

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

October 22, 2026

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

Friday, October 30 ~ Afternoon Halloween Party and Trick-or-Treating!

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

Tuesday, November 17 ~ School Board Meeting at 4pm

Wednesday - Friday, November 25-27 ~ Thanksgiving Break

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 moving quickly! MEA is behind us along with our first annual trip to Sugarloaf Cove Nature Center in Schroeder. This fall trip, along with Tettegouche State Park in February, are now staples in our programming. Utilizing the areas naturalists enhances our student's (and staff's) knowledge of the natural world around us, always a focus for Birch Grove. We hope this addition meets parent approval - we know the students and staff enjoyed it!

Halloween is fast approaching, and the annual Halloween Carnival at Birch Grove is this Sunday, October 25 from 2-4pm. We hope that everyone can make it. This event is not a money maker for Birch Grove, rather it is a community service. Trick-or-treating has its challenges throughout a lot of Cook and Lake county, so this event was created decades ago so that there would still be Halloween fun for children. Please consider volunteering to keep this



event strong in the community. A sign up link is on our school website under the tab Community Services/ Annual PTO Halloween Carnival, or you can click this direct link: [Birch Grove: Halloween Carnival 2026](#)

Students need not worry if they can't make the Halloween Carnival, as we will be having a party the afternoon of Friday, October 30 at school, including trick-or-treating at various local businesses! Students may not wear costumes to school (face makeup should be put on at home prior to school, however). An opportunity to put on costumes will happen after lunch, once all classroom academics have been completed. Please do not send costumes that are overly bloody/scary or that have weapons as accessories. Fake weapons will not be allowed – please be aware of this. Also, we do have younger children in the building and we don't want to scare them with excessive blood or gore – these types of costumes can be worn at the carnival, but not at school. Costumes should be simple and not take a team to get on please! 😊

🍂 Many thanks to the Tofte General Store for donating PUMPKINS again! So many PUMPKINS! It makes our hallway look fall festive! The Tofte General Store has donated pumpkins in October for so many years now that the children start asking about it in September! Please stop at the Tofte General Store and say thanks from BGCS! You can see all of the pumpkins at the annual Halloween Carnival on Sunday, October 25 from 2-4pm.



Parent-Teacher conferences are coming up the week of Monday, November 9 – Friday, November 13. Each classroom teacher will reach out with a sign up link and each teacher schedule will be different. Please sign up and keep your appointment. Please bring your knowledge of your child to share with teachers, as you know them best. We strive to work with parents cooperatively to ensure academic, social and emotional growth throughout the school year. We look forward to meeting with you all!

K/1 engages in multisensory learning regularly. Students make a mind and body connection through touch, motion, hearing, and seeing that aides to cemented in their learning. Kindergarten practiced writing, identifying, and saying letters in shaving cream! This is one of the favorite ways to practice writing!



More pictures can be found on the
school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

The 2/3 class cleaned up our garden plots last week on a beautiful autumn day. Our students help to clean and organize on a daily basis - it's good for them! It teaches skills, respect and responsibility!

This 3rd grader makes it look fun! 😊



Birch Buddies ~ Hike! afterschool program concluded with a hike alongside Onion River. Hikers were met with deep hues of late fall leaves, waterfalls, and grand Lake Superior views! What a beautiful way to end fall hiking! Birch Buddies ~ Hike! will be back again in the spring!



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)



Birch Grove took a field trip to Sugarloaf Cove Nature Center! Students learned about the fascinating geological history of the North Shore and explored ancient lava-formed rocks and slabs found in the cove. K-5 explored the trails, learned about logging history, journaled about nature, and participated in letterboxing, a fun stamp scavenger hunt! In the afternoon, students learned about lichen, and microscopes were utilized to get a deeper look! It was a beautiful fall day to be in nature and participate in hands-on learning!



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)



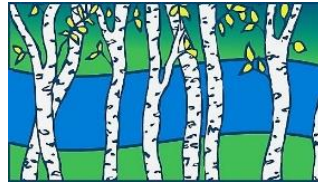


More pictures can be found on the
school Facebook page.

[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!



birchgrove@boreal.org
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](#)



~~~~~  
**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

This week the Seedlings learned all about pumpkins! We started the week by learning about the life cycle of a pumpkin during our morning circle time. Visual aids helped to reinforce our learning of how pumpkins grow from a seed, to a sprout and then a vine, and then forming a flower and finally a pumpkin. We sang a fun song that included hand motions to describe how pumpkins can be tall, short, wide, and thin.

During our circle time we read books that had a focus on pumpkins. We read *We're Going on a Pumpkin Hunt* by Steve Metzger, *The Stubborn Pumpkin* by L.G. Bass, and *The Biggest Pumpkin Surprise Ever* by Steven Kroll. In addition to reading and singing, we also worked together to complete a pumpkin match game, a pumpkin puzzle, a pumpkin shape puzzle, and worked together to put pumpkins in order from smallest to biggest. After introducing the Seedlings to the activities, they were available during free play time for the Seedlings to practice their skills.



This week the Seedlings created a fun pumpkin craft by using a paintbrush to brush a glue/water mixture onto a paper pumpkin and then worked their fine motor skills to pick up small pieces of orange tissue paper to glue onto the pumpkin.

We continue to go outside every day to play for 45 minutes to an hour before lunch. Please be sure to send hats, gloves/mittens, and jackets once the temperatures begin to drop.

Birch Grove's Annual Halloween Carnival is taking place this Sunday, October 25th from 2-4pm. There will be lots of fun games and activities for children of all ages. Volunteers are needed to help run some games so if you or someone you know would be interested in signing up, there is a link on our Facebook page. There will also be age appropriate activities hosted in the Saplings and the Seedlings rooms.

Have a great weekend!

218-663-0170 ext. 7

[emily.vandorenbgcs@gmail.com](mailto:emily.vandorenbgcs@gmail.com)

~~~~~  
From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

As part of our Creepy Crawly week, Saplings have been exploring the focus color black. Our week commenced with an investigation into nocturnal creatures, specifically owls and bats. Saplings created artistic owls by tearing paper to simulate feathers, a fun activity that enhances fine motor skills, concentration, and creativity. They discovered that most owls are nocturnal, and they practiced their best owl hoots. Additionally, they learned that owls are silent flyers due to their exceptionally soft feathers. Saplings explored words starting with O, such as 'open' and 'opposite' to help them understand new concepts. 🦉

Saplings "took flight" on Tuesday, diving into the wonderful world of bats after reading *Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon. To start their adventure, they personified bats and hunted around the classroom for objects starting with the letter B. They even took their exploration outdoors, experimenting with hanging upside down from tree branches! Later, a lively parachute activity with flying beanie bats helped them develop their motor skills, self-control, and social cooperation. To wrap up the lesson, Saplings practiced writing the letter B and painted their own 3D bats, ready for flight. 🦇



What's Halloween without black cats? 🐈 This Wednesday, Saplings crafted black cats peeking behind pumpkins after comparing wild cats to domestic cats, and our reading centered around fun Halloween books. The math manipulative activity involved sorting and counting, enhancing dexterity and coordination through the transfer of black and orange balls using fingers or tweezers into distinct cat-shaped molds. For literacy we centered our attention on the letter C, investigating its hard /k/ sound and refining our writing abilities.

Thursday was all about spooktacular spiders! Our Saplings learned that spiders are arachnids (not insects), can spin silk, and eat small bugs. To build their fine motor skills and pincer grasp, the children used tweezers to rescue colorful spiders from a web. This hand strength is essential for everyday independence, like zipping jackets, buttoning shirts, and brushing teeth. We even sneaked in some math by counting the spiders by color! 🕷️ In the writing center, the children matched upper- and lowercase "letter spiders" to their correct spots on a web manipulative, practicing letter recognition in a fun, festive way. 🕸️

Friday Saplings will slither like snakes 🐍 and scurry like mice 🐭, making connections between the letters, their sounds, and the world around them. We'll focus on the /s/ sound, emphasizing it with a long, hissing sound like a snake. We'll also practice the /m/ sound, making a munching sound like a happy little mouse. The sensory bin will provide a tactile experience, featuring shredded paper, snakes, and mice that Saplings could sort, count, and explore in terms of texture, while also gaining insight into the slithering movements of snakes through their habitats.

See you at the Halloween Carnival 🎃!

218-663-0170 ext. 6
pam.holmbgcs@gmail.com

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

Halloween is next week already! Yikes! K/1 will have a small party on Friday, October 30th, in the afternoon. Please send your child with a costume to change into. They may not bring any kind of fake weapons or blood. I know the children are really looking forward to the party and trick-or-treating!

In math, the kindergarteners are learning about addition and subtraction facts and teen numbers. 1<sup>st</sup> grade is learning about subtraction and how to represent it! In language arts, the kindergarteners learned about the letters B and F and the words and, I, like, see, and the. The first graders are working on learning sight words and how to write complete sentences.

We finished a science unit about birds and animals. This unit was concluded with hanging bird feeders at the camp for all to enjoy. Our unit concluded, but we will always be curious and wonder about the natural world throughout the school year and all the seasons! We took what we learned about being scientists with us to the field trip and utilized our observing and wondering skills!



Please look for an email later next week about online programs you can access for extra support at home. Also, make sure to be reading to/with your child for twenty minutes every day. I notice a difference when students read at home! Another basic support you can do at home is practicing identifying letter names, letter sounds, and numbers!

218-663-0170 ext. 2

[sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com](mailto:sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com)

~~~~~  
From Ms. Samantha Forster

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

This week was a beautiful week as we transferred back into our routine. We spent time outside, enjoying the nice fall weather and leaves. We also were able to watch Charlie and the Chocolate Factory as we finished our book last week! We had a book talk beforehand and answered various questions about the read aloud. Our art project was Halloween themed and we did a Ted Burton themed portrait. On Friday, we will be spending time enjoying the fall outdoors in the afternoon with a nature walk!

Reading was jam packed with phonics review with us focusing on “R, L, and S” blends and the sounds of “G.” This was paired with decodables, group word sorts, independent word sorts, and utilizing them in context. We continued to work on syllable division and syllable types so that we can continue to break about multisyllabic words. Students also read two different stories, one about a teacher that is kind and takes care of her student’s pets and a biography about Roberto Clemente. Each story had a separate graphic organizer that helped students monitor their comprehension and the themes of each of the stories. I also started a new activity that they will be doing during their quiet time throughout the year. We will be working on paragraph writing and I like to focus on the individual structures of paragraphs to build meaningful and productive paragraphs. They will work on a page a day which includes brainstorming, topic sentences, conclusion sentences, body sentences, revising, and finalizing. This week’s topic is an opinion piece paired with a reading article on what is the favorite pet.



Math started out with building fluency on multiplication facts and division facts for third grade. We then took a test on their understanding. We will continue to work on these throughout the year as they are a basis to all higher level math. I use an online platform to do my assessments to prepare students for standardized testing that uses a similar format. In second grade, we continue to work on 3 digit addition, place value, and building numbers up to a thousand. The second graders are quick to understand math concepts so each new thing is quickly grasped.

As always, reach out with any questions. Reminder that conferences are coming up in a couple weeks, keep a lookout for the sign up link. Also the Halloween carnival is this Sunday, stop by for some family fun!

218-663-0170 ext. 2

samantha.forsterbgcs@gmail.com

~~~~~  
**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

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

This past week our classroom has focused on showing responsibility by listening carefully and following directions. Students have new classroom jobs and are working very hard to remember to complete everything that needs to be completed. Part of being responsible in the 4/5 classroom is to do some work at home most nights including studying for math facts and reading for 30 minutes. Students can read chapter books or graphic novels at home, the important thing is that they are developing a routine at home to read most nights. At school, we keep track of chapter books completed in our reading logs and by this time of the year most 4th graders should have completed two chapter books independently and 5th graders should have finished up at three. Check in with your child to see where they are at and what books they have completed.

In math, some 4th graders are reviewing how to subtract large numbers including borrowing across a zero and then checking their work by writing an estimation equation using rounding. Other 4th graders are working on finding factor pairs of a given number and then identifying common factors and the greatest common factor. 5th graders have learned how to add, subtract, rename and simplify mixed numbers. I am so impressed with how much math stamina our class has during group lessons, independent practice work and completing IXL skills on the chromebooks. Math fact tests are taken every Friday so if your child has not mastered all of their math facts they should practice each night for about 5 minutes using their plastic sleeve or a free online flashcard website called, Ascend Flashcards. It is a free program and does NOT require a username or password, but it does require you to give your 4/5th grader permission to go online.



The best part of this week was starting our Pirate Island projects to wrap up our geography and map skills social studies unit. Students chose themes for their projects, designed their islands using the landforms and body of water terms, created a key and created a compass rose. They look great!!

218-663-0170 ext. 4

[stacy.coronisbgcs@gmail.com](mailto:stacy.coronisbgcs@gmail.com)