



Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

September 28, 2023

Dates to Remember:

Thursday, September 28 ~ Minnesota Department of Education Visit
with Assistant Commissioner of Education, Angela Mansfield

Friday, September 29 ~ No School – Scheduled Staff PD/Workshop

Tuesday, October 3 ~ Annual “Painting in the Woods” with Mary LaBarge

Monday, October 9 ~ Annual Fall Site Visit from VOA, School Authorizer

Tuesday, October 16 ~ School Board Meeting @ BG at 5:30

Thursday & Friday, October 19-20 ~ No School MEA

Sunday, October 29 ~ Annual Halloween Carnival 2:00-4:00

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:

Director, Birch Grove Community School

Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service

It was a short but busy week! There is no school tomorrow, Friday, September 29 as it is a scheduled professional development/workshop day for our K-5 teachers.

Please continue to send your child to school in layers. We go outside everyday in all but the worst weather. Children can leave a sweatshirt/jacket here at school so that they will always have it and it is not forgotten at home.

There have been a few illnesses in the classrooms and questions about covid. Please click on the links below for questions about what to do if:



You, or yours, test positive for covid:

[Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19 | CDC](#)

You, or yours, have been exposed to covid:

[What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19 | CDC](#)

Please keep your child home if they are ill – whether it is the flu, strep throat, covid, or any other illness. This helps to keep other students and staff from getting ill. We continue to have our windows open year-round and air purifiers running in an effort to keep illnesses at a minimum. Classroom surfaces are disinfected daily. We also emphasize handwashing – please emphasize this at home as well. Thank you!

Minnesota Department of Education



Birch Grove Community School had a visit today from the Minnesota Department of Education's assistant Commissioner of Education, Angela Mansfield. Ms. Mansfield visited The Campsite where she had the opportunity to watch our K-5 students in action. Much was happening at the Campsite: a fall painting project, partner reading, roasting marshmallows, and the oldest students were engaged in a writing project. When Ms. Mansfield arrived at the Campsite, she stood at the trailhead for many minutes saying that she just needed to take in the incredible view of K-5 engaged in such an incredible setting! School board and staff members each had a chance to chat with Ms. Mansfield and there was even time for her to roast a marshmallow and make a s'more! "You've ended my North Shore trip on a high note", said Ms. Mansfield, who seemed to be greatly impressed with the Campsite and how engaged the students were in the various outdoor activities. It was a great visit! Thank you, Ms. Mansfield! You are welcome anytime!

The Annual Halloween Carnival is on Sunday, October 29 from 2:00-4:00. We will NEED volunteers to make the event successful, so please consider helping us to make this event great! A volunteer sign-up link or sheet will be sent out to all of our families. If you are bringing your child(ren) to the event with another adult, consider having one of the adults volunteer for an hour, while the other escorts the children through the event, then the adults can switch for the second hour. This way the children are still enjoying the event with an adult, and the carnival gets a volunteer to help make the

event possible. Also, starting in October, students will have the opportunity to *earn* a \$5 punch card to spend at the carnival. Classroom teachers will soon be letting their students know how they can *earn* a ticket while in their classroom.

Birch Buddies ~ HIKE! after school program hike #3 was Lutsen Mountains!
Needless to say, we think the gondola ride to the top was the favorite part of this hike!



Birch Buddies ~ HIKE! enrollment is currently at capacity. There is a rumor that it will be making a comeback in the spring. If your child did not get the opportunity to join this fun adventure this fall, be sure to sign up for the spring session as soon as enrollment opens up.

One of the joys of living up North –
Every Friday is “Flannel Friday” at Birch Grove! Join us!



[Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)

Please have your child read (or be read to) a minimum of 20-30 minutes per day/night. 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 Coupon Link: <https://www.logosoftwear.com/coupons.php>
Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)



From Ms. Alayna Carrier, Ms. Ari Summerfield, Ms. Jessica Klemmer
Sapling Teachers, Birch Grove Community Service

It was an enjoyable week with the Saplings! The Pretend Center this week had cardboard boxes, paper, painters' tape, colors and scissors. Most Saplings spent almost all of their time just in this center! Interest levels were high, and the Saplings stayed engaged and focused. With all of these materials, Saplings were able to create different things they wanted out of the boxes and then use the box for pretend play! One box turned out to be a leprechaun house, another was used for a Saplings house, and the last box was created for different art projects! One Sapling had the idea to tape different pieces of paper all over the box to give others a space to decorate it, how kind!

As always, we also spent some time outside including a trip to Tofte Park! Please remember to send your child in layers as we go outside in all but the most extreme weather.

Miss Carrier will really miss the Saplings this year, but we know that the Saplings are in good hands with the rest of the Saplings staff!

Enjoy your weekend!

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

This week we finished creating classroom rules together, consequences for breaking those rules, and got classroom jobs. It was a busy week of collaborating and working on social studies skills.

Kindergarten focused on the letters a and o and numbers up to 10. We are really getting good at learning new letters and numbers. We are focusing and responding well. We also read some books and focused on the main idea of a book.

The first graders continue to practice numbers and letters. We are working on blending letters together to read words and review sight words. We read a few stories and focused on understanding a character's actions.

We started library this week. We will have it every Monday. Please make sure the books are returned on Monday so the kids can check out new ones!

As always feel free to contact me by phone, email, or in person if you have any questions!

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From Ms. Samantha Forster

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

This week has been packed with new learning materials. Our routines are starting to be concrete. We all are learning how to work together as a team and I see many positive things. I love hearing the kind encouragement and helping hands from students.

In reading, we are practicing the long "A" and "I" sound while identifying the patterns that make these letters long or short. Each grade level has been practicing writing their vocab words in their notebook. Students have loved learning new words and their meanings. This week also brought us multiple meaning words, antonyms, and a review on subject and predicates. All these things will help their reading and writing.

In math, each grade level is working through different concepts. Second grade is working on different strategies for addition and subtraction like the "make ten method." We also focused on even and odd numbers. This creates a good base from multi-digit adding and multiplication. In third grade, we have been working on creating multiplication equations with even groups. We also introduced the function table. This has been paired with separate worksheets to reinforce their understanding.



This week was about classifying animals and plants based on different traits. We practiced our note-taking skills while watching a video. Then we went outside and classified different leaves that we found on the ground in small groups. Students were able to pair these leaves together by things that they have in common. This was a fun way to get outside and spend time working with people we don't normally work with.

It is getting chillier out each day and we leave our windows open in all seasons. We also spend as much time outside as we can. Make sure students have a sweatshirt that they can have as a spare in school or wear one each day. This time of the year is always a good time to remind our children about washing their hands. This will help with illness. Thank you everyone for the constant communication, I really appreciate it!

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**From Ms. Laurie Roberts**

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

The 4/5 class has been working on building their “school stamina,” and are getting much better at being able to keep their academic focus well into the afternoon hours. We have also been finding that it is helpful to sometimes bring our work outside in the afternoon so we have a different environment to work in. The campsite is the perfect spot to do this!

In language arts, both grades have been working on different types of sentences and the proper punctuation that goes with those sentences. 4th grade read a nonfiction article about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., along with some shorter books about him. 5th grade read a play, and some shorter books about how to write and produce a play. Both grades enjoyed writing short stories.

In math, 4th grade is doing a great job adding up big, multi-digit numbers. A few kids are challenging themselves to add even bigger numbers than I am asking them to! In 5th grade, students are adding and subtracting fractions and mixed fractions.

In science, students did another experiment with Skittles, and found out why Sour Skittles taste more sour than regular Skittles. If you ask them, they will be able to explain to you that the Sour Skittles have a mild acid on the coating that creates the sour taste. They used pH paper to figure this out. Later this week, they will be designing their own experiments with the steps of the scientific process that they have been learning about.

Students had their first gym class and library time of the year this week which were both successful. They were excited for both of those classes, and I am glad to have such a positive group of kids to teach this year!

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