Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

November 5, 2026

Monday, November 9 - Friday, November 13 ~ Parent-Teacher Conferences
Tuesday, November 17 ~ School Board Meeting at 4pm
Wednesday – Friday, November 25-27 ~ Thanksgiving Break
Tuesday, December 15 ~ Incredible Reindeer Musical Shows at 1pm and 6pm
Monday, December 21–January 3 ~ Winter Break – No School

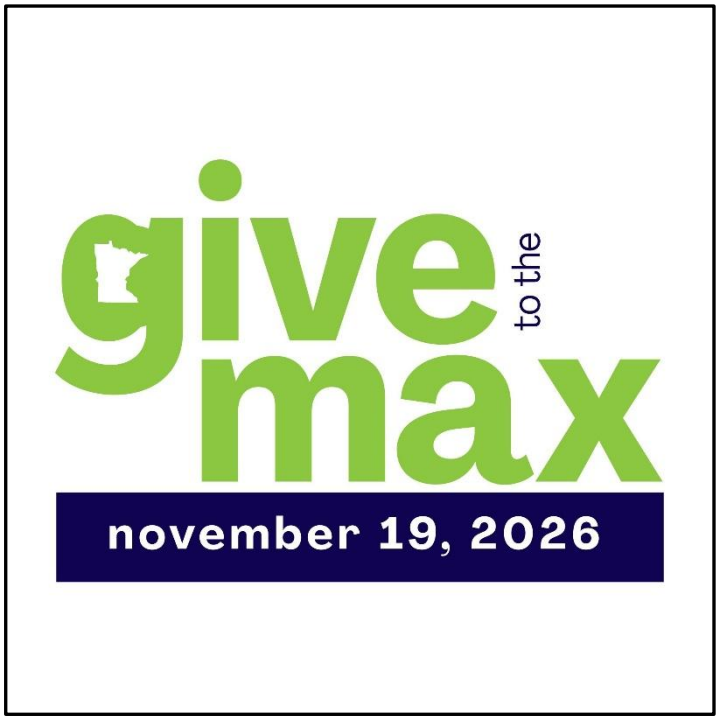
Mission Statement:
Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting to prepare students to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners.

From Ms. Diane Blanchette:
School Director, Birch Grove Community School
Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service

We have two months of school under our belt now and K-5 conferences are here next week! Please be sure to schedule a time to visit with your child's teacher. We look forward to seeing all of you!

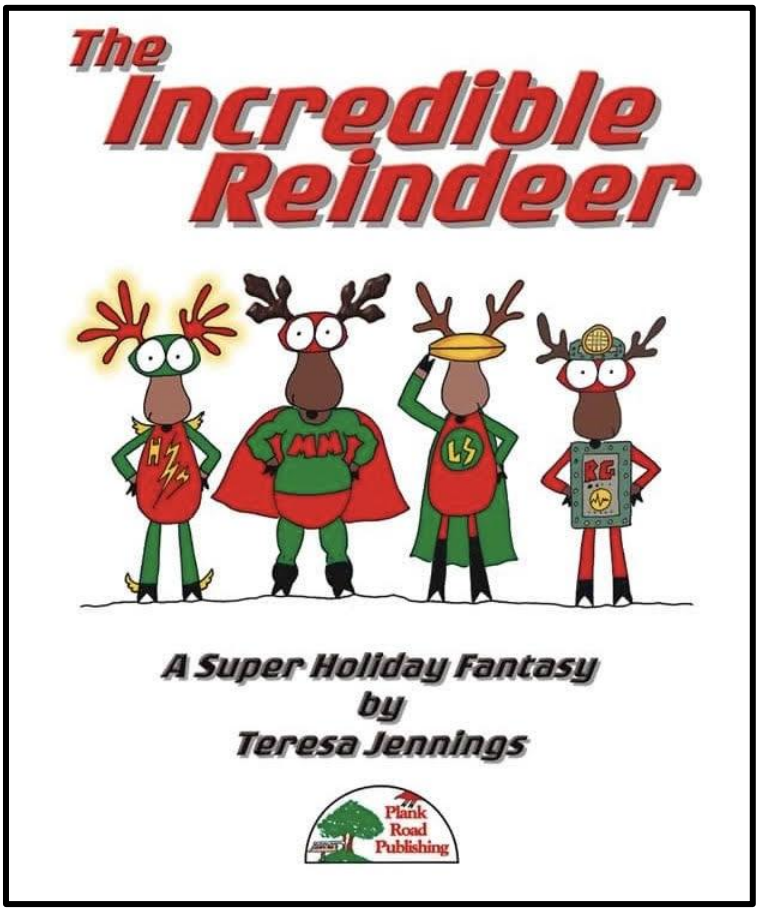
This annual musical has been selected and parts given out, with the biggest parts going to 4th and 5th graders, as always. Practice will start next week and shows are scheduled for Tuesday, December 15th with an afternoon and evening performance. The shows are open to the public, so feel free to invite others to see what I am sure will be another amazing show!

With the weather cooling off, please remember to send appropriate outdoor wear for your child. We go outside in all but the most extreme weather, so make sure your child is ready for it. There are clothing items in the entry of the building that are free for the taking!





Parent-Teacher conferences are next week: Monday, November 9 – Friday, November 13. Each classroom teacher will reach out with a sign up link and each teacher schedule will be different. Please sign up and keep your appointment. Please bring your knowledge of your child to share with teachers, as you know them best. We strive to work with parents cooperatively to ensure academic, social and emotional growth throughout the school year. We look forward to meeting with you all!



Mark your calendar for this year's K-5 musical *The Incredible Reindeer*!
2 shows will be performed on
Tuesday, December 15
at 1:00pm & 6:00pm

If you know that your child will be absent from either the afternoon or evening show on Tuesday, December 15, please contact Gayle Grinnell, play leader, so that we can assign/reassign a part that will not affect the play. Otherwise, we expect all students to be present for both performances. Please see that your child attends so as not to negatively affect the show. Thanks in advance.
gayle.grinnellbgcs@gmail.com

Many thanks to these Tofte businesses that hosted our K-5 and Saplings Halloween parade! The Grand Marais State Bank, Tofte Ranger Station/forest service, AmericInn and Circle K! Check out the pics of these happy children!



















More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

Facebook

K/1 collected, painted, tied, strung, wrapped, and glued natural materials together to make a classroom mobile! This art project involved a lot of fine motor skills, collaboration, and immersion in the natural world. You can find nature both inside and outside at Birch Grove!



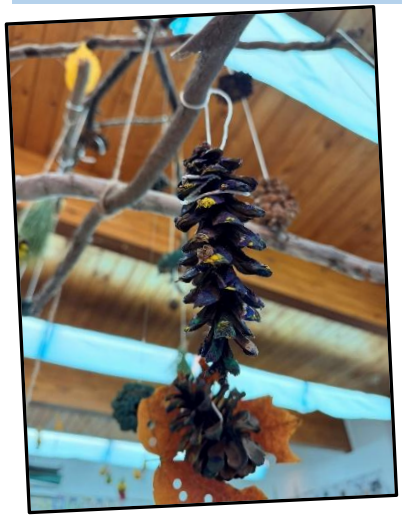




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Saplings had a "Souper" day, despite the rainy weather! 🥣🌧️
Our Saplings have been learning all about where food comes from. After reading Stone Soup, everyone worked together to wash, chop, and prep the veggies—putting those excellent fine motor skills to work! 🥔🥕🍅🫛
During the process, we:
🔢Practiced counting our ingredients
🌱Talked about different plant parts
👀Watched our warm, delicious homemade vegetable soup bubble away
The best part? Enjoying every single spoonful together. Yum! 😋
https://www.birchgroveschool.com/saplings-program





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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
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From Ms. Emily VanDoren
Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service



This week our theme was bears, with a special focus on the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr. and illustrated by Eric Carle. With the time change this week, we had a more fluid routine that allowed for changes as needed based on the needs of the Seedlings.

We read *Brown Bear* during our morning circle and the Seedlings worked to identify the colors of the animals as well as naming the animals. After we read the book, we worked together as a group to put together two-piece puzzles to create cards for all the animals of the book. This week the Seedlings also participated in an activity that required them to look through a bin to find the correct animal card to place it on a velcro board to create the sequence of the book. In addition to working on literacy skills, this activity also worked on their fine motor skills as they had to pick up very small cards to place on their velcro board.

We also read *About a Bear* by Holly Surplice that showed a bear going through different moods (happy, sad, bored, glad) and different activities with friends. This was a great book to help the Seedlings identify emotions based on facial expressions and body language. During snack time, we read the book *Share, Big Bear, Share* by Maureen Wright. This book does a great job of explaining the importance of sharing with friends.
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This rainy week kept us inside so we made use of the gym for our gross motor play. When we play in the gym, we work on throwing, catching, and kicking skills. We also play a variety of games that work on listening skills such as “Red Light, Green Light” and “Simon Says”.

We closed out our week by creating our very own Brown Bear masks out of paper plates so the Seedlings can use their imagination and expand their play at home. The Seedlings also colored a picture of a bear using crayons to work their fine motor skills.

Have a great weekend!

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From Ms. Pam Holm
Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

The *Fall Harvest* theme in Saplings this week served as a wonderful time to learn where our food comes from, how farmers and the land work together. The week started off with Saplings discovering how scarecrows help farmers watch over the fields. They then created their very own scarecrows, practicing color recognition, step-by-step sequencing, and gluing techniques.



Tuesday was filled with harvest-themed stories and silly songs. For art, they crafted fun, 3D hay shocks—a wonderful hands-on activity that helped strengthen their fine motor dexterity and pincer grasp.

On Wednesday Saplings had a "Souper" day, despite the rainy weather! After reading *Stone Soup* they worked together to wash, chop, and prep the veggies—putting those excellent fine motor skills to work! During the process, they practiced counting out the ingredients, talked about different plant parts and watched the warm, delicious homemade vegetable soup bubble away. The best part? Enjoying every single spoonful together.

Saplings were bustling with farmyard fun as they explored the classic tale of *The Little Red Hen*. We focused on story elements, identifying the main character and the farm setting. They then practiced retelling the story using their handmade Little Red Hen puppets and sequencing cards to remember the beginning, middle, and end. The repetitive phrases in the tale helped them join in the reading and build early language skills. This story also sparked important conversations about feelings and
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friendships. We talked about how the Little Red Hen might have felt when her friends refused to help, and how we can be good friends by working together in our classroom.

To wrap up our week, Saplings will discover the unique, curved cornucopia. We will learn how this "horn of plenty" is a special symbol of harvest, abundance, and sharing what we have with others. It will be the perfect opportunity to practice fine motor skills as they fill their own cornucopias with colorful harvest items.

Throughout the week Saplings turned into little scientists by examining seeds and stalks using magnifying glasses, discussing how they grow. Special farm toys made an appearance as we talked about harvest time. They used measuring tools in sensory bins with "wheat" to practice counting and volume concepts. Sorting activities with colorful gourds, and matching games, they deepened their understanding of nature's cycles.

During circle time, they went on an exciting classroom hunt! The Saplings hunted for objects and toys starting with the S and H sounds. Afterward, they practiced building and tracing both uppercase and lowercase letters. Strengthening letter recognition and sound matching, building the vital foundation for future reading and comprehension skills.

Hands-on learning kept right on going at the math and manipulatives tables. The Saplings jumped into seed counting, puzzle sequencing, shadow matching, and color sorting challenges that kept their minds working and fingers moving!

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process by brainstorming ideas, writing a draft, publishing it, drawing an illustration, and sharing our writing. We were excited to present our poems to 2/3 and 4/5! In math, first graders are learning about missing parts in an equation. Kindergarteners are learning about numbers up to 20, shapes, and 5-groups. Both grades completed a unit test this week!

If you have yet to sign up for conferences, feel free to email me! Winter is approaching, and a few degrees colder, it will snow! Please make sure all outdoor gear is waterproof, and your student has a hat, mittens, snow pants, and a proper winter coat every day!

Have a great weekend!

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This week's math focus was all about adding and subtracting. We took what we learned about rounding last week and applied it to borrowing and regrouping. This class has great number sense and this was a quick skill they picked up on. Students were able to take their knowledge of adding and subtracting up to the million place value! They had so much fun with it. We will continue to build upon this skill before I focus on money, time, and fractions during the next part of the year.

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focused on writing 4/5 grade quality summaries using our daily read aloud story, Tales of a 4th Grade Nothing which ended with a hilarious twist. Ask your child about it!!

I look forward to meeting with you all next week to celebrate your child's growth at Birch Grove!

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