

A MESSAGE FROM PTO

OUR CHILDREN ARE WORTH YOUR VOTE

This Tuesday, February 23, Kalkaska Public Schools will be seeking approval from voters for a bond to make improvements to the high school, middle school and Birch Street Elementary. This low interest rate bond will help fix many issues in these buildings. For Birch Street, there are several benefits including the increase of safety for our students. Several representatives from the Kalkaska County Sheriff's Department recently facilitated lockdown practices for KPS. During the practice drill at Birch Street, they commented on the futility of the practices when there are 18 classrooms that cannot be locked.

Perhaps the most immediate benefit will be students having fewer interruptions during class time. If your student is in the first two classrooms on the hub spoke, they are subjected to numerous distractions every single day. Recently, a staff member observed 37 people walk through a classroom in the period of four hours. These were valid interruptions such as students going to speech therapy or paraprofessionals taking children to intervention. Every time the doors open, students raise their heads from their books, their eyes will follow the visitor to the next door, and their attention is called away from their education.

Renters may vote if they are registered voters in the school district. Their property taxes are included in rent costs. If you are a homeowner with a house that has a **taxable value** of \$40,000, this will mean an increase of approximately \$1.45 per week. Is that low cost worth the safety and enhanced educational environment for our children?

Please remember to vote on Tuesday, February 23. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.



The Kalkaska Sheriff's department came in to practice our lockdown procedures. Here they are shown walking through one classroom to get to the next classroom.

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Please have your children come dressed for the weather. We are running low on snow pants, boots, and gloves.

BIRCH STREET MISSION STATEMENT

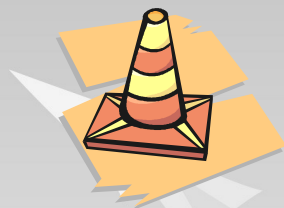
It is the mission of Birch Street Elementary School to educate all students to their fullest potential. The school staff will use effective instructional techniques, assessments, and appropriate intervention to help each student achieve grade level expectations at their own rate of learning.

Monday Morning Meetings COVETED CONE AWARDS

WEEK 1	Mrs. Wodehouse's 1 st Grade
WEEK 2	Mrs. Otto's Kindergarten
WEEK 3	Ms. Krause's 3 rd Grade
WEEK 4	Ms. Bridson's 2 nd Grade
WEEK 5	Mr. Malbouef's 3 rd Grade
WEEK 6	Mr. Malbouef's 3 rd Grade
WEEK 7	Mr. Burkam's 1 st Grade
WEEK 8	Mr. Gustafson's 3 rd Grade
WEEK 9	Mr. Malbouef's 3 rd Grade*
WEEK 10	Mrs. Chappel's Kindergarten
WEEK 11	Ms. Rodes's Kindergarten
WEEK 12	Mr. Beach's 2 nd Grade
WEEK 13	Mrs. Bartholomew's 3 rd Grade
WEEK 14	Mrs. Angela Sutton's – Kdg.
WEEK 15	Ms. Krause's – 3 rd Grade
WEEK 16	Mr. Atwood's – 2 nd Grade
WEEK 17	Mr. Burkam's – 1 st Grade
WEEK 18	Mrs. Angela Sutton's Kdg.
WEEK 19	Mr. Atwood's 2 nd Grade
WEEK 20	Mr. Malbouef's 3 rd Grade**

*Denotes three time winner

**Denotes four time winner



A BIG THANK YOU

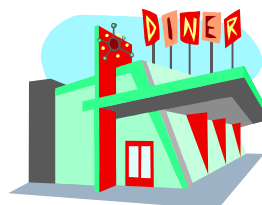
to **Karie Luton** for helping with picture day.

to **Matt Price** for being the MC at Family Game Night, "Deal or No Deal," and the **PTO** for organizing this event.

READING MONTH

"Birch Street Diner - All You Can Read"

It is nearly March and that means that Reading Month in Michigan is almost here! As we have in the past, Birch Street will be joining in the celebration. We will host guest readers during library, have a special project during art class, a reading minute challenge, and at the end of the month, book fair will be here. Watch the Backpack Express for information coming home next week.



7 TIPS FOR FAMILIES TO BEAT THOSE WINTER BLUES

Do the gloomy days of winter have you down in the dumps? Cheer up. Just because the leaves have fallen and the weather has turned cold is no cause for a frown. Here are some practical ways to beat the blahs this winter season.

1. Get up and get moving. It is a proven fact that exercise releases "feel good" endorphins into the blood stream. Even the worst day begins to look a little better from the perspective of a healthy body. Strive for at least thirty minutes of physical activity most days of the week to build energy and good feelings.

2. Watch what you eat. You truly are what you eat. Fatty foods may taste good at the time but they increase our waistline. That's no fun. Consuming too many carbohydrates leads to fatigue and sleepiness.

3. Get some sleep. The body can only go for so long without proper rest before it puts its foot down and yells, "Halt!" The more sleep we skip out on, the less able we are to concentrate. Our nerves get all jittery and anxiety takes hold. Aim for eight hours a night. Allow the body to slowly come down to normal before bedtime to ensure a better night's sleep.

4. Get professional help, if needed. For some, the winter blues are a little more serious than that. For them, consulting a physician is best. When you are unsure of what the diagnosis may be, it is not advised to treat yourself.

5. A light box may be the answer. For people diagnosed with seasonal affective disorder, a close cousin of the winter blues, light boxes provide a daily dose of artificial sunlight to improve mood and alleviate symptoms.

6. Find support. If you are stressed by work, school, or family, talk it out with someone from a neutral third party. Support groups at church or a community organization provide a chance to work through what is causing the winter blues in the first place. For a more intimate setting, schedule a visit with a psychologist.

BIG BAND JAM

Concert to benefit school and Bay Area Music Foundation

Kalkaska loves Jazz and on Thursday, February 25 at 7:00 pm, the 16- member Bay Area Big Band will perform in the KHS Band Room and jazz lovers will be treated to an evening of "Big Band era music as it was meant to be played", according to the Band's founder and leader Chris Bickley.

The concert will benefit both the band program of Kalkaska Schools and the Bay Area Music Foundation, an organization dedicated to providing musical instruments and instruction to local disadvantaged children. The evening's program will open with performances by the Kalkaska Middle School and High School Jazz Bands.

LIBRARY NEWS

Thanks to saved profits from Book Fairs, technology bond funding, and district funding, the libraries at Birch Street, Cherry Street and Rapid City are in the process of being automated. The benefits of this automation are many. First, students, parents, and staff will have access to our catalog of books from any computer with internet access. Even our youngest students will be able to use this with little help. Most books will have their covers listed along with other book information. Teachers will benefit with having a definitive list of available books. Many teachers need a specific book for a lesson. With automation, we can see if we have the book in our collection and if so, is it on the shelf, checked out by a student or by another teacher. The next benefit will be for record keeping in the libraries. When books are overdue, sending notices will become much more efficient and timely. This will also help when billing for lost or damaged books.

Lost and damaged books are a problem for every library. When care is not taken with borrowed materials and damage occurs, it is expected that the book be paid for. This ensures that our collection stay intact and that it is accessible to all students. At Birch Street, we only charge the original cost of the book, not its replacement value. If a lost book is paid for, we will gladly refund the payment if the book is found and turned in.

Damaged and lost books can be avoided by following these simple tips:

1. Keep books high above toddlers and pets.
2. When your child is finished reading the book, put it back in their backpack.
3. Encourage your child to follow the rules they've learned in library; no eating or drinking while reading, books don't belong on floors-at home or in cars, proper page turning.

Students at Birch Street may check out one book every week provided they have turned in previously checked out books or do not owe an outstanding bill for a damaged or lost book. Part of our students' library grade is checking out so it is important that these books be accounted for so all students may check out in a timely manner. We appreciate the school families who continue to help us keep books coming back on their due dates.

WANTED: GENTLY LOVED BOOKS

The PTO will be launching its Great Book Giveaway during Reading Month. They are in need of a few gently loved children's books (nearly new, not torn or written in) to supplement those already purchased. If you would like to contribute, you can drop them off in the office. Thank you for your support.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Feb. 23 Remember to Vote

Mar. 22-26
Book Fair in library

Mar. 25 Parent/Teacher
Conferences
Half day of school for
students – 11:30
dismissal.

Mar. 26 Half day of school for
students and staff –
11:30 dismissal.

Mar. 29 Spring Break begins

Apr. 6 School Resumes

Apr. 23 Trout Friday
Half-day of school for
students – 11:30
dismissal.

Apr. 29 & 30
Kindergarten Round-up
Call for appointment
258-8629

BIRCH STREET LIBRARY SCHEDULED DAYS:

Monday-Bridson, Gustafson,
Wodehouse, Otto
Tuesday-Beach, Malbouef, Loose,
LePla
Wednesday-Reust, Bartholomew,
Kennedy, VanAlstine
Thursday-Atwood, Krause, L. Sutton,
A. Sutton
Friday-Rodes
Mr. Burkam's class is split amongst
the other first grade classes.
Please ask to find out when your
child's day is.

TO CONTACT STAFF MEMBERS:

By email – First initial of their first name, their last name, and followed by @kpschools.com

Example:

rponstein@kpschools.com

By phone – Please call the office at 231.258.8629

STAFF TEACHERS:

Preschool

Sarah Haveman
Cinda Knight
Lisa Wyzgoski

Kindergarten

Julie Rodes
Angela Sutton
Stephanie VanAlstine
Andrea Otto
Jennifer LePla

First Grade

Lisa Sutton
Erin Kennedy
Becky Loose
Kelly Wodehouse
Tom Burkam

Second Grade

Heather Reust
Greg Beach
Randy Atwood = rjatwood
Ali Bridson

Third Grade

Kevin Malbouef
Jeremy Gustafson
Vicki Bartholomew
Samantha Krause

Special Teachers

Deanna Hixson – PE
Betsy Neelly – Library
Ginny Yost – Music
Pat Smolinski – Art
Dave Dalton – PE

Title I Teachers

Sandra Alspaugh
Gay Kasza

Instructional Coaches

Marie Strong
Arica Swoverland

Special Education Teachers

Shelley Torres
Julie Diola
Michelle Keeder = makeeder



Kindergarten and first grade students celebrated 100's Day on Tuesday, February 16. Some of the activities included necklaces made with 100 Fruit Loops, projects with 100 items and wore pins that said "100 days smarter." Above are some of the students from Mrs. Angela Sutton's classroom and below are a few of Mrs. Otto's students.

