



Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Newsletter

April 8, 2021

Dates to Remember:

- Tuesday, April 13 Reading MCA Testing for 3rd -5th
- Wednesday, April 14 Math MCA Testing for 3rd -5th
- Thursday, April 15 Science MCA Testing for 5th Grade
- Monday, April 19 School Board Meeting at 5:30
- Tuesday, April 27 MAPS Reading Testing K-5th
- Wednesday, April 28 MAPS Math Testing K-5
- Thursday, April 29 MAPS Make-Up Testing
- Friday, April 30 No School

Mission Statement:

Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting allowing students to reach their potential, preparing them to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, lifelong learners.

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

We continue to work hard here at Birch Grove and we are gearing up for our year end assessments, both the MCA's and MAPS testing.

The MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments) will be conducted on Tuesday, April 13 (Reading 3rd-5th grade), Wednesday, April 14 (Math 3rd-5th grade), and Thursday, April 15 (Science 5th grade only). PLEASE be sure that if your child(ren) is/are testing that they get **EXTRA sleep the night before a testing day.** Breakfast will be offered to testing students each morning and testing snacks will also be offered each day. We will have a short "pep rally" for testing students as well! Please encourage your child to take their time during this test and to do their best work - this is an opportunity for them to show off their big brains!

Please remember to send boots! Rubber boot work well too! It is hard to go outside or in the woods were there are puddles and mud with students that only have tennis shoes. If your child needs boots, please let us know. Thank you!

I sent out a letter from the Cook County Public Health and Human Services about COVID saliva tests for families. They should arrive on Friday this week. I will send out tests to those that requested them on Monday next week, so check backpacks. I send in staff saliva test every other Tuesday. If you want, I can send your completed tests along with our UPS pick up. Please send completed tests in a plastic baggie, and I will add these to our pick up. Tuesday pick-up days are:

- Tuesday, April 13
- Tuesday, April 27
- Tuesday, May 11
- Tuesday, May 25

Also, please note that the school calendar says that the last day of school is Friday, May 28. We will have school on-site this day, so it is NOT a distance learning day. There is also an early release at 12:00. Considering this, the last Friday distance learning day is: May 21.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us:

birchgrove@boreal.org ~ Birch Grove Community School Email

bgcommunityservice@boreal.org ~ Community Service Email

218-663-0170 ~ School Phone

218-663-0170 ext. 26 Community Service Phone

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Birch Grove Community School and Community Service #4145

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**From Ms. Sheryl Martinson**

*Saplings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

The theme in the Sapling room this short week has been “Little Red Riding Hood.” The children and I read and watched a variety of versions. We discussed characters and character traits. We also noted similarities and differences between the versions. This was great a kicking off point for some work on sequencing. What comes first? What is in the middle? What comes at the end? We sequenced the Little Red Riding Hood story in a couple different ways. Then we moved on to 3- and 4-part story activity cards. This is just another step as the children push towards reading readiness. At the end of the week the children took turns dressing up and acting out the story of Little Red Riding Hood.

We sure enjoyed that too brief window of beautiful spring-like weather. Now it sounds like we will be dealing with rain for a while. Of course, we won't go outside in a downpour, but we will try to slip out between showers. So, thank you in advance for sending rain boots and any other outdoor gear that will keep your child comfortable when we go outside. After all, we all know, April showers bring May flowers!

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1 Grade Elementary Teacher

It was another busy week in K/1! In language arts, we discussed character traits. We identified the actions and what a characters say to identify traits about that character. In math, we practice shapes. Kindergarten practiced story problems and writing numbers up to 100. First grade practiced symmetry and fractions.

April showers brings May flowers! This week, we continued to observe the seasons change. We dodged the rain to observe and investigated the new buds and growth happening around us. We spotted flowers, buds on trees, grass greening, and sprouts coming up out of the ground.

Please continue to read and practice math facts at home! There is only 2 weeks until spring testing! The students are excited to get tickets for treasure. Be sure to keep logging all reading and math practice at home so that students can get tickets!

Enjoy the weekend,

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**From Ms. Sara Silence**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

These students have blown me away these past two weeks. I expected and planned for a bit of a slide due to spring break where we would have to review class expectations and once again build our stamina for working. What I found was that they came back ready to tackle whatever I put in front of them, and they are eager to help those around them do it too! This week we have been pulling double duty in math as we look at graphs together as a whole class, but also progress through our individual assignments in our groups. I've balanced a little of the work by putting some on the computer so they can play their way through some of the practice.

In reading we are really focusing on our informational text unit. We are reading a story about trees, how they work, and some different types. We will be doing much more with trees and plants in the coming weeks. For now, I can share a fun fact: Did you know some tree sap gives off a foul smell to keep animals away?

With just about 35 days left of school, we are eager to see that our "target scores" are almost at the high score level-when we have mastered all the standards for both second and third grade. It feels good to see how far we have come this year! Our class goal is to memorize our math facts. Please practice these in some way daily. You can use dice, flash cards, or just about any card game to add/subtract or multiply/divide. We are making progress in this area too, but it is one of the things we have not mastered YET!

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From Ms. Heidi Milner

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

What a whirlwind of a week in 4/5th grade! We have been busy getting ready for our MCA tests next week. Math has consisted of a smattering of different topics including measurement in the metric system, finding area of various shapes, and transformations of shapes. We've buckled down and stuck with some hard problems, and it's been so impressive to watch the growth of students! We are using more critical thinking, math talk, and problem-solving skills than ever before!

In reading, we have been working on a wide variety of topics. 4th grade analyzed characters, working to compare and contrast two characters that were campaigning in a school election. We had great conversations about what character traits make a good leader. In 5th grade, we talked about tone and style of a piece of writing. Students did a great job identifying the tone of a story and finding evidence to support their ideas.

This week, we've been working on organizing our writing project. We learned an advanced outline format to help us think through our writing assignments and worked together to organize all the facts and information we want to present in our writing. Students got the body of their essay organized, so next week we will be looking to work on the introduction and conclusion before we start writing.

4/5th grade also talked about organization as a life skill. We worked to fill out a Friday agenda to help students get organized with their work. Students made lists of their independent work to check off when they completed assignments and made a plan for when they were going to complete each part. They are doing a good job learning to get organized and ready for middle school!

We also talked about the importance of healthy sleep schedules. Students have been a bit tired lately, especially in the morning. Please work with your child(ren) to plan to get enough sleep each night so they are ready to go the next day! Having a routine of reading before bed is a great way to settle down and get ready for sleep (and is a great way to sneak in those 20 minutes of reading each night).

As always, if you have questions or concerns don't hesitate to reach out via phone or email!

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