

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

October 8, 2026

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 and continues to be brilliant! It was a busy week and our short week next week will be busy as well. Please look for a field trip permission form in Take Home Folders for next Wednesday as we will be visiting Sugarloaf Cove Nature Center for the day. This trip has been added to our annual fall calendar and we are very excited about it! Please be sure that your K-5 student brings a lunch, water bottle, and layered clothing for this event. All buses run as normal on this day.

There is no school next week on Thursday and Friday for MEA. Please be sure to have your child read over the break – we would greatly appreciate it!

Kudos to all of the staff that pulled together this week as we were short handed with 3 staff out due to family emergencies. You can really count on the Birch Grove team to come through in all types of situations – they are truly the best!





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>

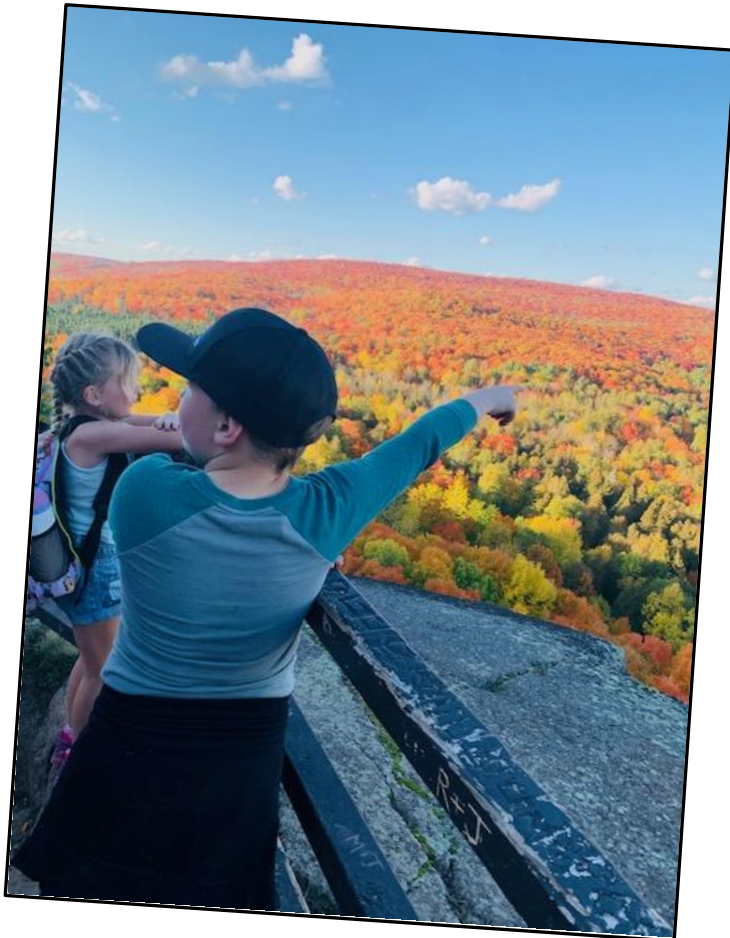
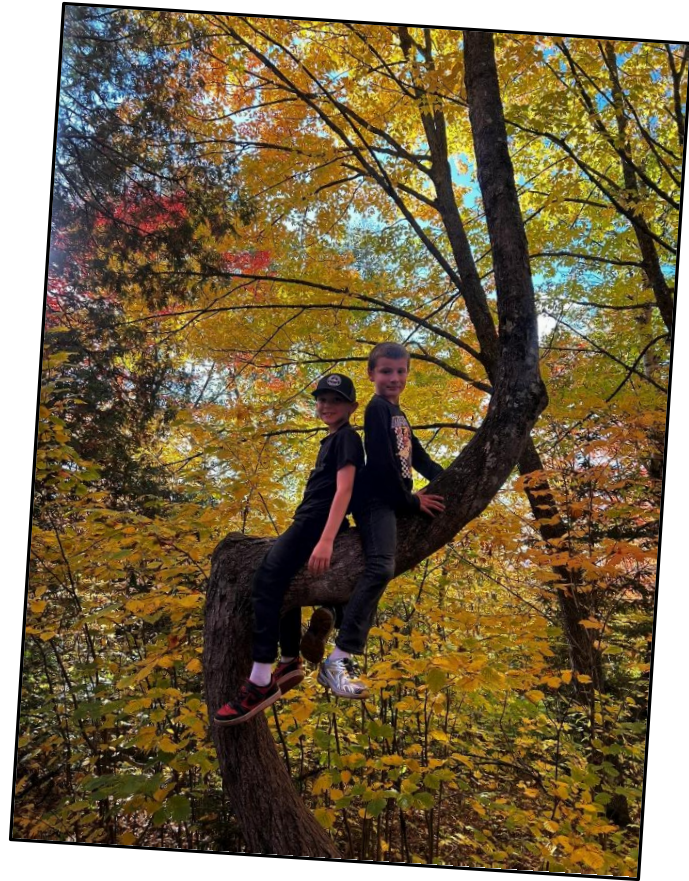


Lots of volunteers are needed to pull this annual event off. For those BGCS families that are planning on attending and enjoying the carnival with their child(ren), perhaps consider bringing two adults to the carnival so that one can enjoy the carnival with your child(ren) while the other volunteers 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 below. Volunteers must be 16+

[Birch Grove: Halloween Carnival 2026](#)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C45AAA92AA2FF2-66589537-halloween#/>

Last week's Birch Buddies ~ *HIKE!* afterschool program captured some amazing North Shore autumn pictures! Hike the Shore! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/birch-buddies>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

🍕🍕 K-5 utilized the wood-fired oven last Friday afternoon and created mini-pizzas! Students had been working hard throughout the week and deserved a little special event - though they were still learning skills while doing this. It was a great and tasty outdoor activity on a beautiful North Shore day! 🍕🍕



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)



🔥 🔥 K/1 listened to their daily read aloud book in the woods by the campfire! They also enjoyed the fall colors, a campfire, and some books of their own while under the trees! It was followed up with some delicious s'mores treats! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)



Many thanks to Tofte Fire & Rescue for coming to Birch Grove today for Fire Prevention Week. Tofte and Schroeder members talked with the children about home fire safety, "Stop, Drop, and Roll" and answered many "What If" questions. The team asked the children to take their fire safety booklet home and review it with the adults in their household – please do so! Then everyone went outside and rotated to different areas with the firetruck and the firehose being the favorite, of course. Everyone got to take home a goodie bag that included a cool red fire hat. Many thanks to Tofte Fire & Rescue for sharing important information with Birch Grove children during Fire Prevention Week!

You do good work!

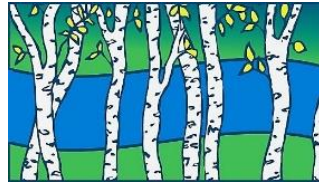


More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[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*

The theme of the week was Community Helpers. Since it was also Fire Prevention Week, we had a focus on firefighters.

During our morning circle we read both fiction and non-fiction books that showed the work that a firefighter does. We also sang a song set to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot" about the tools a firefighter uses. Here are the lyrics if you would like to sing with your Seedling: "I'm a little firefighter on the go. Here is my helmet, here is my hose. When I see a fire, hear me shout: Turn on the water and put it out!".

In addition to learning about firefighters, we also talked about teachers, police officers, doctors, veterinarians, and much more! We worked as a group to play a matching game with cards that displayed all the community helpers. The Seedlings colored pictures of firefighters and a fire engine as well. We had a pop-up fire truck for the Seedlings to try their hand at driving and putting out fires.



On Wednesday we had an extra fun day! We spent extra time outside in the morning and after nap we went back outside to see real fire trucks from Tofte and Schroeder fire departments. We saw rescue trucks, the ladder truck, and watched as the older kids took turns to spray the firehose.

Have a great weekend!

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From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service



Saplings Charged into Fire Safety the first few days of the week! Because heavy coats, masks, and oxygen tanks can feel quite daunting, young kids often tend to hide during a real emergency. To ease their fears, I brought in hands-on firefighting gear – including helmets, masks, boots, and hoses – to help them get used to the equipment and build confidence.

Working together, Saplings practiced tackling simulated fires at the Haunted House and successfully rolled up a 50-foot fire hose! They also learned and practiced the "Get Low and Go" technique, safely crawling out of the room during our simulated fire drill.



Math and manipulative exercises featured water droplet counting, count and clip cards, hydrant size sequencing, counting puzzles, and block measuring of diverse firefighter apparel. Literacy training emphasized the letter F, employing letter tracing activities and searching for items that start with the letter F.

Thursday kicked off with a Ghoulish Green theme. In the Saplings laboratory, they fashioned some Picasso-esque Frankensteins and accomplished the resurrection of Frankenstein through a chemical reaction involving vinegar and baking soda, resulting in the production of carbon dioxide that inflated a Frankenstein balloon. Cozying up by the fire, Saplings engaged in a reading of *Little Goblins Ten* by Pamela Jane. To bring the story to life, they walked through the deep green glen and gathered in a stick-built hovel. Along the way, they practiced counting and spent time journaling.

The cauldron will be brewing on Friday as they'll utilize their counting skills to create potions according to recipes. *Room on the Broom* by Julia Donaldson will be read and witches will be crafted to soar through the air. Emphasizing the letter W practicing our writing skills.

Pajama Day next Wednesday, October 14th!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**

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

K/1 has enjoyed science this fall through many hikes and exploration time in our backwoods. We are learning about animals and what they need to survive. We have noticed animal signs such as tracks, scat, broken twigs, and potential homes in hollowed out trees. We are learning how to be curious, observe, and wonder when we are in nature. Our favorite spot in the woods is a huge puff mushroom patch we found hiding.

In Kindergarten, we are learning letters L and I this week. We also read a story about pets. We used inferencing skills to predict what will happen in the story. We also learned about nouns and found all of our animal names in our story. In math, we are practicing writing numbers 0-20 and we learned about circles, rectangles, and squares. We sorted, drew, built, and identified shapes!

The first-grade students are continuing to practice reading and reviewing letter sounds. We read a story called Curious George Goes to School. We talked about sequence of events in a story.

We summarized the events that happened to Curious George in a flow chart. In math, we learned all of our addition partners up to 10 and took our first unit test. We all did a great job on our quiz!

We spend lots of time outside on a school day. As the weather turns colder, please send your child with appropriate clothes to wear for extended periods of time outside. We hope that the weather will continue to stay warmer through October!

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From Ms. Samantha Forster

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

This week has been fun but with a focus on productivity and routine. Students worked on reviewing school rules and expectations. Students are comfortable within the classroom so we spent extra time reviewing what it looks like to be in the second and third grade classroom. We had fire prevention and this was such a highlight of our fall. We are spending the afternoon on Friday making Picasso Franksteins. I am so excited! We also spent some of our social studies time, learning about community relationships by cleaning up our garden for the winter. We cannot wait until the spring



and the upcoming planting season. We will be finishing up our read aloud this week and I hope to be watching the movie throughout the week next week (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.) This was such a fun book and I hope to incorporate more Roald Dahl books this year.

In reading, we spent time on Venn diagrams, an effective tool for students to monitor their comprehension and develop their understanding around texts. We compared different pets in one group and the various needs that different animals may need. In another group, we compared and contrasted two different characters within their anchor texts. Our phonics focus was “VCe” words and sounds of “C”. We learned about antonyms, the prefix “un-”, and the suffix “-ed.” It was a productive week in our reading groups. As always, we paired learning about these concepts with “read and rolls”, decodables, and word sorts.

Maths main focus has been multiplication and division. The exposure and consistency will make memorizing these facts easier as we progress through the year. We were able to do different math games outside which increased the energy around learning. Second graders focused on adding two digit numbers together. They are learning quickly so we are covering things at a rapid pace!

We will be having a field trip to Sugar Loaf next Wednesday; there will be a permission form heading home with more information!

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

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

(Written by Ms. Ana Sebold – amazing substitute!)

It has been another busy and exciting week at Birch Grove! On Wednesday, our class participated in a fire prevention activity where students learned important fire safety tips and took home fire prevention bags filled with engaging materials to continue the learning at home. Students have also been working hard to care for our school grounds. Later this week, we will help sand and stain the gaga ball pit so that it is ready for lots of fun in the months ahead! Our Birch Buddies afterschool activities are also continuing with Dodgeball and Hike.

In math, our 5th graders have been learning how to add and subtract mixed fractions and then simplify their answers. They have been working hard to show their thinking and carefully check their



work. Our 4th graders are practicing prime and composite numbers, comparing large numbers, adding large numbers, and developing their estimating skills.

Our classroom routines for math and literacy are becoming stronger each week. During independent work times, students are continuing to work on differentiated IXL math and Lexia reading lessons while others meet with the teacher for small-group instruction. Students are also continuing their book club reading of *The One and Only Ivan* and *Cricket in Times Square*. As they read, students are making inferences, adding to their inference charts, and developing character webs based on what they learn about the characters. Some students are also working with shorter passages to strengthen their reading comprehension and fluency. The class has been doing a great job using quiet voices and staying focused during these independent and small-group learning times.



In social studies and writing, we are studying landforms and continuing to build our geography skills. Students are learning about different types of landforms and connecting their learning to the maps and geography skills we have been practicing. We will likely begin our Pirate Island project next week, where students will have an opportunity to put their geography skills to work in a creative project.

All students should be reading at home for 30 minutes and studying math facts for 5 minutes each night. Students can continue using strategies such as flashcards, their plastic sleeve practice page, and the free website Ascend to practice their math facts. Math facts tests happen each Friday.

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