

## Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

February 27, 2026

Wednesday, March 4 ~ Walter's Birthday!

Thursday, March 12 ~ Sled Dog Rides with Rita Wehseler

Friday, March 13 ~ School is ON! Make Up Day

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.*

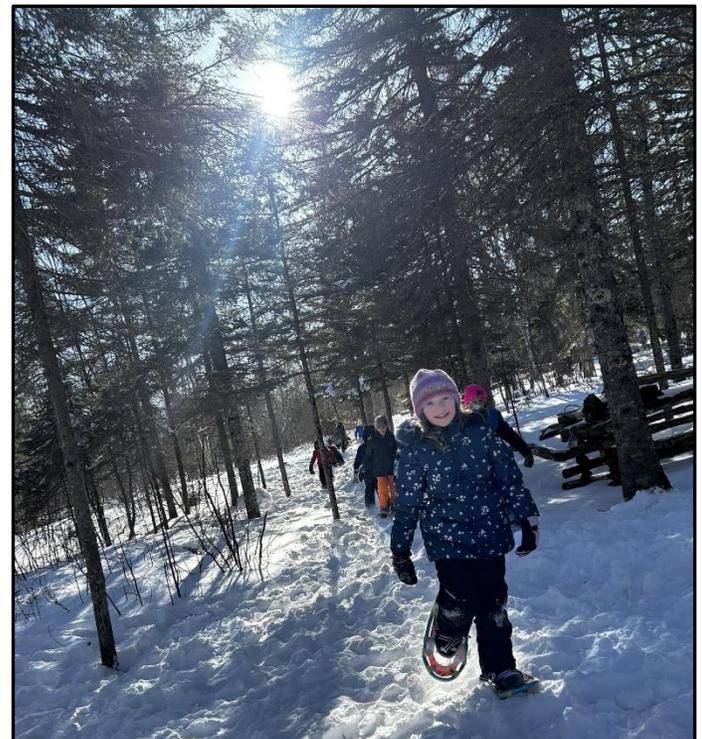
### **From Ms. Diane Blanchette:**

*School Director, Birch Grove Community School*

*Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service*

You may have noticed that we did not send out a newsletter last week. Since it was already a short week with a planned non-school day on Monday, and then the blizzard canceling school on Wednesday and Thursday, it turned out to be a really short week. Because of this, a little bit of the featured news in this edition is a tad old by our standards, but worthy of mentioning all the same.

February is flying by and next week is March already! That leaves only three months of school left for the year - wow. Please continue to send your child to school on time every day, and remind them that school and learning are important, so they should be doing their best work each day. Growth is a team effort between the school, parents/family, and each child. We are so happy that you have chosen Birch Grove Community School! Go Birch Grove!



2nd and 3rd graders practiced cross country skiing the week before the blizzard. We knew at the time that the snow conditions weren't the best, but it's February and we just wanted to get out there! Many 2/3 students have not been lucky enough to cross country ski before, so they started out practicing around the playground. Now that we have more snow, they may get to hit the trails!

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



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)



K/1 created a very special nature inspired bouquet of flowers for their grown-ups for Valentine's Day. They crafted this arrangement using pinecones and paint! How beautiful!



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

Birch Buddies afterschool program ~ PAINT BY NUMBER! the Northern Lights session, wrapped up this week with glorious results! Another paint by number session is coming soon!

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



🔥 It's not too early to be thinking about Campsite Kids - several inquiries from summer visitors have been made already. This K-5 program is unique and incredibly popular! Registration will start in April, as this program is on FIRE! 🔥 <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Campsite-Kids>





Due to the two snow days this past week, the school calendar has been revised.

There will now be school/Saplings on:

- Friday, March 13 - School is on!
- Friday, May 1 - School is on!

You can find the revised calendar on the school website:

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/>

The last Birch Buddies ~ SKATE! afterschool program was this week! Thanks so much to everyone that registered and we look forward to next winter when Birch Buddies ~ SKATE! makes a return!

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



Students have been enjoying all of the “blizzard” snow!



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*

The Seedlings learned about dinosaurs this week. We had a lot of fun singing familiar tunes with new words while stomping, roaring, and wagging our tails like dinosaurs.

Our sensory table became a dinosaur excavation site. The table was filled with lava rocks (dried black beans) and a variety of plastic dinosaurs such as the tyrannosaurus rex, stegosaurus, dimetrodon, and much more! The Seedlings enjoyed digging through the rocks to see what dinosaurs they could find.

Our morning activities included a dinosaur match game. During the game the Seedlings were handed a picture of a dinosaur and they had to find the matching picture on the table and lay their dinosaur on top. The Seedlings also worked on 2 piece dinosaur puzzles that required them to match the head of the dinosaur to the correct tail. We also worked on color names and recognition by placing a dinosaur on the matching color sheet. The Seedlings were able to choose between different dinosaur coloring sheets and then colored with markers to work on their pencil grip and fine motor skills.



We read both fiction and nonfiction books about dinosaurs during our morning snack time. The Seedlings particularly enjoyed *How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?* and *How Do Dinosaurs Say I'm Mad* by Jane Yolen.

Have a good weekend!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

A JaZZy little lesson commemorating Black History Month was initiated for the beginning of the week. The Saplings listened to jazz music and read about Louis Armstrong "Satchmo" and Ella Fitzgerald. They investigated jazz music, a style built on imagination and teamwork along with the impact on various Disney songs. They learned that jazz musicians often make up their music as they go, called improvisation. Saplings identified the sounds of the saxophone, trumpet, piano, double bass, and drums. A blast was had by all using "nonsense" syllables like *shoo-be-doo* to sing along to the beat as they discovered the concept of Scat singing. In an artistic expression of jazz, Saplings designed a collage, tearing paper and embedding instruments and musical elements while immersed in jazz music. Tuesday's art focused on directed drawing, enabling the Saplings to refine their figure drawing skills through a jazz dancer self-portrait.



Wednesday Saplings delved into the Underground Railroad. An obstacle course was created to mimic the treacherous path from south to north. Saplings were blindfolded to recreate the darkness of night, and a "conductor" escorted them through the course. This activity encouraged teamwork and cooperation. For math and art, Saplings explored the significance of quilt patterns in the Underground Railroad and their role in conveying hidden messages. They then collaborated on a paper Freedom Quilt project, contributing individual pattern squares to a larger class quilt, each symbolizing a different Underground Railroad code. Additionally, Saplings practiced recognizing uppercase and lowercase letter Q and developed letter Q discrimination skills.

The rest of the week Saplings empowered themselves with dental health awareness, as February is Dental Health Month. They participated in various manipulative activities designed to promote healthy and happy teeth including brushing and flossing lego teeth, comparing and measuring

toothbrushes, counting teeth, making patterns, and sequencing sizes. Letter and word recognition exercises focused on T for teeth, B for brush, and D for dentist. They continued working on writing and their pincer grip with a variety of prewriting practice line tracings from the toothbrush to the tooth.

During art they imaginatively flossed teeth with paint and developed their own special toothpaste (puffy paint) to brush our teeth, exploring our creativity. Saplings also perfected their cutting and gluing skills by creating a monster mouth full of teeth.

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

This week, Kindergarten learned about the letter sound TH! They have been busy learning 6 new sight words a week for the last 3 weeks. We are practicing blending words and reading every day. We are getting better at fluency and understanding. Keep practicing at home! 1<sup>st</sup> grade read a story, "Rabbit's Tale," that is similar to Chicken Little. We used those two stories to practice comparing and contrasting. We practice identifying the parts of a story. We also learned about dialogue. In math, Kindergarten is finishing a unit about 3d shapes and adding and subtracting. 1<sup>st</sup> grade started a unit about graphs!

K/1 practiced social and emotional learning this week! Our subject was all about teamwork and belonging. We practiced conversations with a game we called 'convo catch.' We practiced taking turns asking questions, and answering. We also played team games and practiced good sportsmanship and teamwork. K/1 loves learning about emotions and practicing our social skills!

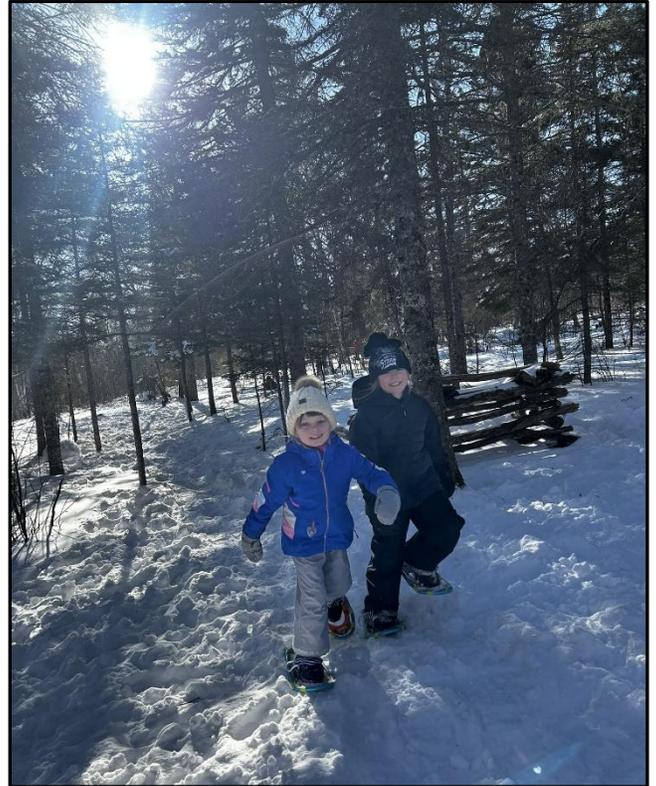
Our play this week was all about paper mâché! We are creating a pinata for Walter's birthday next week. Creativity was sparked with lots of ideas of how to celebrate Walter, and we decided to create a giant pinata tennis ball. Our plan is to fill it with tennis balls and treats for him. Stay tuned for how it looks and turns out next week!

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

We are back with a normal week and getting back into a routine. Everyone has lots of energy and excitement about being back at school. We have been working on our biography research project and writing a 5 paragraph essay. This has been the highlight of most students' week even though it is hard work. Next week, we will finish our final drafts and start our timelines then powerpoints. We explored the Australian artist Marc Chagall and did a fun art project by him. He is known for his whimsical dreamlike art and I wanted students to see the different possibilities that they have with their creativity. I sent in their book to be published this week! This was wonderful and so exciting for students as it was a ton of work. We spent our Friday afternoon playing outside and enjoying the snow some more! Lastly, I will be doing conferences March 9th through March 19th. This will allow time for everyone to meet with me for a spring conference so please be on the lookout for that email with a signup link.



In reading, we explored a nonfiction passage about penguin chicks then followed up with passages about more penguins. We used this passage to explore adverbs, answer questions about the passage, and have a vocabulary lesson. Students also did this with a nonfiction passage about grasslands that was paired with a fiction passage about prairies. We worked on the word part script and how to create words with this word part. In phonics, students focused on the sound /or/ and the correct spellings of this sound pattern.

I have adjusted math groups to incorporate review opportunities so this was an exciting switch up. We reviewed time and money this week. Some groups worked on telling time and others worked on elapsed time. Both groups worked on making change and utilizing correct denominations to give money back. We will continue to work on review and target areas throughout the spring to prepare for spring standardized testing.

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

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

It has been a busy week in our classroom including a highlight of our “crafternoon” where we celebrated our classroom responsibility by creating crafts and projects. Students spent time with each other creating art, knitting, crocheting, making hamster mazes, coding robots, making melty bead art and so much more. Setting time aside to showcase a variety of talents made for a great afternoon.

In math we have completed our second fractions unit and took our final assessment on Thursday. These tests will be sent home next week for you to take a look at. In our next unit we will work on converting fractions and mixed numbers to decimals and percents. We used a hands-on activity called “Rational Number Project” to develop a core understanding of what a decimal is and how closely it is related to fractions.

In reading and social studies we have wrapped up our study on the American Revolution and have begun our final 13 colonies project. Students are divided into the three colonial regions including the New England, Middle and Southern Colonies. Students are learning about their own region and then will teach their classmates next week. We make sure to spend time remembering that the Native Americans were on that land for hundreds of years prior to the European colonists and what conflicts that must have caused.

In writing we are practicing writing summaries for fiction text as well as responding to creative writing prompts using a writing response called “musical chairs”. Ask your child about it! This gives an authentic reason for writing and provides students immediate feedback from their peers about their creative ideas!

We wrapped up our week with some ice time on Friday afternoon! We will continue to get out and ski, skate and snowshoe as much as we can during these final weeks of winter!

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