

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

March 6, 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*

It was a great (and full) week of school, this first week of March, with the highlight being a celebration of Walter, our school therapy dog in training. Not only did he turn 1 on Wednesday, which is cause for celebration alone, but we celebrated just because he is here and adds so much to our school days - we didn't know what we were missing until he entered our doors. We are truly thankful that he is a part of Birch Grove!

We are fast approaching spring break, and have much to do before then. Please remember to sign up for conferences, as they take place before the break. All families have been contacted by teachers with virtual, or in person options, as well as a variety of sign up days and times. Be sure to schedule and keep your appointment, and let your child's teacher know how much you appreciate them! Thank you!



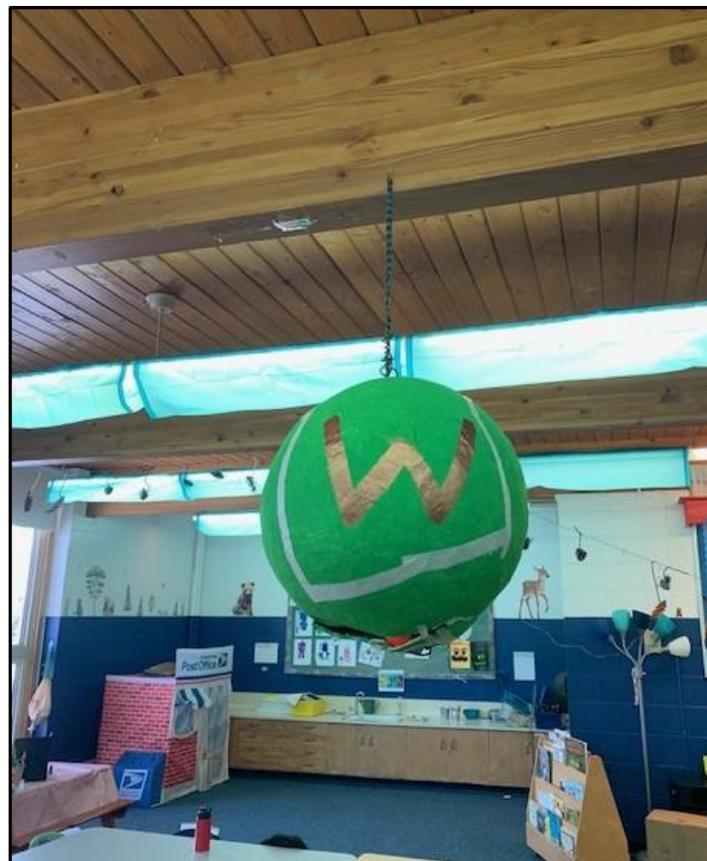
The start of another round of afterschool Birch Buddies ~ Beading! was enjoyed by all! The children were so proud of themselves learning a new hobby and following directions with a pattern. Some of the older ones got the hang of it right away and were more than willing to assist the younger ones. 😊
Beautiful little creations! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/birch-buddies>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.
[Facebook](#)



K/1 created a giant paper mache tennis ball piñata for Walter's birthday! They built the mold around an exercise ball putting many layers of paper on it, painted it using their own blend to create neon green, and engineered a trap door for Walter to be able to tug it open. K/1 was proud to share it with Walter and the rest of the school at Walter's birthday party!



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

The March hot lunch menu is posted on the school website at:
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/School-Lunches>
March looks yummy!



School Board Elections

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

at the regular school board meeting at 4:00

Seats Up:

Judy Motschenbacher: running unopposed

Mary VanDoren: running unopposed

Two seats remain open on the board.

One ballot will be sent to each BGCS family, staff and employee.

Please send ballots back to Birch Grove by Monday, April 20.



Front row: Judy Motschenbacher, Skip Lamb.

Back row: Sara Knottski, Mary VanDoren,
Sarena Crowley.

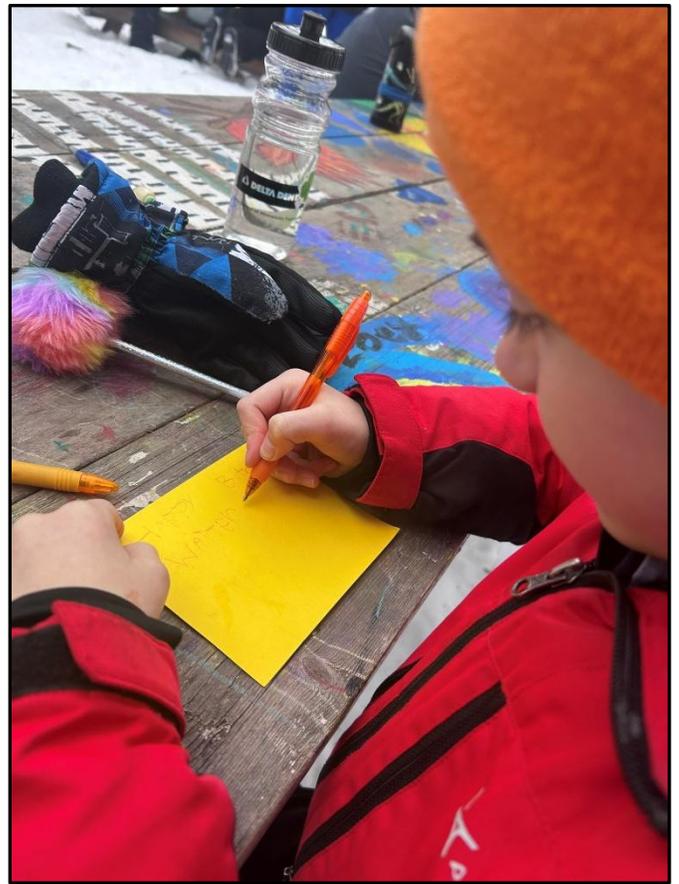
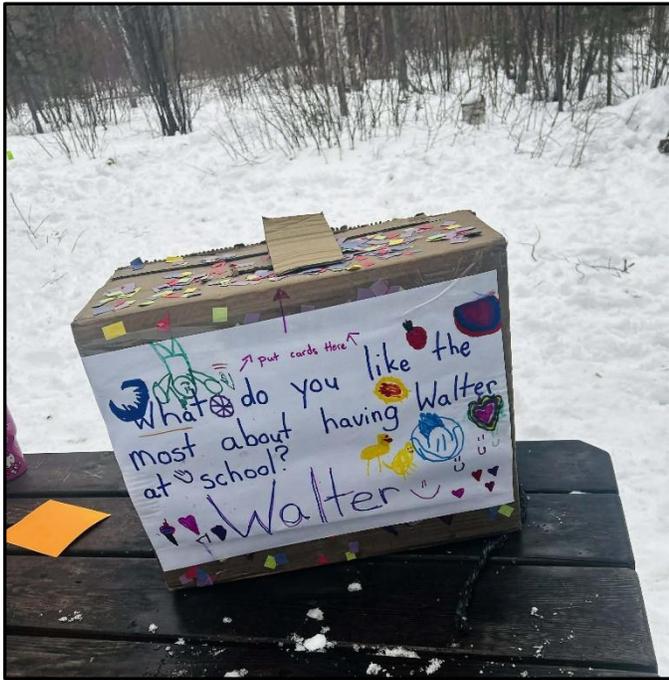
For more board or election information go to:

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/school-board>

Event of the Week! ~ Walter's First Birthday Party!

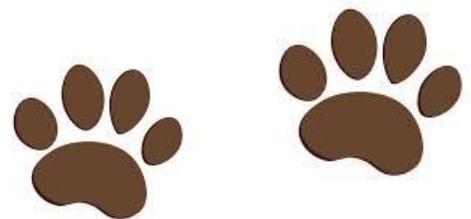
Walter, our school therapy dog-in-training, celebrated his 1st birthday at Birch Grove! Walter celebrated with his favorite people, students, and with his favorite things. He tugged opened a giant tennis ball piñata to find a rainfall of tennis balls - he was not the only one excited about this! (You can see a video on the school Facebook page.) Students enjoyed roasting hot dogs over a bonfire, taking silly pictures in a 'photo booth', sled races around the camp, and writing notes to Walter about all the hard work he does. Happy birthday, Walter!



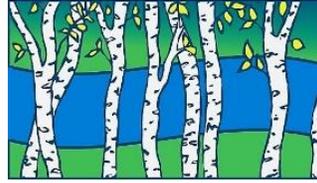


HAPPY BIRTHDAY





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](#)



From Ms. Emily VanDoren

Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

Our theme for this week was Dr. Seuss to celebrate his birthday on March 2nd. We read several of Dr. Seuss' books including *One Fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish* as well as *The Cat in the Hat*, *Fox in Socks*, *Wacky Wednesday*, and *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?*

The sensory table was set up with felt fish bowls and felt fish cut outs. While playing in the sensory table, the Seedlings practiced sharing, counting, and color identification. We also worked on sorting the fish by colors.

The Seedlings worked on their fine motor skills by painting a hat cut out with red paint. This activity also worked on their hand eye coordination as they dipped their paintbrush into the paint and then back to their hat. They also worked on their prewriting skills by tracing a line that led the Lorax to a Truffula tree using a dry erase marker. We ended our week with various Dr. Seuss coloring sheets that the Seedlings colored with crayons to work on their pencil grip.



Together as a group, we practiced color recognition and pattern matching by matching together paper socks. We also did four piece puzzles of different characters that are found in the Dr. Seuss books. A favorite activity of all the Seedlings was trying to make the different sounds that we read about in *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?*
Have a good weekend!

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From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

The Seussville Saplings room celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday with a Seusstastic week, kicking off with a *Cat in the Hat* themed pink slime activity. The sensory-rich experience developed fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and tactile exploration through the act of manipulating the gooey substance. Alphabet stamps added to the pink slime facilitated letter recognition. Red lines painted on white hats highlighted patterns and repetition, emulating the iconic *Cat in the Hat*, for an art project.

Following a reading of *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish* on Tuesday, Dr. Seuss-inspired fish designs were created, accompanied by a goldfish counting activity for snack. The Saplings were captivated by the story of *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, which narrates King Derwin's desire for novelty. Seeking to transcend the monotony of rain, sunshine, fog and snow, he enlists his royal magicians to create an extraordinary occurrence. The outcome is a storm of sticky green goo, referred to as Oobleck, which subsequently brings devastation to his kingdom.

King Bartholomew resolves the Oobleck crisis by taking responsibility and apologizing with a sincere "I'm sorry". Our experiment in creating Oobleck yielded positive results. Observations revealed that Oobleck behaved like a solid when prodded, struck, or lifted, whereas it exhibited liquid properties when poured or left undisturbed. Furthermore, when squeezed, Oobleck's viscosity increased, prompting a transformation from a liquid to a solid state.



Wednesday commenced with our reading of *Wacky Wednesday*, which involved identifying the comical discrepancies on each page, thereby enhancing the Saplings' observational skills. We also read *There's a Wocket in my Pocket*, which exemplifies a classic Dr. Seuss theme of self-sufficiency and

confidence. For art, we utilized our manipulative skills by sewing a pocket and placing a wocket inside. For lunch, we sampled green eggs while reading *Green Eggs and Ham*.

On Thursday, the Saplings rounded out the week with a read-aloud of *Daisy-Head Mayzie*, paired with a writing activity that invited students to contemplate their response if a daisy were to sprout on their head. Building on our reading of *The King's Stilts*, which underscores the importance of balancing work and play, we proceeded to practice stilt-walking through the flooded area to refine our large motor skills.

We wrapped up the week by creating puppets and practicing rhyming words, tongue twisters, and engaging language, emphasizing the lightheartedness of *Fox in Sox* while focusing on pronunciation and articulation skills through puppetry. All week a multitude of math and manipulative sensory activities incorporating Dr. Seuss themes provided learning opportunities in counting correlation and letter recognition.

Next Thursday, March 12th we will have a Llama Llama Red Pajama day!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**

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

This past week has been all about Walter and his birthday party! K/1 planned and organized Walter's party for the whole school. Our big project for the party was a giant paper mâché tennis ball that we made, painted, and engineered a trap door on the bottom. We were overly thrilled when Walter pulled the string and the trap door opened with a rainfall of tennis balls and dog treats. Happy birthday to our beloved Therapy Dog!

This week, Kindergarten practiced retelling stories and finding the characters, settings, and important details of the story. We read "If you Give a Moose a Muffin" then retold the story using felt picture and label pieces. The first graders learned about drawing conclusions and finding the beginning, middle, and end of stories. We also practice reading words with bossy r and continued to work on fluency with blends and long vowels.

In math, we are learning about data and graphing. Kindergarten, 1st-grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd graded participated in class polls about our



favorite things. We put our information we collected and put it in bar and pictographs. This led to lots of math talk about the graphs! We compared and contrasted, counted, and identified what was our most favorite!

Have a great weekend!

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From Ms. Samantha Forster

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

This week has been filled with lots of warm weather and excitement! We were lucky enough to celebrate Walter's first birthday with a party and loads of fun activities. We did some art related to the Australian Aboriginals. This had so many fun colors to get our mind ready for spring. We have been working hard on our biography project with most students finishing writing and starting slideshows. Thank you everyone for signing up for conferences in the next two weeks! Please reach out with any questions regarding this. I will be emailing links and attachments if you selected a virtual meeting.



In reading, the third graders focused on a nonfiction article about migration patterns of animals and followed that test prep activity on collecting text evidence on monarch butterflies. Second graders focused on a fictional story about new friends, highlighting character traits and conflicting feelings. We worked on the word part "script" and how that relates to writing words. Lastly, we worked on blending words that have a consonant blend at the beginning and ending of words.

In math, everyone focused on graphs. We started with bar graphs then moved into pictographs and line graphs. This was differentiated per grade level and individual student need. I focused a lot on questions related to the graphs as this is the hardest part of graphs. Students all did very well and enjoyed this review.

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## From Ms. Stacy Coronis

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

Greetings 4/5 families! I would like to share some amazing things happening in our classroom! During our student led daily Morning Meetings the students greet each other in a language (right now we are using the ASL “good morning” sign thanks to Ms. Cheyenne!) and we have used Spanish, Ojibway, German, Japanese and Pig Latin. Student leaders invite the class to participate by reading the daily schedule and learning targets, facilitating a group discussion on a daily prompt, inviting each other to share something about their life on each students’ sharing day, and asking each other questions to learn more. This meeting format is a key component of the Responsive Classroom philosophy which empowers students to interact socially each day in a respectful and caring manner. We sit in a circle, listen to the student leaders, learn about each other by sharing the celebrations as well as the hard times and LOVE having Walter join us for snuggles. In addition to Morning Meeting, we also finish up each day with a Closing Circle to reflect on the day using an interactive “fist to five” activity and then sharing one of the Three A’s; A-ha, Apology or Acknowledging a classmate for a kind act. These two community building activities are my favorite times of the day and over the last few weeks I have been so impressed by the maturity and cohesiveness that I have witnessed.



In math students are learning all about decimals. Students can now read, write, draw and compare decimals to the thousandths place as well as convert fractions and mixed numbers to decimals. After our daily lesson, independent practice and IXL skills, the students have a chance to practice these skills in a Decimal War game. Math games have the power to cement learning in a fun and interactive way. During reading students are working with differentiated texts to practice comprehension using the PRESTO strategy. Ask your child what the letters represent and how it helps them as a reader. Another compliment I would like to share is how many chapter books students are completing each week. The growth in all students since fall is impressive and it warms my heart to see our class enjoying the books that they self-select and develop a love of reading. In Social Studies we are wrapping up our study on the 13 Colonies and the American Revolution by using a jigsaw method of cooperative work. Students work in a small group to learn about their assigned colony, New England, Middle and Southern, and then next week we will mix up groups and students will learn about the other two colonial regions from a classmate. In addition to spelling and grammar, we started a fun way of responding to a creative prompt by writing for 10 minutes while listening to classical music, and then getting up and moving to other music genres and playing musical chairs. When the music stops kids run to the nearest table spot and read a classmate's entry and respond back to them. This interactive method gives kids a fun way to share their writing with the class and get immediate feedback.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has signed up for a conference. If you haven't signed up for one yet, use this link to choose a time that works best for you to meet either online or in person. Thank you!

[CORONIS CONFERENCE LINK](#)

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