

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

May 15, 2026

Tuesday, May 19 ~ School Board Meeting at 4pm

Tuesday-Thursday, May 19-21 ~ North House Folk School for 4/5

Monday, May 25 ~ No School - Memorial Day

Wednesday, May 27 ~ K-5 Field Trip to Grand Marais

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

Friday, May 29 ~ End of Year 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 has been a quiet week here at Birch Grove with 2-5th graders gone most of the week to the annual 3-day, 2-night trip to Wolf Ridge. This long awaited trip is the start of the end of the school year, and it gets pretty busy from here on out. Please be sure to check the events above as we assign special activities to different days (like the Tickets To Treasure drawing, COLOR! Day, and other year end activities). I can't wait for the Wolf Ridgers to return so that I can hear all of the adventures had! 😊





Hot Lunch Menu Change for Next Week

Next week, the Thursday and Friday lunch menus will be switched due to the 4/5 field trip to North House Folk School. We want to make sure that Aliyah is here for her menu choice.

Thursday, May 21: Spaghetti w/Marinara, Breadstick, Caesar Salad, and Fruit

Friday, May 22 ~ 5th Grader Aliyah's Choice: Orange Chicken, Rice, Yogurt and Pineapple

15th Annual Gala for the Grove! ~ TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE!

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 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!

For more information go to:

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

Direct Link to Tickets:

[Gala for the Grove 2026 Ticket Order Form](#)



Birch Buddies ~ HIKE! Spring session afterschool program to Dyers Lake was refreshing! Rocks, water, trees, sky, friends (including man's best friend) all packed into a hike was a good remedy for spring fever! Hike the North Shore! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/birch-buddies>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

Birch Buddies ~ Art! with Pam! afterschool program ventured out into their own nature backyard to collect twigs and sticks, then headed back in to get cracking on their creative twig creations. 🐱🐱🐱

Yes, they do use hot glue!

✔️ Yes, they know how to be safe with a hot glue gun.

? Why? Because they have been given ample opportunities to explore risk. They have a solid understanding of how to be safe.

🔥 They have been using hot glue on many projects, with various amounts of coaching and teamwork.

⚠️ They know exactly where NOT to touch the hot glue gun itself, as well as how to be cautious with the glue until it's dry.

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



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)



K/1 and 2/3 joined together to participate in two weeks of project-based STEAM activities. Students were split into two groups, and each group had the opportunity to engage with STEAM Legos and coding Finch robots. For the Lego project, students chose to build a movable hockey player or push cars. The lesson goal was the same for both projects: to learn about forces, friction, and gravity, and to utilize problem-solving skills while collaborating with peers. Students experimented with force and friction by launching their puck or car across different surfaces and using different forces. A lot of fun and learning were achieved! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/>



K/1 and 2/3 worked together on coding Finch robots! Students participated in either shape and spirograph coding or coding to navigate a maze. Students who worked on the maze were required to create a track and experiment with coding to get our Finch robots to complete the maze. Students creating shapes needed to know the attributes of shapes and be able to translate that into code. For both projects, students needed to measure distance, angles, and create a sequence of codes, all while working with peers and engaging in engineering thinking. <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)



End of Year Celebration is on Friday, May 29 and families are invited to celebrate with us! The End of Year Celebration will start at 10:30, with early release at 12:00. Please take your child home at 12:00 or make pick up arrangements for your child, as there will be no busing available at the end of the school day, ending at noon. Please let us know if this is an issue for you as we may be able to help. Thank you!

Please remember that there are 2 more days of school after the celebration: Monday and Tuesday, June 1 & 2. This is due to the snow days we had. These days are planned for pure FUN!

Extra sleep is really important these final weeks of school! Please see that your child is well rested for the fun events and activities that we have coming up ~ it will make for a better end of the school year for everyone! 😊

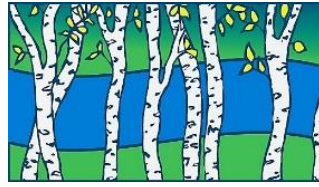


North House Folk School Field Trip for 4/5

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday May 19-21

Permission slips were emailed home and hard copies will be sent after Wolf Ridge Friday or Monday (depending on how your child was transported home). PLEASE turn in signed forms asap. Thank you!

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](#)



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**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

This week the Seedlings learned about farm animals. Our sensory table was filled with dried corn, scoops, cups, and jars. The wall near the table was decorated with different farm animals that the Seedlings practiced naming as well as creating the different sounds the animals make. We read books that focused on farms and the animals that may live on farms.

The activities this week included a prewriting practice sheet that required the older Seedlings to trace a line from the farmer to an animal using a dry erase marker. This helped work their fine motor muscles as well as their pencil grip. We also worked together to match together animal pictures, and to solve various animal puzzles. We practiced counting animals on cards and worked on number recognition.

We sang "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" throughout the week and added to the fun by using animal face masks to turn ourselves into horses, cows, pigs, and chickens. The Seedlings worked on their fine motor skills by coloring animal and farmyard pictures and also used foam stamps to create their own farmyard scene.



As a reminder, we will be closed on Monday May 25th for Memorial Day. The last day of the school year Seedlings program will be on Thursday May 28th. We will be closed the first week of June and our summer Seedlings program will open on Monday June 8th.

Have a good weekend!

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From Ms. Pam Holm

Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

Life in and Around Pond was Sapling's theme for the week, focused on pond life, aiming to foster an appreciation for nature. Our exploration encompassed a range of species, including frogs, salamanders, blue heron, ducks, turtles, lily pads, and cattails. The sensory bin was reimagined as a pond filled with stuffed animals. In the science area, we examined the life cycle of frogs, using plastic frogs and tadpoles, and manipulative tongs to facilitate feeding.



Saplings explored the life cycle of a frog on Monday, covering the stages of egg, tadpole, froglet, and adult, and learned that frogs are amphibians dependent on clean water to live. They practiced the letter 'F' for Frog, measured their jumps, and painted a lily pad pond for their frog.

The Saplings conducted an in-depth study of salamanders on Tuesday, discovering that they are amphibians characterized by their smooth, wet skin, which distinguishes them from dry, scaly reptiles. They learned that salamanders absorb water and sometimes breathe directly through their sensitive skin. Interestingly, they possess the unique ability to safely detach their tails to evade predators and subsequently regrow a new one. As a creative activity, each Sapling designed a colorful native salamander using a template to color.

Wednesday was all about the Great Blue Heron! Saplings learned that these magnificent wading birds love to stand still like statues in shallow water while waiting patiently to catch their food. Saplings practiced their balance and patience by playing "Freeze Like a Heron". Then they created their own painted herons complete with long orange legs.

Thursday Saplings dove into an exploration of two local turtle species, the vibrant Painted Turtle and the powerful Snapping Turtle. They learned the painted turtles use the sun's warmth to fuel up for the day. They discovered the prehistoric giant snapping turtle can grow very large and have a tiny

bottom shell, long spiked tails, and strong jaws to catch food underwater. Saplings participated in a large motor crawl, trying not to shed their shell. As a creative conclusion they designed their own paper plate painted turtle masterpieces, decorating the edges with red and yellow patterns to match real wild turtles.

Friday Saplings loved learning about Mallard ducks, observing their bright colors, and practicing their very best duck waddles and quacks. Even mastering the game of *Duck, Duck, Grey Duck*. They learned a father duck is a drake and a mother duck is a hen. They also learned that Mallards can sleep with one eye open to watch for predators! Sapling artists used green, brown, and blue tissue paper to create beautiful male and female mallard wings.

Throughout the week Saplings refined their math skills through exercises of counting with 1:1 correspondence using frogs on lily pads and ducks, categorizing pond life, and recognizing numbers by stacking turtles. Symmetry was explored using pattern blocks to create mirrored designs on turtle shells. Literacy focused on identifying words in a story, finding what is different in a picture, along with frogs on a log letter recognition and pond letter mats.

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1st Grade Elementary Teacher

Ms. Silence subbed for Ms. Knottski, who went on the Wolf Ridge trip with 2-5. Thanks for stepping in, Ms. Silence!

It has been so much fun to be back in the classroom this week! Our days have gone by both slow and fast! Ms. Knottski left us some double digit addition to work, but we kept losing track of the new ten! To fix this, we "bundled" over 2,000 popsicle sticks to both see and feel where that 10 comes from and goes during math. Having this visual memory will help them remember it next year when they have to "un-bundle" a 10 to subtract.

In reading we read a story called Winners Never Quit by Mia Hamm. We identified the main idea and found supporting details while working as a team. We also practiced some games, that had losing, which was hard, but then we remembered "Winners never quit." In phonics we looked for long vowel sounds in our reading, we practiced finding open-ended vowels like "she", magic e as in "hike", and vowel teams as in "team." We also learned a new rhyme/song:



When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking.

Lastly, we did my favorite thing of all and cooked! I love cooking with kids and teaching through food! They have fun, I have fun, and we get to EAT! This week we made two lotions (with varying success), our own rice crispy treat, banana pops, branded potatoes, AND brownies in a cup.

Good thing we had 3 days to do everything, we needed it! ~ Ms. Silence

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

2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher

2nd and 3rd graders were at Wolf Ridge this week for the annual 3-day, 2-night adventure! Check our school Facebook page for pictures. Highlights of the adventure will also be in next week's newsletter.



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From Ms. Stacy Coronis

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

4th and 5th graders were at Wolf Ridge this week for the annual 3-day, 2-night adventure! Check our school Facebook page for pictures. Highlights of the adventure will also be in next week's newsletter.



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