



Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Newsletter

November 26, 2020

Dates to Remember:

Thursday-Friday, November 26 & 27 No School – Thanksgiving Break
Monday, November 30 On-line Scholastic Book Fair Starts
Monday, December 21 School Board Meeting at 5:30
Wednesday, December 23 – January 1 No School – Winter Break
Tuesday, January 19 – Return to the 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

After much consideration, Birch Grove Community School will be moving to a distance learning model after the Thanksgiving break. Distance learning will start on Thursday, December 3, with a targeted return date of Tuesday, January 19.

After the Thanksgiving break, there will be three planning days prior to the start of distance learning:

- Monday, November 30 – planning, no school
- Tuesday, December 1 – planning, no school
- Wednesday, December 2 – planning, no school

The decision to change to the distance learning model was a hard one. I apologize that it was so abrupt. While we knew that this may happen, it still didn't make it any easier. The decision to change models was mainly due to increasing community COVID cases accompanied by concerns over the

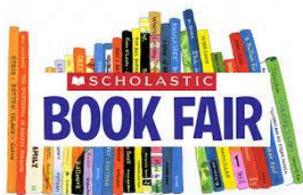
spread during the upcoming holidays, not due to cases on site. I know that some of you arranged holiday plans to safeguard your family and Birch Grove, and it is so appreciated – thank you!

During this distance learning period, we will miss 3 days of school to planning, and 24 days of distance learning will occur until the return date of **Tuesday, January 19**. Why a return date of **January 19**? The thinking behind this is that it is 14 days after New Year's Eve (another holiday), essentially enough time for COVID to be detected before children returning to school.

Upon return, we will continue with the hybrid model and the safety measures that accompany it:

- 50% capacity on buses (or less, in our case)
- Taking temperatures and administering hand sanitizer upon entry
- Keeping classrooms separate
- 50% maximum occupancy in classrooms with additional spaces to break down into groups throughout the day
- Maintaining social distance
- Regular disinfecting of surfaces
- Mask wearing for all
- Windows open in all rooms
- Regular handwashing
- Spending more time outside (the ice rink should be ready!)
- Continuing with distance learning on Fridays
- All should stay home if they show the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - A new cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - A new sore throat
 - New muscle aches
 - New headache
 - New loss of smell or taste

Please watch for more information to be sent home about distance learning during the planning days. We will be here to support you during these 24 days of distance learning and will prepare for return on Tuesday, January 19.



The on-line fair starts on November 30 and runs until Sunday, December 13. All orders are delivered to your home, and if you order \$25 or more, shipping is free. Orders placed on the last day of the fair will be delivered before Christmas. Books make fantastic gifts for children! BGCS receives Scholastic Dollars for 25% of the fair total – we use these Scholastic Dollars to put books on our

library shelves and we also give gift books to Saplings-5th graders right before the winter break. You can find the book fair link on our Facebook page, or use the link below. Thank you!

<https://www.scholastic.com/bf/bgcs>

We hope that you have a great Thanksgiving. Please see the video attached. Enjoy and take care.

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

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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*

Happy Thanksgiving from the Sapling classroom! After a quick overview of the Thanksgiving story, we spent most of our time discussing turkeys – first the cartoonish, cute version and then the more realistic (and kind of ugly) version. Today we discussed the traditional Thanksgiving meal. In a non-Covid year, I often like to work with the children to prepare a small Thanksgiving meal. This year we imagined it.... The children traced their hands to draw a turkey. They sponge-painted turkey tails and they put together a turkey sticker project. We sang turkey songs and read turkey books. It was a lot of attention for the lowly turkey!

We also finished up our unit on drawing a person. A couple weeks ago I had the children draw their version of a person. This week, after lots of discussion and practice in a variety of ways, I asked them again to draw their best person. It was very fun to see the progress that even the youngest ones had made. I also re-introduced the topic of patterning. We patterned blocks, people, and actions. There will be a lot more practice on that in the coming weeks.

I am happy that I will be able to continue to see the Saplings in person, hopefully throughout the winter. I am wearing a mask and constantly sanitizing. I require the children to wash their hands frequently and I do the best I can to keep the children separated and Covid safe. Thank you for all you do in your home and family to keep us safe and in class as well! I am giving thanks for you and the children! Happy Thanksgiving!

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1 Grade Elementary Teacher

We are a thankful bunch of kindergarten and 1st graders! This week we talked about what it means to be thankful for people, animals, and things. We wrote and drew what we are thankful for and why! In kindergarten, we learned the letter J this week. We jumped for joy and drew jackets and jeeps. In math, we practiced adding and subtracting.

In first grade, we are learning about end blends. We also practiced finding the characters, setting, and plots of stories. In math, we finished unit two about addition and subtraction.

As a reminder keep reading at home with your child! Children can be reading on a tablet or Ipad too. Here is the RAZ Kids log in. J

To access download the Raz Kids app go to
<https://www.kidsa-z.com/main/Login>

Teacher Username is: slizakowski

Find your child's name and if a password is asked it is the picture of the bunny.

Have a great break!

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**From Ms. Sara Silence**

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

Our class was lucky enough to already have some fun party themed activities this week. No need to try to add extra to celebrate our last day together for a while. This week in math we focused on review and new concepts with manipulatives. Monday we worked in pairs on our clear mats to discuss addition strategies. Tuesday we pulled out the classroom supply of coins to sort, add, and understand them. Wednesday was the day we waited these 11 weeks for: Candy Math. We invented word problems, math mountains, and other equations. Then came the best part, eating our math!

For reading we took a short look at informational texts about storms. This is a popular topic each year because the pictures are very fascinating. We spent most of our week looking a letter sounds and being detailed in our listening and reading skills.

Just a quick note about distance learning, as I will be spending three days next week preparing and then sending out details. Our distance Fridays have been used so far as a review time and some focused skill work. The work load for distance learning will closely resemble what we do in class,

including at least two 30 minute Meets in small groups of three or four students. In other words, full distance learning will take more time to complete each day.

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From Ms. Heidi Milner

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

4/5 has had a great week, fitting in a lot of learning before Thanksgiving Break. In 4th grade, we finished our multiplication unit and have begun to discuss division, specifically basic division and long division. In 5th grade, we continued to divide decimals and practice our understanding of this concept.

In reading, 4th grade read an informational text about hurricanes. During the reading we talked about text and graphic features and practiced identifying the two. In 5th grade, we read a historical narrative about John Adams when he was a boy crossing the Atlantic to go to France. We talked about some historical concepts and we worked to identify cause and effect in the story.

Our social studies lesson this week was a news article about life in as a first settler in America as well as a text about the Wampanoag nation, both their history and modern life. Meanwhile, in science we finished our PBS LearningMedia lesson on matter. Student worked to connect their learning and discuss with the class what they now know about matter, atoms, elements, and mixtures.

4/5 has been enjoying our music lessons. We talked about harmony this week, learning about how a chord is made and how the common chord progressions work in writing music. We finished our lesson by writing our own song using the song maker online, which had the class applying all the skills we have worked on in music this year!

As 4/5 plans to move to distance learning, we are confident we can keep learning fun and engaging while online. Students have been using the online platforms we will access during distance learning to help keep learning while distance. This combined with our Friday practices helps our class to feel confident moving forward. We will miss being in person with each other, but we know we can keep learning from afar. Keep up the great work, 4/5! We can do this together!

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