



Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Newsletter

November 5, 2020

Dates to Remember:

Friday, November 6 No School

Monday-Friday, November 9-13 Conferences

Monday, November 16 School Board Meeting at 5:30

Thursday, November 19 Picture Re-takes

Thursday, November 26 No School – Thanksgiving Break

Friday, November 27 No School – Thanksgiving Break

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

There is no school tomorrow (distance learning or otherwise), Friday, November 6. Please continue to have your children read (or be read to) for at least 20 minutes a day. Thank you!

Tickets to Treasure reading logs should be coming home in Take Home Folders soon. Please keep a log at home so that you can document reading activity and students can receive their tickets.

- **Tickets to Treasures Program:** students have the ability to earn tickets that are related to work completed in reading or math. Each individual teacher will let students know how they can earn tickets in their classroom, as there are many ways. One way is by logging time spent on reading (or being read to) on the sheets that are coming home (every 20 minutes equals 1 ticket).

- There are multiple prizes that students can win with the entry of their earned tickets. The prizes are on display in the library. Students determine how many tickets they would like to put in a box that corresponds with a specific prize. They can decide if they want to put all of their tickets in one box, in just a few boxes, or if they want to put some in every box. This is a good lesson in odds (and we do talk about this as well as strategies). Names are drawn for prizes at the end of the year. All students that do not win a prize will receive something at the end of the drawing. 😊

As COVID case rates continue to rise in both Lake and Cook Counties, I would like to ask again for safety precautions to be a priority in your home – we want to stay in school!

- Wash hands regularly
- Wear a mask
- Stay 6 feet from others

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

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www.birchgroveschool.com



Look for:

Birch Grove Community School and Community Service #4145

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**From Ms. Sheryl Martinson**

*Saplings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

The Saplings and I are loving this little reprieve from the cold, almost winter temperatures! There was a lot of playing in the woods and on the playground this week. We don't stop playing outside when it gets cold. It does get a little more burdensome though with winter attire and cold weather restrictions.

Our theme this week was "Healthy Habits." We discussed the differences between sick and healthy. We learned just a bit about germs. And we revisited the importance of proper hand washing and ways to cover a sneeze or a cough. Our focus was the letter I and the color blue.

We play a lot of games in the Sapling classroom. We play games at circle, at centers and during recess. There is much to be learned via games. Our math center and ABC center almost always have some type of game available. Beyond the fun there is much value in games. There is the obvious

counting and taking turns. There are fine motor skills involved in moving pieces and turning over cards. There is the social skill of inviting someone to play, or asking to join in a game. There is the delicate balance of being victorious and being a good sport. Many of our games do not have an obvious winner. Often it is just for the fun of playing. But some games do have a winner and loser, and that is important too. Often, I am in a leadership role during a game. But I also enjoy joining the children at their level and playing with them. Sometimes they beat me, sometimes I let them win. Sometimes I win. All the while I try to model good competitive sportsmanship. I try to talk through the role I am playing, whether I am trying to catch up, hoping for a good roll of the dice, or voicing my enjoyment at being in the lead. I try to teach the winning child to offer a "good game" to their opponent. I encourage the losing child to put on a pretend angry face and with their hands on their hips say, "I'll get you next time." I try to make sure no one child wins or loses all the time. I try to make sure everyone gets turns and there is a measure of equity. It is a lot of work. It is a lot of fun! So I would encourage you to pull out "Candyland," sit down on the floor, and enjoy playing a game with your child.

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1 Grade Elementary Teacher

Conferences are next week! If you have yet to sign up for a time slot please do so before Friday at 9 pm. I will have some preparations to do and last-minute signups will be hard to get ready for.

The first graders learned about r blends such as SR, BR, TR, SHR, THR, etc. They also read a story called *How Animals Communicate*. We discussed and made a concept map of the main idea and the supporting detail. In math, we are learning about how subtraction and addition are related.

The Kindergarteners learned about the letter H. We made a list of things that start with an H such as a house, heart, helmet, and hammer! In math, we are practicing addition and subtraction.

Have a fantastic long weekend!

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**From Ms. Sara Silence**

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

The shining sun has made the week fly by, even with the time change which always effects children. We have enjoyed eating outside again, and laying in the grass.

This week we looked at the illustration process of books, and practiced making our own "dummy" or layout of illustrations for a story we wrote. Also in writing, we finished our rough drafts for our personal narratives or our "True Story of Self." We will be moving onto typing those and doing artwork for them next week. As our stories focused on the visual aspects of stories and the history of

illustrations, we worked on several art processes that tied into many parts of our curriculum. All these projects should be wrapped up by next week and then we can share them with you.

In math, everyone finished their Unit 1 math test. They are all excited to move onto something "new" and see what challenges are ahead. Continue to practice math facts at home, along with playing any games that make kids think creatively, like a brain teaser.

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From Ms. Heidi Milner

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

~From Ms. Blanchette

4th and 5th graders continued to work on decimals: adding, subtracting, multiplying, as well as decimal word problems. In reading, 4th grade read "Me and Uncle Romie" and 5th graders read about a Florida Everglades project. All students worked on corresponding worksheets related to the stories, including the spelling words for the week - the test was today. Students continued to work mostly independently and then were paired and/or grouped to compare answers and work together to compare/correct/debate answers (by working the problems together, reciting math facts and showing evidence in text).

Yesterday, on Wednesday, I had the sneaking suspicion that I was working them too hard. 4/5 confirmed this when I asked the question point blank. They were polite, but honest! Haha! So, we eased up with other activities. 😊 I wonder how long it would have taken for someone to speak up had I not brought it up. 😊

We also did another art project, this time with water colors and oil pastels. I read aloud from the class chapter book "Inkheart" while they worked on this art project. The pieces turned out great and will be sent home next week. Pictures were posted on Facebook of some of the creations. I hope you were able to see them.

Ms. Milner believes that she will be able to teach from home next week. Yay! Ms. Milner will teach math and reading in the mornings, and the afternoons will be supervised by me or a paraprofessional. We will help with work assigned by Ms. Milner and will continue to do other activities in the afternoon.

Please note that conferences for 4th and 5th graders will be pushed back a few weeks to give Ms. Milner time to adjust to teaching from home, then teaching at school, and then preparing for conferences. To have a quality conference, she will need more time. We appreciate your understanding as Ms. Milner makes her way back to health. When she is ready for conferences, she will send out an email to all 4th and 5th grade families.

Please keep your child(ren) reading over the break! Have a good one!

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