

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

October 1, 2026

Friday, October 2 ~ K-5 Afternoon Pizza Party w/Firewood Hearth Oven

Wednesday, October 7 ~ Fire Prevention Visit-Tofte Fire & Rescue

Wednesday, October 14 ~ K-5 Trip to Sugarloaf Cove Nature Center w/Naturalists

Thursday & Friday, October 15 & 16 ~ No School – MEA

Tuesday, October 20 ~ Annual and Regular School Board Meeting at 4:00

Sunday, October 25 ~ Annual Halloween Carnival 2:00-4:00

Monday, November 9 - Friday, November 13 ~ Parent-Teacher Conferences

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.

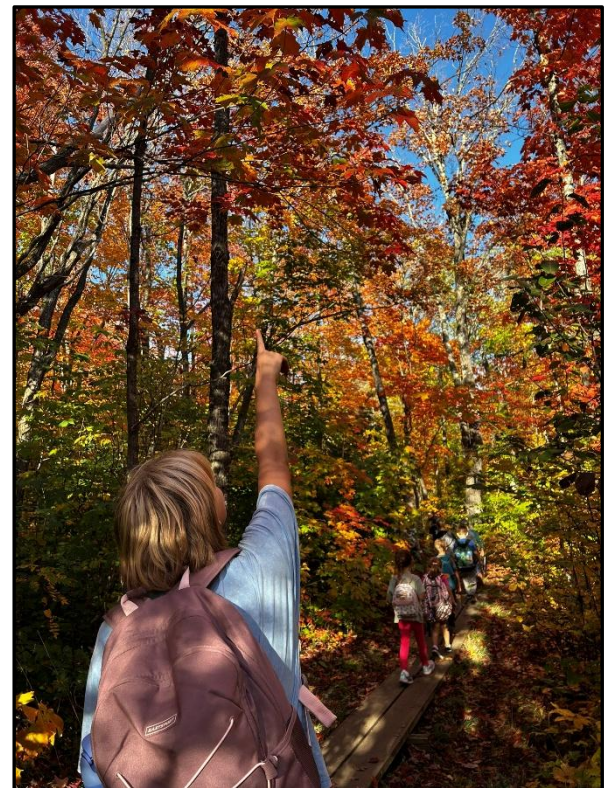
From Ms. Diane Blanchette:

School Director, Birch Grove Community School

Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service

October is here! We have had some spectacular September days and hope October is just as amazing! We have been getting outside often and have many plans for the days ahead to do the same. Please be sure to send your child in layers so that they are able to enjoy the outdoors more comfortably. We appreciate it!

Routines and expectations have been established for the year and classrooms have been hitting the curriculum, standards and benchmarks. Assessments have been completed and discussions and plans underway for each of our students. This takes time and work, so be sure to show some appreciation to your child's teacher. Also deserving of appreciation are Birch Grove's paraprofessionals who step up each day and enhance your child's daily experience. Be sure to let all staff know that you appreciate what they do throughout the year, as they are all quite amazing!





Next week there will be construction putting in a new culvert to the road entry to Birch Grove (where you have seen the yellow and orange sawhorse and cone). While this work is happening, you will need to use the south entrance to get to and from Birch Grove. We appreciate your understanding while the road gets an upgrade!



The October school lunch menu can be found on the school website at www.birchgroveschool.com

[School Lunches | Birch Grove Community School](#)



Don't forget! On Friday, October 23 Angie will be serving her award winning chili! Can't wait!

Autumn brings our Annual PTO Halloween Carnival, a staple in this community for nearly half a century. We continue the tradition and strive to improve this annual event. Please see the website page dedicated to the carnival at:

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Annual-PTO-Halloween-Carnival>



Lots of volunteers are needed to pull this annual event off. For those BGCS families that are planning on attending and enjoying the carnival with their child(ren), perhaps consider bringing two adults to the carnival so that one can enjoy the carnival with your child(ren) while the other volunteers to work, then change places halfway through the carnival! It's a win-win for everyone! Also, be sure to let grandparents, neighbors and friends know. The volunteer activities are easy to do, and consider the joy you will be bringing to many children! You can find the link soon on the website page. Volunteers must be 16+

There's just something special about hiking with friends. ❤️🌲👣

Hearing the kiddos say, "Oh, look at the beautiful colors!" 🍂

"The waterfall is so beautiful!" 💧

And staff favorite... "Hiking with friends is the best!" 😊

These are the moments that make the miles worth it. Watching them slow down, take in the beauty around them, laugh together, explore, and make memories with their friends is something pretty special.

Fresh air, colorful leaves, rushing waterfalls, muddy trails, lots of laughter, and good friends... what more could you ask for? 🌸🍃💛

Here's to more adventures, more memories, and more little voices reminding us just how beautiful the world can be. ❤️

Birch Buddies ~ HIKE! Afterschool program



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

🌲🌲 *Pinecones and Peanut Butter!*

Ms. Knottski's K/1 class collected pinecones from red and white pine trees, spread peanut butter on them, and rolled them in bird seeds to make bird feeder mobiles! Happy children, happy birds!

[The Great Outdoors](#) | [Birch Grove Community School](#)



More pictures can be found on
the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

THE ANNUAL BIRCH GROVE HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL!



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

2:00 - 4:00

AT BIRCH GROVE IN TOFTE

- ~ FUN FOR ALL AGES!
- ~ KIDS GAMES!
- ~ WIN PRIZES!
- ~ CAKE WALK!
- ~ COOKIE DECORATING!
- ~ FABULOUS FOODS!
- ~ PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST!
- ~ MAKE A S'MORE AT THE CAMPSITE!
- ~ BINGO! WITH CASH PRIZES FROM GRAND MARAIS STATE BANK~TOFTE



**WEAR A COSTUME (OR NOT)
AND BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!**



IT WILL BE A SPOOKTACULAR TIME!

**CARNIVAL TICKETS ARE \$5 EACH - CASH OR CHECK ONLY.
MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES CAN BE ENJOYED FROM ONE TICKET.**

FREE SPECIAL ACTIVITY ROOMS FOR 0-5 YEAR OLDS!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CARNIVAL GO TO:

[HTTPS://WWW.BIRCHGROVESCHOOL.COM/ANNUAL-PTO-HALLOWEEN-CARNIVAL](https://www.birchgroveschool.com/ANNUAL-PTO-HALLOWEEN-CARNIVAL)



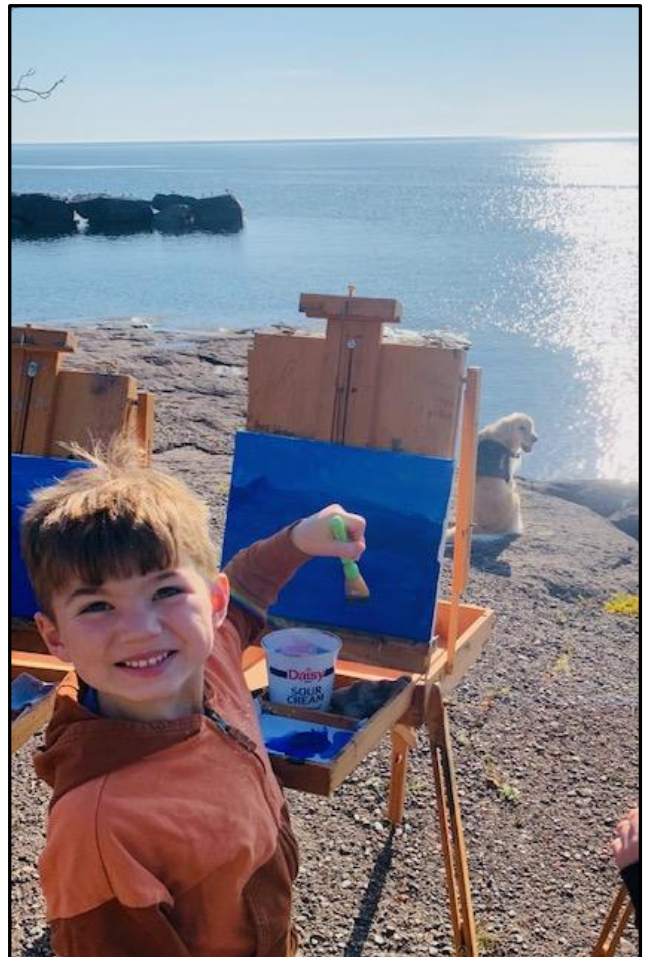
We changed our annual fall painting day from the woods to the lake this year, and we are so glad we did! It was nice to change it up and the weather on Monday was amazing. K-5 spent the entire day outside engaged in different activities including painting with Mary LaBerge! And, to make the day even more special, ice cream at the Coho was the cherry on top of this spectacular day! As always, the paintings will be showcased throughout the school year and will go home at the end of the school year. We hope these paintings find a special place to hang!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/the-great-outdoors>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

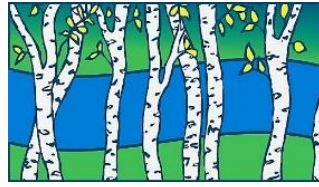




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Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

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



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**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Our theme of the week was apples! We had a lot of fun with books, songs, and activities that had a focus on apples.

The discovery table was filled with paper grass and red and green balls to represent apples. The Seedlings dug through the paper to find the apples, much like you would have to move leaves on the tree to find an apple. We worked on color identification and also counting as they placed the "apples" they found into a basket.

We read the book *The Apple Pie Tree* by Zoe Hall. The book shows how an apple tree changes through the different seasons and how the apples can be used to create apple pie. After we read the book, we used red, yellow, and green dot markers to color a picture of an apple. We also read *Ten Apples Up on Top* by Dr. Seuss this week. The book was a great way to work on our counting skills. Things turned silly when we tried to balance the balls from the discovery table on our heads.



During our morning circle we sang a fun song about an apple and a worm that worked on the Seedlings understanding of positional words (above, below, beside, etc.). We also sang Apples and

Bananas by Raffi. This song is a great way to sneakily introduce phonological skills. We also worked together to play an apple match game.

I brought in apples from my tree to cut open to show the Seedlings the seeds inside an apple. After we explored the apple, the Seedlings each had the opportunity to taste test the apple.

Have a great weekend!

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From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

The Spooktacular month of October has arrived! Saplings have settled in - what an amazing group of little ones. This week's theme was *A Ghostly Gathering*, with Ghosts, Skeletons and Mummies - focusing on the color of white. The Dramatic Play area was transformed into a Haunted House. The sensory bin was transformed into a graveyard full of bones. It provided an engaging setting for exploration, where the Saplings were digging and counting bones and skulls in a controlled environment. The writing center offered pre-writing exercises emphasizing the letters G for ghost, M for mummy, and S for skeleton. The math and manipulative center provided activities such as mummy wrapping to develop fine motor skills, ghost and skull counting, ghost shapes and haunted house sequencing.



Saplings enhanced their fine motor skills on Monday by practicing their cutting and gluing techniques. They created paper haunted houses, carefully cutting out various shapes. They finished their masterpieces by adding spooky ghosts and mummies!

Tuesday kicked off with a fun reading of Riel Nason's *The Little Ghost Who Was a Quilt*, followed by a hands-on quilted ghost craft. The Saplings then turned into scientists, exploring liquids and surface tension through a ghostly writing activity and a spooky milk experiment. Later, while playing in our woods, imaginations came to life as they spotted trees and leaves eerily transformed into ghosts and ghouls.

Saplings spent Wednesday learning about the fascinating history of mummies. The Saplings learned that mummies are far more than just spooky characters in stories – they are an incredible part of ancient history. We explored how ancient civilizations, particularly in Egypt, used specialized

techniques to preserve bodies for thousands of years, carefully wrapping and burying them. To bring this history to life, we participated in an interactive movement activity where Saplings practiced their dexterity and coordination by wrapping each other in toilet paper. Finally, they created colorful wrapped paper mummies to decorate our classroom.

Thursday was all about bones for our Saplings! They kicked off the day learning how the skeletal system gives our bodies structural integrity and why calcium is essential for bone strength and whiteness. Next, we dived into a culturally enriching lesson by reading Hannah Elliot's Día de los Muertos. The room came alive with traditional Mariachi music as they played along using maracas and castanets. Finally, our creative Saplings assembled their very own paper skeletons from a friendly "bag of bones"!

Our "Fun Friday" candy corn craft was a sweet success! Saplings a blast gluing colored paper pieces together to build their own candy corn. This creative activity was a wonderful way to practice color recognition and categorization skills.

Scary-safe play: Saplings enjoy playing chasing games outside. Someone is the ghost or monster and tries to get them. Those scary moments trigger endorphins, serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine — neurotransmitters we also experience when we're happy, excited, and surprised. Children come into the realization that their body can feel so intense sometimes (scared, angry, hungry, tired), and they are trying to figure out how to manage it.

Have a fa-BOO-lous weekend!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**

*K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

Fall is in the air and K/1 is excited about the change in seasons! We go on a lot nature hike in K/1 and this week was no different! We started off the week with a big walk to the lake and ended the week collecting and press leaves for a later art project. We also used our science skills daily to observe, predict, classify and sort nature that we find. We look forward to more fun science, math, and reading fall activities.

Kindergarten focused on the letter g and h 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 reviewing sight words. We have a big focus on handwriting



right now! We are practicing writing letters lowercase and with the correct motion.

K/1 is learning about animal behavior and birds! We learned about different behaviors animals have when they are looking for food. We made bird feeders with pinecones, peanut butter, and seeds. We set them up around the woods to see where the birds like to eat food. We also set up a trail camera on the feeders to see what activity we get at the feeder. It has been a fun way to use our observing and predicting science skills!

We started library last week. We will have it every Thursday. Please make sure the books are treated kindly and returned on Thursday so the kids can check out new ones! Students are not allowed to bring toys to school or on the bus. Please remind them of this rule and check their backpack for toys they may try to sneak in. 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

What a beautiful week! We were able to enjoy lots of outdoor time this week. Monday's lake day was amazing and so much fun. Everyone had lots of fun painting, opening "rock shops" on the shore, and eating ice cream. We also were able to enjoy creating some fall art outside on Wednesday. We are ending the week with a pizza party outside in the hearth oven. Truly couldn't ask for a better fall week. In science, we spent the week talking about animal behaviors and how this helps animals survive. We did an activity where students pretended they were raccoons and had to feel for mystery items.

In reading, we talked about drawing conclusions and comparing and contrasting. The themes for our anchor text were "The court system" and "Family culture." We explored those themes with a variety of readings and graphic organizers to deepen their understanding of those concepts and vocabulary. Our phonics lesson this week was around "VCe" syllable types and how to read words that had this spelling pattern.

Math continues with multiplication and division strategies. We are exploring how to solve a variety of problems and moving into memorizing the math facts. The second graders are continuing to build their understanding of numbers under 200. We focused on place value and then ventured into two digit addition.



I cannot wait for October or as most of the students are calling it “spooky season.”

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

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

Many exciting things have been happening at Birch Grove that the 4/5 class has enjoyed! On Monday we loved spending the day painting a seascape while standing on the rocks overlooking Lake Superior! Everyone loved spending the day at the lake and making the walk over to Coho to enjoy some ice cream! Birch Buddies afterschool classes are in full swing with Dodgeball and Hike! Later in the week, our class will help winterize the gaga ball pit by giving it a light sanding and fresh stain.

In math this week the 4th grade has finished reviewing place value, rounding and ordering large numbers. 5th graders are reviewing equivalent fractions, comparing and ordering fractions. Our classroom routines for math and reading groups are going very well and when students are not meeting with me for their lesson they are working on independent math and reading skills on their own using differentiated IXL math and Lexia reading lessons. Students are also in either a book club reading The One and Only Ivan or Cricket in Times Square and using this text to make inferences on an inference chart and developing character webs based on those inferences. Some students are reading shorter passages to practice their comprehension and fluency. Our class feels good about keeping quiet voices during these group times so that everyone can do their best thinking and learning.



In social studies and writing we are studying geography and making progress on our mapping skills. Students have reviewed how to read a map key, identify distance using a scale, use cardinal and intermediate directions, and identify lines of latitude and longitude. Next week we will begin our landforms study and then begin our Pirate Island project.

All students should be reading at home for 30 minutes and studying math facts for 5 minutes each night. Students have learned many strategies for practicing their math facts including flashcards, plastic sleeve practice page, and a free website called Ascend. Math facts tests happen each Friday.

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