

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

October 31, 2024

Dates to Remember:

Friday, November 1 ~ No School - Staff Workshop

Monday, November 4 ~ No School - Staff Workshop

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

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:

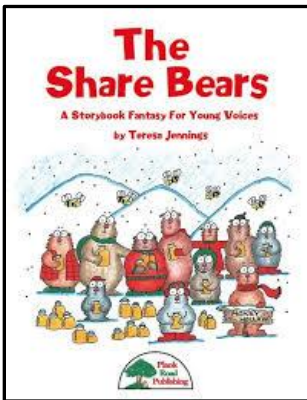
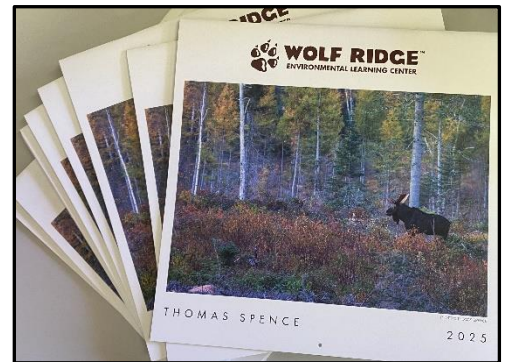
*School Director, Birch Grove Community School
Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service*

Today is the last day of October and the end of Quarter 1. Wow, that went fast! With November here tomorrow, please start sending children with winter jackets, hats and gloves. Once there is significant snowfall, please also send children with winter boots and snowpants. We go outside everyday in all but the most extreme weather. Sometimes classrooms go outside multiple times in a day! We do have some winter gear that can be claimed, so if you need something, please let us know.

As a reminder, there is no school tomorrow, Friday, November 1 and no school next week on Monday, November 4. Teachers will be working on completing report cards and preparing for K-5 conferences. If you haven't signed up for conferences already, please do so. We look forward to seeing our K-5 parents!



Wolf Ridge calendar money has been coming in steadily and we have more available for sale. Some K-5 families have sold multiple calendars and a few families have yet to sell the one sent home. No worries, we will continue to sell calendars until mid-January. If you need more calendars, just email birchgrove@boreal.org or send a note to school in Take Home Folders and we will get them sent home to you. If Saplings or Seedlings families would like calendars, please let us know! Calendars will also be on sale during the annual winter musical.



Speaking of the annual winter musical, 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. Musical practice will start the beginning of November. We look forward to another great musical and hope that you will all come to see it! Bring family, friends and neighbors to see what I am sure will be a cute performance!

Many thanks to the Tofte Forest Service for treating (and not tricking) our Saplings and K-5 as they paraded down the hall of the forest service with smiles and a chorus of “trick or treat”! All of the children enjoyed the visit very much! Thank you for your hospitality! More pictures will be posted on the school Facebook page soon!



Some forest service staff are in the center back. Thanks for joining the pic!



A reminder that there is no school on Friday, November 1 and Monday, November 4. Teachers will be completing student report cards and preparing for parent-teacher conferences. Dates for conferences are below.



K-5 parent-teacher conferences are coming up November 5-9. Please watch for an email link to sign up for a time to confer with your child's teacher. We look forward to sharing with you!

We had a special Halloween lunch today with lanterns, Monster Mash music, and impromptu mini-pumpkin juggling from Ms. Knottski! Thanks to Angie for the great lunch and thanks to Sara for the flying mini-pumpkins!



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:

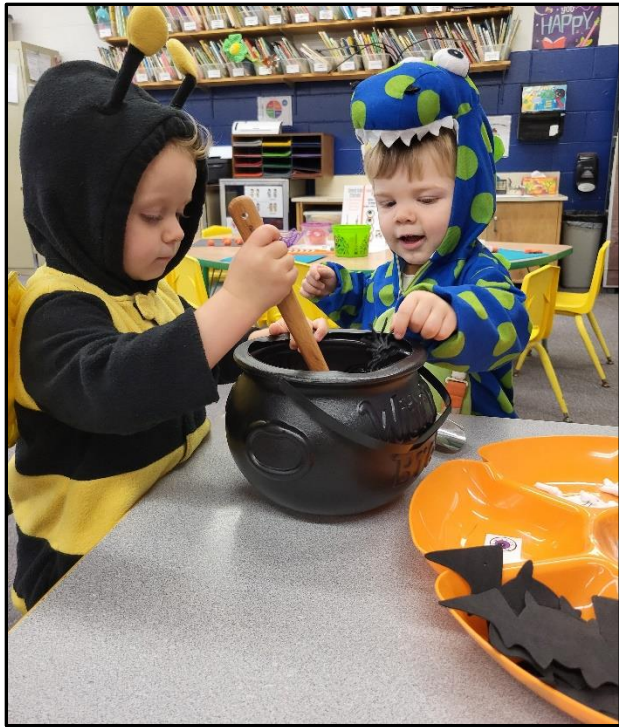
birchgrove@boreal.org ~ 218-663-0170

Website: www.birchgroveschool.com

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftware.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](#)





The Annual PTO Halloween Carnival was on Sunday, October 27 from 2-4pm! We had a great time! Thanks to all that had a hand in making this traditional event a success again this year.

We wish you all a safe and happy Halloween!



Thanks to all that volunteered at the Annual PTO Halloween Carnival! We couldn't have had this bit of seasonal fun without the following volunteers:

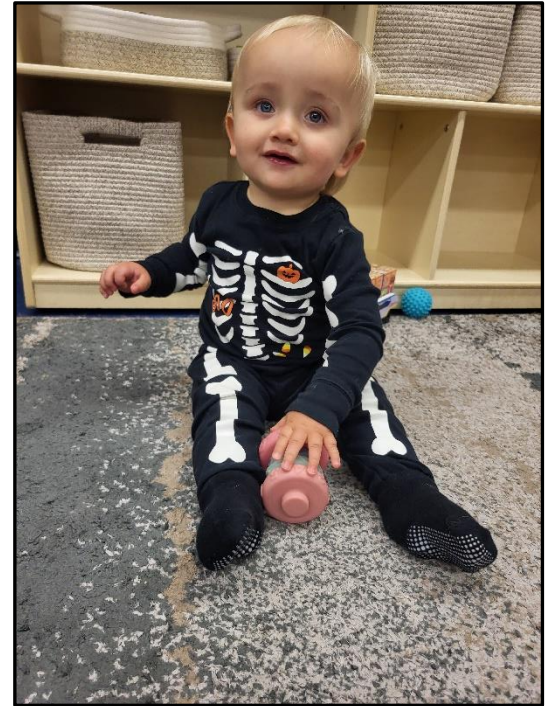
Judy Motschenbacher, Sarena Crowley, Samantha Forster, Angie Fernlund, Gretta Hall, Becky Fernlund, Stacy Coronis, Jenny Buckman, Gayle Grinnell, Gabby Grinnell, Ada Schlien-z-Hall, Mary VanDoren, Chuck VanDoren, Sam Crowley, Sylvia Duclos, Rose Thoreson, Dan Dietzman, Jill Johnson, Carol Flack, Neveah Lahti, Kelli Ross, Jeff Eliassen, Germillius Lee, Lonna Lahti, Ed Belmore, Alisha Buckman, Kate Bissel, Tina McKeever, Ashley VanDoren, Anne Deneen, Heather Belmore, Lexie Jerome, Ellen Andersen, Cody Selger, Pam Holm, Emily VanDoren, Dale Patterson and Teresa Patterson. Thank you so much!



From Ms. Emily VanDoren

Seedlings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

Happy Halloween! We finished up our Halloween theme this week with some fun activities and crafts. We exercised our fine motor skills in a few different ways this week. We used ink pads and cotton swabs to dot paint bats. This requires strength and control to press the cotton swab onto the pad and then unto the paper to create small circles. We also pinched and pulled apart cotton balls and glued the pieces down to a paper cutout of a ghost to add to our decorations in the hallway. Introduced this week was scissor skills. We used child safety scissors to practice holding the scissors properly and also the opening and closing motion to be able to cut paper. Play dough was also a big hit this week and was played with in the morning during free play almost every day. All of these activities are helpful to build up our pre-writing muscles and skills.



We were able to play outside and enjoy some warm days this week. We did play in the gym for the first time this week to avoid rain and the strong winds. It was fun to have a change of scenery for our morning playtime.

I hope you have a happy and safe Halloween if you choose to celebrate. There is no school on Monday November 4th, so there will be no Seedlings or Saplings. We will see you Tuesday!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Falling leaves and a chill in the air means it's the perfect time to study pumpkins! The Saplings Dramatic Play area transformed into a Pumpkin Patch, promoting reading, writing and math activities. Multiple pumpkins were available for counting purposes and various seed manipulatives for one-to-one counting correlation.

The pumpkin hammer was significant success, refining hand-eye coordination, arm and hand strength, and fine motor skills. Rubber bands were added to the activity – a 3D pumpkin geoboard. They loved working their fine



motor muscles some more as they decided where they could stretch the rubber bands. They made triangles, lines, squares... more learning!

This week, circle time featured multiple pumpkin-inspired songs. Pumpkin Bells stood out as a favorite, with the Saplings eagerly shaking their bells. Singing or listening to music releases endorphins and generates brain activity, hence most children are responsive to music as it inspires positive, emotional regulation.

Our science and sensory play involved carving out a pumpkin. The Saplings began by doing a pumpkin investigation. They examined the outside of a pumpkin using their five senses and recorded their observations. Then, we cut open a pumpkin and look closely at the inside. They again used their five senses to observe the pumpkin. During this investigation they learned that a pumpkin is a fruit because it grows from a flower and has seeds on the inside. Upon completing our data collection, we develop the pumpkin display's parts and continue with learning about the pumpkin's life cycle.

On Thursday we focused on pumpkin fun! This day was for tasting pumpkin treats. We made pumpkin muffins and toasted pumpkin seeds, as well as playing pumpkin games and making pumpkin crafts. The day ended with a **Pumpkin-Cano!** The erupting pumpkin was an excellent example of chemical reaction.

Don't forget to fall back an hour this Sunday.

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From Ms. Sara Knottski
K & 1st Grade Elementary Teacher

Conferences are next week! If you have yet to sign up for a time slot, please do so before Friday at 9 p.m. I will have some preparations to do, and last-minute signups will be hard to prepare for. Please let me know if a different time would work better for you.

The first graders learned about the double letters ss, ff, ll, ck, and zz. In math, they are learning how to count on and count down to add and subtract. The Kindergarteners learned about the letter T. We also practiced some of our letters already learned and put them together to sound out words! In math, we are practicing addition and subtraction and learning about teen numbers.

With the weather change this week I wanted to remind you to practice self-help skills at home. Snow will soon fly and K/1 is ready for it! Students should be able to put on most of their winter attire independently. It is quite time-consuming to help 16 children bundle up! In addition, please make sure things fit correctly and they do their job of keeping your child warm! Waterproof clothing is helpful!

Have a fantastic long weekend!

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

Halloween week and the last week of the quarter has been full of fun and excitement! We also finished studying the European continent as well and will be moving onto South America in November! We spent time learning about the purpose of the government and additional services that it provides. We ended the unit by making a service poster. This week we did art inspired by Gustav Klimt and made his Tree of Life. Lastly, we ended our week with a little Halloween celebration and a trick or treating adventure to the Tofte Forest Service.

English has been increasingly more exciting as students find their groove with participation. It is evident of how hard the students are working to build understanding around literature. We learned about homophones and synonyms this week and practiced sorting by syllables. Each week, we continue to build our vocabulary base and spelling by doing semantic mapping and vocab task cards. Each student has been decoding unfamiliar words more consistently than the beginning of the year and that has helped increase fluency.

This week in math, third grade focused on math puzzles and writing the first question to two step word problems. This has been challenging for all students but really good for problem solving skills. Second graders worked through double addition with their preferred style. This has been the first week where we spent the whole time working with regrouping. It is a much appreciated challenge for all.

This week has been chilly! We are requiring students to wear jackets outside (at least) so please send the works with your child (hats, mittens, boots, and coats.) This will help with sicknesses and keep everyone comfortable! Also, we have conferences next week. Be on the lookout for your virtual link (if that's how you signed up) otherwise I will see you next week in person! If you didn't sign up, I will have slots open until Friday of this week, then I will close the signups down. Reach out with any questions!

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From Ms. Stacy Coronis
4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

We have been hard at work in our classroom this week! In addition to Halloween activities, we have spent a lot of time on our Pirate Island Projects. Everyone has created a unique island with 10 landforms, a compass rose and a key for the landforms and the scale. Soon we will celebrate our learning with a "Pirate Day" in our classroom.

In reading the 4th graders have practiced making inferences based on context clues and the 5th graders have worked to identify the sequence used in nonfiction writing to comprehend the order of events in a story. All students are wrapping up a math unit and will take the unit test next Thursday and Friday. 4th graders will show what they know about place value, comparing and ordering large numbers, adding and subtracting large numbers, and estimating sums and differences by rounding. 5th graders will be assessed on drawing, comparing and simplifying fractions. They are also expected to be able to add and subtract fractions and mixed numbers with uncommon denominators. Everyone has done their best each day and I am proud of their progress!



Remember that there is no school for students on Friday 11/1 and Monday 11/4. I will be working on quarter 1 report cards along with information to share at your child's fall conference. Thank you to everyone for signing up for a conference. If you still need to sign up, you can check your email or use this link ([CORONIS CONFERENCE LINK](#)) to sign up now. Conferences will be held in person or online so please indicate your preference when you sign up. I can't wait to share the successes from the first two months of school.

Finally, winter weather is coming so please make sure you send warm clothes as we go outside daily. Donations are accepted if you have gently used outdoor clothing that your family no longer needs. Thank you!

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