Wednesday, December 11 ~ Winter Musical 1:00pm & 6:00pm

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

Our short 4-day week was filled with learning during the day and conferences after school for K-5 teachers and parents. Thank you so much to the K-5 teachers for all of the additional work that conferences bring – you guys are the BEST! Thank you also to the families that signed up for conferences on time and kept your conference appointments. Our teachers have been working hard to make connections at home!

The school messaging system has been updated for this school year and a trial run will be made



Keeping the entry festive with this cute turkey!

tomorrow, on Friday, sometime in the afternoon. Please note, this is just a test run – no need to panic if you see the school has called. If you don't receive a call at home or on your cell, please let me know. Home phone numbers were added from the enrollment sheet filled out at the beginning of the year. You can delete numbers or add numbers to this system, you just need to contact the office and let us know the details. Emailing this information works best: birchgrove@boreal.org This system is used primarily for school cancellations. School cancellations include the Saplings and Seedlings programs. If you don't get a call (or text) with this test, let us know!

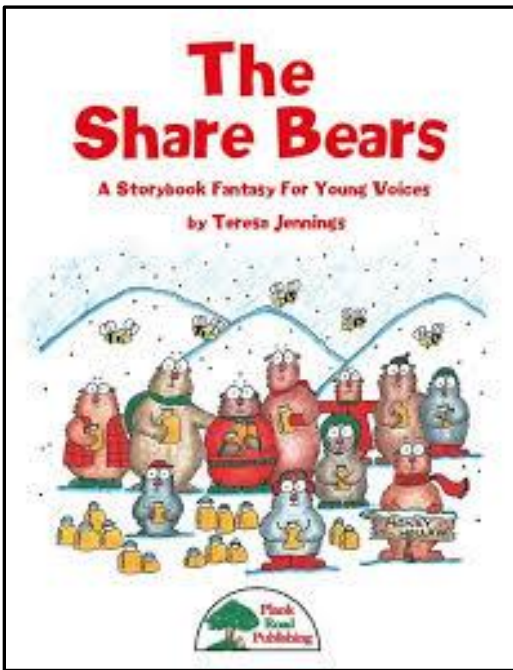
Please note that last year we had to make changes with our transportation. BGCS no longer has a direct contract with Arrowhead Transit, instead, we pay for tickets for each child that rides the bus to and from school on their regular routes. This means that we no longer make decisions on whether or not the buses run in questionable weather (ultimately closing school). While we don't have to close school just because the Arrowhead buses aren't running, it makes sense to close as the majority of children will not be here. Any angst about cancellations should not be directed at BGCS, please! 😊 I trust that Arrowhead will make the right calls concerning the routes that cover Two Harbors to BG and Grand Marais to BG. It is quite a distance and while the weather/roads may be fine here, they may not be 30 or more miles from here.



K-5 attendance was pretty good in Quarter 1! Thank you so much! We are still getting the occasional child out due to pink eye/eye infections, a little bit of coughs, and a little bit of colds. Please have your child practice good hand washing habits at home as we do here at school. We also, as always, have windows cracked throughout the school year. Yes, even in the winter. Air purifiers are also running in the K-5 classrooms. All classroom surfaces are cleaned daily with the help of all K-5 students, learning skills and responsibility in the classroom and school.

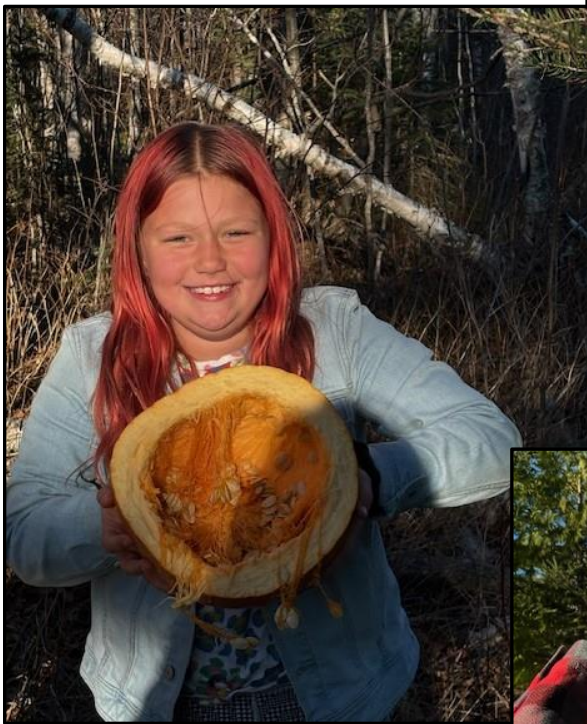


Tofte Township hired local artist, Mary Laberge, to paint this beautiful mural on the wall in the Birch Grove gym. Amazing! Do you recognize the location? 😊 Thanks to Tofte and to Mary!



K-5 will be working on the winter musical soon!

Please save the date: Wednesday, December 11th with two performances at 1:00pm and 6:00pm. K-5 students will be performing "The Share Bears" by Teresa Jennings. We look forward to another great musical and hope that you will all come to see it! Bring family, friends and neighbors to see a great show!



4/5 did some pumpkin smashing today taking the leftover pumpkins out to the woods and breaking them apart so that the wildlife can have a tasty snack! Fun and feeding our friends!

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](#)



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**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedlings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Airplanes, trains, and cars, oh my! This week's theme was transportation and vehicles. We read several books and learned about construction, rescue, and passenger vehicles. We played a vehicle match game where we had to find two matching pieces of a vehicle to form a complete picture. We also had a few puzzles to choose from that required lining up pieces in number order from 1-10 to form the picture of the vehicle. We also spent time this week reviewing some of the skills that have been previously introduced. We played the fruit match game and counted the amount of fruit in a picture and matched it to the written form of the number and also practiced tracing numbers.



We took our vehicle theme outside during our playtime and pretended to be jets, trains, and cars zooming around the tennis court and on our walk along the bike path. We also used the song "Wheels on the Bus" to get our bodies moving in the classroom.

The weather has been mild and we have been enjoying our daily walks. Please be sure to send hats, gloves, and coats as the weather gets colder. If you would like, you can leave a set at school for your child to use. Each child has a labeled cubby to keep items. We also have a few spare items on hand in case something is forgotten.

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From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

Is hard to believe November has arrived already. Wednesday was a beautiful day for a walk. After spotting a hawk swooping down, the Saplings heard the honking geese flying in a "V" overhead. They then noticed the geese formation changed to a "L" as they headed south for the winter. Recognizing the letter "V" tied into our Tuesday theme of voting. We read *Duck for President* by Doreen Cronin, afterwards we had an election for Duck or Farmer Brown. The Saplings, along with K-5 voted by casting their ballots. The tallied results were Duck - 20 to Farmer Brown - 5 votes.

Duck for President is a cute story about a Duck who becomes tired with his daily chores on the farm and decides he wants to "overthrow" the farmer. He organizes and holds an election and wins! He soon tires of his duties and runs for governor and president as well.

Special farm toys made an appearance in the classroom 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 harvest and hay, and C for corn and cornucopia, were emphasized. Artistic endeavors involved designing scarecrows and cornucopias, fostering cutting expertise.

During circle time the Saplings had a fun classroom hunt 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.

I have begun labeling items around the classroom. Incorporating labels into classroom settings exposes students to enhanced letter and word recognition, promoting seamless integration of alphabet awareness into their daily routines and fostering connections between letters, shapes, and phonetic sounds.

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, I am excited to embark on a month filled with opportunities for growth, exploration and celebration.

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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!

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! Practice putting on winter gear at home so that they are more independent at school!

Have a great weekend!

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From Ms. Samantha Forster

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

This week is packed full with new material and past material. We entered into our "South American" continent month so this has transformed our art projects and helped guide some reading activities. We did an activity inspired by Frida Kahlo this week. I love the effort and excitement the students have around learning about new artists. We focused on different types of habitats this week and discussed the things animals need to survive that habitats provide them.

In reading, we spent a lot of time with phonemes, compound words, the prefix "sub, and verb tenses. Each group had a different comprehension skill that they worked on that helped them monitor their understanding as we read through the anchor text. Third grade used "drawing conclusions" to help them build meaning within the text. Second grade focused on main idea and using text evidence to support their claims. Reading is an exciting part of the day and students are developing into being "word watchers." This is what we call each other when we notice things about words and draw attention to their meanings.

Math has been so exciting and challenging. Third grade is working on mastering two step problems with multiple operations. Second grade is working on applying place value knowledge to money and adding and subtracting numbers within 200. The challenge is welcomed and students have been working hard at building their understanding.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me this week about your student's growth throughout this first quarter. I learned a lot about each student and it was exciting to share similar experiences. This has been helpful for me as their teacher. Please reach out if anything else pops up that you would like to discuss.

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

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

In our classroom this week we have been busy creating our Pirate Islands and writing a Pirate's Tale to go along with our artwork. We are going through the entire writing process including creating drafts, editing, revising and then publishing a final copy. The class did a nice job of using their graphic organizer as the foundation for their first draft. I was very impressed and can't wait to see the final projects. This project will be sent home next Friday.

In reading the 4th graders had a book club unit of study using the book Frindle. They recorded the story elements on a plot map which included characters, setting, conflict, climax, theme and resolution. The 5th graders completed the same skills using a story from the reading book. In math

class both grade levels completed a unit test which will be sent home next week.

Thank you so much to everyone who signed up for a conference and attended at their scheduled time. I loved the chance to visit with families and students to celebrate learning and set goals for the school year. Parents, please remember to check your child's take home folder every Friday to look over some of the work from the week and sign the weekly progress report. Thank you also for reminding your 4th or 5th grader to read each night for 30 minutes and practice their math facts for 5 minutes. Students who are passing their Friday math facts tests are signing the "wall of fame" in our classroom and are very motivated to master their math facts.

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