

## Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

February 12, 2026

Friday, February 13 ~ No School, Staff PD  
Monday, February 16 ~ No School, President's Day/Staff PD  
Tuesday, February 17 ~ School Board Meeting at 4:00  
Thursday, March 12 ~ Sled Dog Rides with Rita Wehseler  
Friday, March 13 ~ No School, Staff PD  
Tuesday, March 17 ~ School Board Meeting at 4:00  
Monday, March 16 - Friday, March 20 ~ Parent/Teacher Conferences  
Monday, March 23-Friday, March 27 ~ Spring Break, No School

### 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*

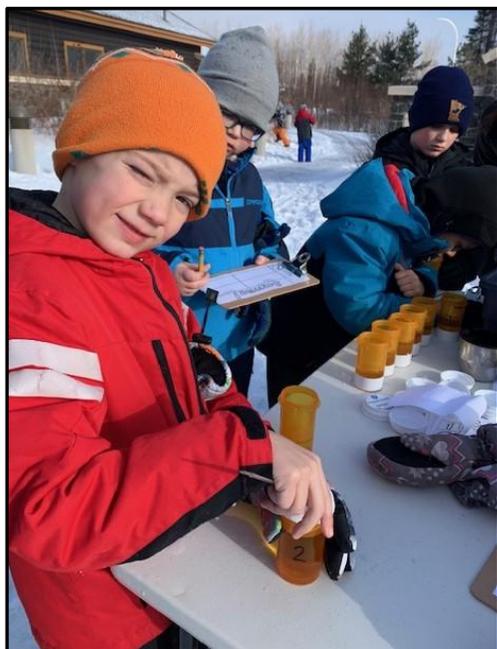
This is a short week with no school tomorrow, and a short one next week as well, with no school on Monday, President's Day (see the dates above). Please encourage your child to read and access classroom platforms as much as you are able during this time. Much appreciated!

As a reminder, even though there are "days off" for students, it doesn't mean there are "days off" for teachers, as teachers have much required training to complete, lesson plans to create, student data to review with implementation plans for growth, and other behind the scenes work that most never see, in order to provide students with the best experience possible at Birch Grove Community School. Be sure to send some love to all of the hard working staff this Valentine's Day! We LOVE our staff!



K-5 had a fantastic field trip to Tettegouche State Park last week! The morning was spent with three state park naturalists who taught us about identifying animal tracks and signs, the network of insulating tunnels and homes under the snow, and owls unique make up that allows them to be great predators. In the afternoon, students spent time snowshoeing or cross-country skiing through this beautiful state park. Students also enjoyed creating Minnesota nature themed artwork. This event will now be an annual February field trip! Thank you to Tettegouche State Park for having us!

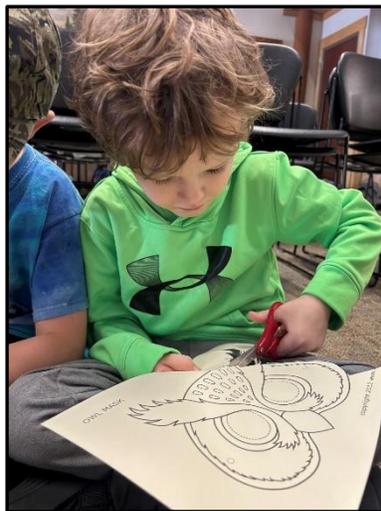
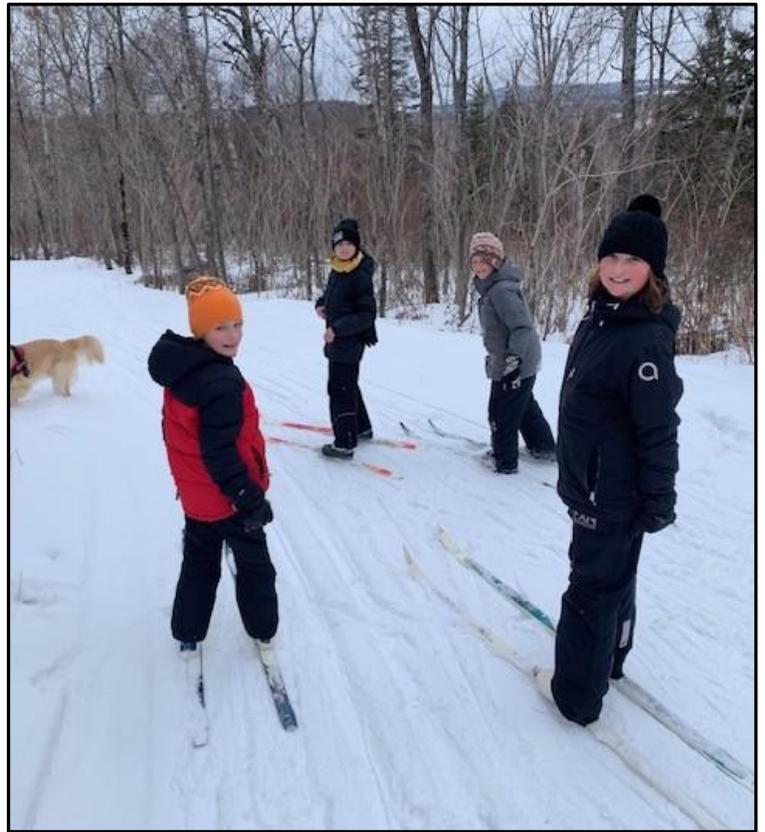
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/the-great-outdoors>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)







Many thanks to Oddz & Endz and Anna Latz for the \$367 distributed to Birch Grove Community School!  
Your support is greatly appreciated!

Birch Buddies ~ PAINT BY NUMBERS! Two more sessions remain - Feb 17 & 24. This is a creative project that is low key with opportunities for quiet friendships. This northern lights piece is framed and ready to hang in all its spectacular glory!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/birch-buddies>



K-3 brushed up on some skating skills last week during a beautiful North Shore afternoon. Living large at Birch Grove! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/the-great-outdoors>



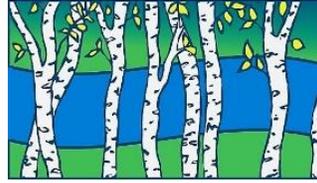
The Saplings "traveled" through Italy last week where they encountered the visionary Leonardo da Vinci and created their own adaptation of the Mona Lisa, one of the world's most iconic paintings.

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/saplings-program>



Math fact flashcards are available to check out for home use. Please ask your child's teacher, and we will send them home! Please help us, and your child, by supporting learning at home.

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](http://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](#)



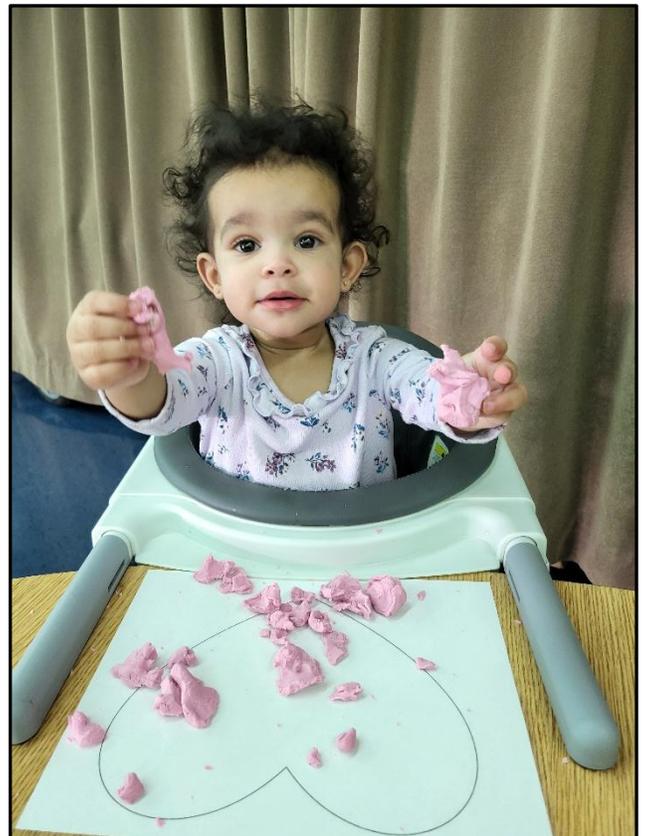
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**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

This week the Seedlings' learning was focused on kindness, sharing, and friendship. To show kindness and friendship, we practiced greeting each friend by name as they arrived and saying goodbye when they were picked up in the afternoon.

We read books that helped us to learn about kindness, friendship, and sharing. *How Kind!* by Mary Murphy tells the story of a hen that offers an egg to a pig, and through that act of kindness, other animals decide they would like to do something kind as well, and eventually the hen sees her kindness returned to her. We read *Winnie the Pooh Forever Friends* and learned about the ways we can show love in our friendships by sharing, helping, and playing with each other. The Seedlings practiced sharing and showing kindness by taking turns trying to blow bubbles during our morning playtime.

Our songs this week included "Skidamarink", the Barney song "I love you" and a fun Valentine's song by The Kiboomers called "Valentines, Valentines, what colors do you see". With this song the Seedlings practiced naming the different colors of hearts.



Activities this week included a sensory table filled with red, pink, and white paper grass and hearts with different patterns and colors. The Seedlings needed to sift through the paper to find hearts and were also tasked with trying to find matches. Heart puzzles were a fun challenge this week as well.

The Seedlings worked their fine motor skills with both coloring and play dough as they tried to fill a heart template with their play dough by either smooshing and rolling the play dough out or by tearing pieces of the play dough to cover the heart.

Each Seedling helped to create a special Valentine's keepsake so be sure to check their folders/bags.

As a reminder, there is no school on Monday February 16th. Have a good weekend!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Valentine's week in the Saplings featured an engaging and interactive experience with the dramatic play area designed as a Post Office. The theme highlighted activities such as mail delivery, letter writing, stamping, sorting packages, and learning about mail carriers, with an emphasis on post office-related vocabulary including stamp, envelope, mailbox, and address.



To improve literacy skills, we wrote letters to classmates and family members incorporating vocabulary words such as Mom, Dad, and Love, honed our envelope-addressing skills, and examined phonetics through mail-related activities. Valentine letter recognition activities were also performed.

For math the Saplings activities included sorting packages by size, counting stamps or matching numbers to mailboxes. Along with several Valentine math and manipulative activities to choose from. The sensory bin included a mixture of rose petals and hearts, allowing for sorting exercises focused on weight, size, and color.

In our Science lesson, we examined the human heart's function as a dual pump, responsible for circulating blood throughout the body. This circulation ensures the body receives vital oxygen and nutrients. Following the discussion, we used real stethoscopes to listen to each other's heartbeats resting and after exercising.

Saplings created an array of heart-shaped masterpieces that demonstrate their creativity and skill this week. They employed a range of techniques, including stained glass tissue hearts, weaving, painting

and paper tearing. The pink and red playdough proved to be a huge success as they brought to life an assortment of hearts, hugs, and kisses in various sizes.

Happy Valentine's Day!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**

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

The children had a wonderful Valentine's celebration at school. They enjoyed making, handing out, and getting valentines! K/1 worked on a special project for their grown-ups; it was a pinecone/flower bouquet. We hope you enjoy them as much as we enjoyed making them!

The Kindergarteners learned about sequence of events in books. We practice retelling stories with first, next, and last vocabulary. They also identified the setting and characters in a story. The first graders read a book about where food comes from. We talked about the author's purpose and finding supporting details in a book. Everyone is working hard to improve their reading skills. We are constantly practicing sight words, letter sounds, writing, and reading!



In math, first grade practiced adding tens together. Kindergarteners practice addition partners of ten and teen numbers. K/1 has been enjoying Friday math time recently. We have been playing an online quiz game, math board games, and group games to practice our math skills.

We started a geography unit this week about where we are on the map. K/1 is excited to explore different regions of the world and learn about other cultures! Have a great long weekend! Remember to have your child read every day for at least 20 minutes. Students should be practicing on Lexia as well!

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**From Ms. Samantha Forster**  
*2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher*

This week has been full of learning and spending time outdoors. We finished our book that we are writing and it turned out very good. It was apparent how much work students put into it! It was a great introduction to our biography research project we started this week. Students will be writing a 5 paragraph essay, making a timeline, creating a portrait, then making a slideshow with all the information to present to their classmates. Third graders were so excited to get to work on this and have been doing a great job of helping their younger classmates work through all the research portion. We did our card exchange for Valentine's Day. It always amazes me how kind and considerate the students are to each other. Then they ended their week with a fun cross country skiing activity with Ms. Knottski! (as I am now unable to take them myself and they have been BEGGING to go). Also, I will be offering more conference dates that are different from the normal school schedule to ensure that I am able to meet with you for spring conferences. Keep a lookout in your email for this sign up/information.



We practiced a reader's theater this week in class! This was a great way to practice understanding different text structures. We practiced and then performed for our classmates. Every student was very excited to be able to read aloud to the class. We practiced the sounds /ar/ /k/ /kw/ through decodables and word sorts this week. I also encouraged them to utilize the new vocabulary in their own sentences which helps build understanding with unfamiliar words. Writing will be a big focus in the next couple months and will help prepare them for the next grades.

We have started reviewing many different concepts this week in math. There have been skills that not everyone has mastered yet so I spent this week doing individualized instruction to help each student master their goals. This will be another common thing in the next couple months while I enrich other student's learning so that each student is getting what they need.

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

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

In reading and social studies this week we continued learning about the American Revolution and the 13 colonies. In our reading selection we learned about the role that African American, James Forten, played in the revolution. We created a timeline by documenting the impactful events that happened in his life after reading his biography. The students agreed that living during the revolution must have been very difficult!

In math, our fractions unit continued by learning how to compare fractions using the strategies of the same numerator, same denominator and the  $\frac{1}{2}$  benchmark. This unit has proven to be a challenge, but the class continues to practice their math stamina and persevere. During math class we use our online learning platform, IXL, to supplement our lessons in class. Students are able to access this online and can practice the skills or play math games at home.

The week ended with a Valentine's exchange of cards, treats, and compliments. Valentines is a great time of year to reinforce the importance of kindness so each 4/5 student received anonymous compliments from the students in class and adults in the building that they used to make their own compliment poster to take home. Through my years of teaching, this has always been one of my favorite moments while watching the kids read through their compliments and see their faces light up! Hopefully these posters make it home and can find a spot to be hung to remind your child of how wonderful they are!



Just a reminder that there is no school on Monday due to President's Day!

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