



# Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Newsletter

**January 7, 2021**

## Dates to Remember:

Friday, January 15 – No School or Tier 1 – Planning/Prep Day  
Monday, January 18 No School – MLK Day and Teacher Workshop  
Tuesday, January 19 – Return to Hybrid Learning Model

### 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*

Happy New Year!

Birch Grove Community School will have a great start to the new year with the return of our K-5 students to the hybrid learning model on **Tuesday, January 19**.

On **Tuesday, January 19**, please send all distance learning materials, school borrowed devices and chargers, curriculum books, library books, and any finished homework to school with your child(ren). If there are a lot of materials, please help to get it on the bus or van. We will have staff available outside the school to help at 8:00am to bring materials inside. On Friday distance learning days, we will send materials home as we have been doing from the beginning.

To prepare and plan for the students return, we will be having a planning day on **Friday, January 15, which means there is no distance learning and no Tier 1 care on this day**. Thank you for your understanding as we prepare for what feels like the first day of school – again!

We will continue to implement our hybrid COVID procedures on site. Because we were already in the hybrid mode, we have very little to change with the Governor's newest plan. The only change will be that students will now have to wear masks while in the gym.

We ask that you continue to be vigilant at home concerning COVID. Please keep your child at home if they are feeling ill and contact the school office should your child need to stay home – we need to communicate throughout the remainder of the school year about this. We want to continue with the hybrid learning model until the end of the school year and stay in school, please help us to do this!

Thank you to Jon and Shirley Heinzen for donating funds to purchase each K-5 student a book from the Scholastic Holiday Book Fair this year! What a great gift to the kids at Birch Grove Community School. Thank you! If your child did not receive his/her book in a delivery, their book will be waiting for them upon their return to school.

Please remember to send winter clothing every day including: snow pants, snow boots, winter jacket, hats, gloves/mittens, as we will be engaging in our normal winter activities that include ice skating, snowshoeing, hitting the nature trails behind the building, and visiting Lake Superior. And as always, we go outside for recess in all but the most extreme weather. If you don't have these clothing items at home, let us know as we have extra that we can send home.

Ice skating, hockey, and fun for all ages!! A new group is forming called the Tofte Pickup Hockey Game (for adults). However, there is kid skating portion as well! The event is every Wednesday at the ice rink at Birch Grove – the kids can skate anytime (with adult supervision) from 3:15 until it gets dark. Once it's dark and the kids have worn themselves out, it's time for the adults to play! The warming hut and bathroom are open and there are used skates to borrow in the hut if you need them. The rink lights go on at dusk. A BBQ grill is fired up and available for use. For more information, you can check out the group *Tofte Pickup Hockey Game* on Facebook, call 218-235-8600, or just show up and see what it's all about!

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

[birchgrove@boreal.org](mailto:birchgrove@boreal.org) ~ Birch Grove Community School Email

[bgcommunityservice@boreal.org](mailto:bgcommunityservice@boreal.org) ~ Community Service Email

218-663-0170 ~ School Phone

218-663-0170 ext. 26 Community Service Phone

Website

[www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com)



Birch Grove Community School and Community Service #4145

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**From Ms. Sheryl Martinson**

*Saplings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

The Sapling classroom ushered in winter with a quick review of the seasons and a lesson about how we go from one year to the next. Then we turned to the theme of the week – snow! The children examined and described real snow and then were surprised to watch me stir up some “fake snow.” We discussed how each snowflake is unique and practiced cutting skills by making snowflakes. The children also created some “pasta snowflakes.” The dramatic play area has been transformed into an ice rink to correspond to our winter themes.

Our focus this week was the letter A and triangles. We continue to work on patterning and matching, with the children making great progress.

After lunch we usually go to the gym for a time of free play. The children have the option of using soft balls, but often prefer to just RUN and make up their own games. I especially enjoyed watching them play one day this week. After being released to play two groups of children formed, each “doing their own thing.” There were a couple children not included. With very little prompting from me, those not included asked a group if they could play and were quickly drawn in. As I watched, the two groups shifted and evolved with different children leading and rules that I couldn’t understand. After a while one of the groups began playing a classroom favorite “Chickens Come Home.” The other group noticed and asked if they could play. Soon the whole class was involved in a game while I sat on the sidelines and watched. Not every trip to the gym is so idyllic, but it does happen. And when it does, it is fun and heart-warming to see.

218-663-0170 ext. 21

[sheryl.martinsonbgcs@gmail.com](mailto:sheryl.martinsonbgcs@gmail.com)

**From Ms. Sara Knottski**

*K & 1 Grade Elementary Teacher*

K/1 started off the new year running!!! They jumped right back into learning and were excited to be back at school. What a great way to start a new year!!

In language arts, we are working on our reading comprehension skills. We dove into a few books and had discussions about what is happening in the story, why it is happening, and what we think might happen next. In math, 1st grade is finishing a unit about missing addend and kindergarten is learning about teen numbers and addition.

K/1 started a new science unit about animals. This week we are learning about how to identify different parts of an animal in a diagram, how to take care of different pets, and an introduction to types of animals. Winter is a great time to learn about animals and their behaviors because they leave wonderful tracks and animal signs in the snow. Make sure to get outside and look for animal signs!!

218-663-0170 ext. 22

[sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com](mailto:sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com)

**From Ms. Sara Silence**

*2nd & 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher*

Monday was a little hard for all of us to come back. By the end of Monday, we had declared it Pirate Week as we practiced the "ar" says AAARRRRR. Suddenly morale improved and we were back to the hardworking class we are. We played some pirate "Would You Rather", came up with pirate names, and told some pirate jokes. Next week will further the silliness as we pretend to go to Australia and practice the "oy" sound.

In math, both groups have been working on estimating or making "a guess that makes sense." Third grade is also working with rounding and this year's group is doing very well. Many times, rounding is so easy that students think it should be harder so they end up adding, subtracting, or multiplying the numbers instead of just watching the directions and rounding! Great work to my older Pine Martens as they continue to be diligent detectives and not get tricked!

Second grade moved on from estimating length to measuring in centimeters. This has been a little tricky to do over distance learning but also fun as we see different types of things measured. Today we found out that all of our doors were the same width. We also found out that a marker could be anywhere from 14-20 centimeters long! What a variety. Next, we move on to graphing and line plots. Always a fun series of lessons to go through since we inevitably end up graphing food!

I am beyond excited to return to our hybrid learning plan on the 19th.

218-663-0170 ext. 26

[sara.silencebgcs@gmail.com](mailto:sara.silencebgcs@gmail.com)

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**From Ms. Heidi Milner**

*4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher*

4/5th grade has had a full week back after winter break. We have been reading a LOT this week! In fourth grade we read the story "Riding Freedom," a historical fiction about a young girl who relearns how to drive a stage coach after an accident leaves her partially blind. We learned a lot about courage and hard work from the characters in the story. In fifth grade, we read the story "Lunch Money," about a kid who makes his own comic book company called "Chunky Comics". In this story, we also learned about hard work and learned how to make our own comic books. Our readings this week have also included a Scholastic News article about Grizzly Bears and whether or not they should still be considered endangered. We also started a new research project about Native American Tribes of North America. We found lots of books to read on the subject on the website, Epic!

In math, fourth grade has been continuing to study long division and word problems. This week, we worked to interpret remainders and answer the specific question asked in a word problem. In fifth grade, we have begun our Algebra unit. We have started studying expressions and have been using the order of operations to solve problems with variables. Students in both grade levels have been doing excellent work with these complicated concepts.

In science, our class has begun to talk about energy transfer. We have been doing a lot of reading on the subject and have been applying our new knowledge. We learned about the artform glassblowing

and how energy is transferred from a furnace to sand to transform the sand into glass to make art. We also talked about solar energy and the practicality of different forms of renewable energy on the North Shore.

Students have been doing a great job getting to meetings on time and completing work. Please remember, I am online from 11:30-12:30 each day to help students complete independent assignments. I can also check for completed work at that time, or you can email me pictures of finished work later in the day. A big thank you to parents and loved ones for all the work of making distance learning a success! As always, please email with any questions or concerns you might have.

218-663-0170 ext. 23

[heidi.milnerbgcs@gmail.com](mailto:heidi.milnerbgcs@gmail.com)