

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

April 24, 2026

Friday, May 1 ~ School is ON! Make Up Day!

Monday-Friday, May 4-8 ~ FastBridge Assessments for K-5

Wednesday-Friday, May 13-15 ~ Wolf Ridge Trip for 2-5

Tuesday, May 19 ~ School Board Meeting at 4pm

Monday, May 25 ~ No School - Memorial Day

Thursday, May 28 ~ Last Day for Seedlings & Saplings (Until Summer Session)

Friday, May 29 ~ Graduation Celebration! 10:00am - ½ day of school. Release at 12:00.

Monday & Tuesday, June 1 & 2 ~ School is ON! FUN Make Up Days!

Saturday, June 6 ~ Gala for the Grove!

Monday, June 8 ~ First Day of Campsite Kids, Summer Seedlings & Saplings

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.

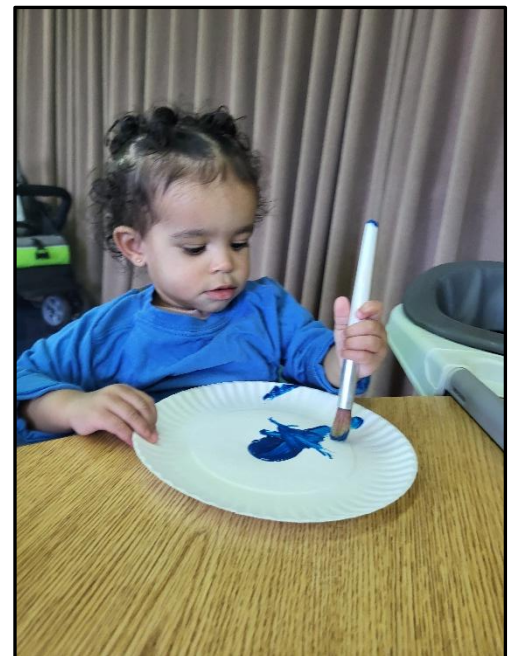
From Ms. Diane Blanchette:

School Director, Birch Grove Community School

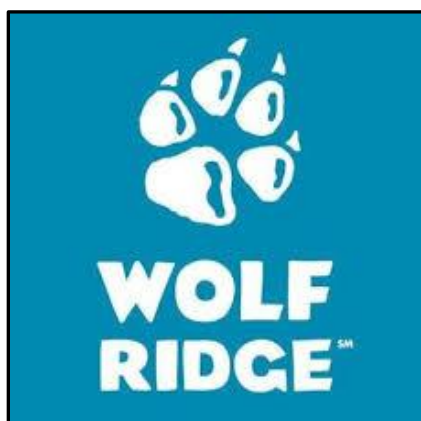
Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service

It's Fri-yay! It was a busy week with the MCA tests in reading, math and science this week for 3-5th graders, with 5th graders only taking the science test. We have completed all of the series with everyone completing all tests - no makeups needed. It feels great to have this culmination completed and moving on with the rest of our school year. Many thanks to the families that saw to it that their child(ren) had extra sleep this week and sent them off with encouragement to do their best work. Teamwork makes the dreamwork! 😊

This week school board elections were held at the regular meeting, with Judy Motschenbacher and Mary VanDoren elected to serve



another term at Birch Grove Community School. Thank you so much for your service ~ you are appreciated!



The annual Wolf Ridge overnight trip is coming up. 2-5th grade parents, please check your email about transportation for this amazing trip.

Permission forms went home today in Take Home Folders. Please be sure to return these to school. Thank you!

[Gala for the Grove 2026!](#)

2026 Theme: Hats & Horses: The Hometown Derby

A Kentucky Derby-Inspired Night of Racing, Roses, and Giving for Birch Grove

Saturday, June 6, 2026

The Gala for the Grove, a spirited fundraiser for Birch Grove Community School, is semi-formal in the Lakeside Ballroom at Surfside in Tofte. Dress for the theme or not, the choice is yours – it will be a great time either way!

An announcement will be made when tickets are available for this annual fundraiser for Birch Grove!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/gala-for-the-grove>



Please check at home for overdue school library books! It is time to return them for the year, as checking out library books ends this week for the remainder of the school year. Please return all school books – don't forget to check under the bed! 😊

🌍 Earth Day Clean Up at Birch Grove! Saplings through grade 5 helped to clean up trash around the building, on the property, and up and down the bike paths today. Happy Earth Day everyone! 🌍
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)



Birch Buddies ~ Diamond Art! afterschool program had sparkling results!
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/birch-buddies>



Baby Theo born April 14th at 8:03 AM. 8lbs 2 ozs and 20.75 inches!
Congratulations Ms. Forster and family! What a cutie!



Summer Saplings (ages 3-5) enrollment is open! Register today! It's going to be a great summer!
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Summer-Saplings>

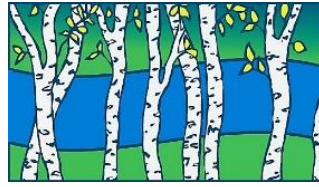


Parent *Aware*
Rated Program



Highest Possible Rating

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](#)



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### From Ms. Emily VanDoren

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

In honor of Earth Day on April 22nd, the Seedlings spent this week learning about Earth as well as ways that we can take care of Earth. Each Seedling took home a book this week that explains the meaning of Earth Day and provides suggestions for things that can be done at home to help take care of our Earth. The book also provides the opportunity for the Seedlings to practice their pencil grip and work their fine motor skills as it doubles as a coloring book. We read books this week that showed the different climates, animals, and geological features that are found around the world. We listened to "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong throughout the week as well.

The sensory table was filled with various foam shapes in the colors blue and green to represent the colors that are seen when the Earth is viewed from outer space. The Seedlings practiced their shape and color recognition as well as expanded their imaginations as they found different ways to play with the foam shapes. We played a recycling match game and challenged the older Seedlings with a memory game. For our art project this week the Seedlings painted a paper plate with blue paint and then worked with me to glue down green construction pieces to create the land formations.



As the weather continues to warm, we are extending the time that we spend outside. We enjoyed taking walks along the bike path every day this week in the beautiful weather. Now that the snow has melted, we will be spending more time outside playing so be sure to do a quick tick check in the evenings.

Have a good weekend!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

This week, the Saplings engaged hands-on with sustainability as the theme was *Reduce, Reuse and Recycle!* A sensory bin filled with shredded paper and hidden items was used to teach how to sort materials into trash, recycling, and compost bins. Our discussion centered on the types of materials that can be recycled and the role recycling plays in reducing waste in landfills. By demonstrating the recycling process, we are empowering the children to make a positive impact through their individual actions. Due to MCA testing in the school, the Saplings spent most of their time



outdoors. Research suggests that four-year-olds should spend at least three hours outside daily. Outdoor activities help build confidence, foster creativity and imagination, teach responsibility, provide diverse stimulation, promote physical activity, encourage critical thinking, and reduce stress and fatigue.

On Monday Saplings embarked on an eco-adventure outside, exploring designated trails and respecting wildlife. They participated in journaling activities, observing animals in their natural habitats without causing disturbance and gained valuable knowledge about responsibility and conservation. They also gathered nature “treasures” in their recycled containers.

The Saplings expressed their creativity on Tuesday by making paper pulp earths from recycled paper in our bin.

On Wednesday Our Saplings celebrated Earth Day with a creative twist! They crafted planet earth's journals from recycled lids, paper and books. In the afternoon, they took part in the school's Earth Day trash clean-up initiative by tidying up around the school grounds.

To commemorate Arbor Day, Saplings explored the wonder of trees on Thursday and Friday. When asked what they love about trees, their creative answers included: Hanging and swinging from branches, climbing to new heights, providing homes for birds and squirrels, a source for paper and building materials, offering shade from the sun. Hands-on fun followed with making recycled bird feeders from toilet paper rolls. Additionally, two painting-inspired art projects, influenced by Gustav Klimt and Wassily Kandinsky, were undertaken.

Throughout the week fun continued with literacy and math activities! Saplings practiced writing skills by tracing letters on alphabet sheets and then finding the same letters on recycling bins. Number skills were strengthened by counting and covering dots on earth and recycling bin-themed printables, focusing on numbers 0-20.

Please ensure your child is dressed for warmer outdoor adventures, rain or shine! We explore nature daily, and getting wet and dirty is part of the fun. To make the most of our time outside, kindly send your child with suitable gear, including waterproof rain gear (not just wind-resistant). This will help them stay dry and comfortable.

Proud of our Saplings for embracing the wonders of nature!

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

Sunshine, flowers, and fresh air have been wonderful for the kids this week. They are feeling spring and gaining energy from the warmer weather! For the rest of the year, we will be spending Fridays outside as long as the weather cooperates. Please ensure your child has enough layers and proper footwear to spend long periods outside. If it is cold, we will still go out; however, we will not go out if there is a lot of rain.

This week K/1 finished a writing project and shared it with other students. Students started out by creating a clay ball creature. We then drew portraits of our animal. Lastly, we built stories around our animals. K/1 practiced creating a rough draft, then rewriting for a final draft. We enjoyed adding more illustrations and sharing with others our hard work!

In math, we are all reviewing various topics. Students were introduced to fractions this week. We created divides in a piece of paper by folding it equally. It was exciting to see how many times we could fold the paper; it was 7 times. We



are working on mastering the concepts of time, money, and measuring. We took time to play multiple whole-group math games this week. It was a good review and fun!

Reminder: Tickets to treasure drawing is in about a month! Remember to read with your child and help them record it in their reading logs!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski (Subbing for Ms. Forster during her maternity leave)**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

MCA testing was the topic for the week in 2/3! The 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade students did a great job staying focused and trying their hardest on their reading and math tests. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade helped by ensuring they were quiet in the building, and they were cheering on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade! They watched, knowing that they would be doing it next year! With testing being done in the library, 2/3 spent most of their time in K/1 this week.

Reading was done this week without 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, as they were testing right away in the morning. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade practiced reading comprehension and summarizing important ideas in a story. We did a lot of writing and partner work this week! In math, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is learning about units of measurement and how to convert to other units. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade reviewed arrays and fractions! We will continue to review topics they learned this year in 2/3 and look ahead at what we might be learning next year!

We celebrated Earth Day on Wednesday by cleaning up trash around the school. We did not find a lot around the school, or on the bike path, so we must have done well with not littering this year! We also listened to a presentation about trees and how they are important to our ecosystem.

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From Ms. Stacy Coronis

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

Hooray! We have wrapped up our MCA math, reading and science tests. I am so proud of how hard the students worked to review for the tests and the time they took during the test to do their best work. Many thanks to Ms. Angie for coming in early every morning this week to serve the 3,4 and 5th graders a warm and nutritious breakfast! What a treat!

Another special event this week was celebrating Earth Day! After completing an Earth Day Fun Facts Scavenger Hunt in the classroom we were able to participate in an interactive Earth Day presentation with the "Let's Plant Trees" organization. Boy, the Birch Grove kids know a lot about trees and impressed the presenter with their ability to identify trees just by a photo. All students received a sticker and a voucher for a tree seedling that will be coming later in May when the weather is warm enough for tree planting. Finally, all K-5 Birch Grove students went outside at the end of the day to clean up our property by picking up trash found on the ground. The 4/5 class worked near the highway and were surprised at how much trash was collected!



In science we are learning about the importance of our Earth's water cycle and how water conservation is a necessary step to keeping our water plentiful. 4/5 students each designed, labeled and explained the stages of the water cycle on their own poster. Students also identified three important things that everyone can do to conserve and protect our water supply.

In social studies and writing we are participating in a USA "chain letter" activity to learn a little bit about the other 49 states. Our class responded to a request from a school in Nebraska who wanted to learn more about Minnesota and culture on the North Shore. Next, each student chose 3 states to send a letter to and practiced sending out an addressed and stamped envelope. We are excited to see the letters come back to us over the next few weeks of school!

Information about Wolf Ridge was sent home today in the take home folders. Please read through your packet and have your child return the permission slip next week. Included in this packet you will find a packing list so that you can make sure your child will have everything needed for a great Wolf Ridge trip in mid-May.

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