ELLIOT'S CLASSROOM • WEEKLY FAMILY UPDATE

Third & Fourth Grade Newsletter

Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School | Week ending Friday, October 16, 2026

Dear Families, This week, third and fourth graders connected local traditions, stories, and landscapes with their learning. From Cranberry Day to multiplication strategies and weather investigations, students had many opportunities to ask questions, share ideas, and explain their thinking.

Cranberry Day: learning across generations

In both **gardening and social studies**, students learned about **Cranberry Day and the Wampanoag tradition on Martha's Vineyard**. We discussed the important role elders play in passing knowledge and traditions to younger generations. This connected directly to last week's **oral-history and family-event discussions**, as students considered how people's memories and spoken accounts help us learn about the past.

Social Studies: Massachusetts and the Ice Age

Students explored the landscape of Massachusetts and how glaciers shaped our region. We discussed the glacial formation of **kettle ponds** and the **glacial erratics** found throughout the Cape and Islands, connecting these features to the end of the last Ice Age.

We also studied **primary and secondary sources**, continuing our investigation of the different kinds of evidence people use to learn about history.

Third Grade Math

Third graders practiced multiplication through **skip-counting, arrays, and number lines**. Manipulatives helped students model different strategies and show their thinking in more than one way.

We also used **IXL** and autumn-themed multiplication **color-by-number and color-by-code** activities to combine practice with creativity.

Coming next: Students are preparing to use **bar models** to represent multiplication, building on the strategies they already know.

Ask your child: *How can you show 3 × 4 with an array and a number line?*

Fourth Grade Math

Fourth graders have begun **estimating with numbers in the hundreds of thousands** to support computation, check their work, and strengthen mental math. Our vocabulary includes **addend, sum, total, and estimation**.

This week marked our **first homework assignment with Chromebooks going home**. All students successfully used IXL, cared for their Chromebooks, and brought them back the next day. Thank you for supporting this responsible start!

Morning work includes **MCAS practice questions** on some days and lighter autumn-themed multiplication and addition coloring activities using numbers or codes on others.

Ask your child: *How can an estimate help you check an answer?*

ELLIOT'S CLASSROOM • WEEKLY FAMILY UPDATE

Third & Fourth Grade Newsletter

Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School | Week ending Friday, October 16, 2026

ELA: folk tales and the lessons they carry

After wrapping up earlier work, we launched our new **folk-tale unit** with *Abiyoyo*, a South African folk tale. The story sparked a lively discussion about the lessons we can learn from stories passed down through generations.

Students then worked in small groups to read a variety of folk tales. They came back together to share their stories and discuss each tale's lesson or message. This work offered opportunities to strengthen **reading comprehension, collaborate with classmates, and explore the lasting wisdom in traditional stories**.

Science: clouds, wind, and a changing landscape

We continued exploring weather, focusing on **clouds and wind**. After watching a *Bill Nye the Science Guy* video about wind, students discussed its important role in weather. We also explored how wind shapes the landscape over time through **erosion**.

Students were especially interested in hailstones: how they move within storm clouds and grow as they collect **supercooled water droplets**, eventually becoming heavy enough to fall to Earth.

Looking ahead: We will investigate extreme weather, including how **tornadoes and hurricanes** form and the powerful effects these storms can have on our environment.

Our scarecrow decision: Toothless and Hiccup!

The students have decided as a group to create **two scarecrows featuring Toothless and Hiccup** from *How to Train Your Dragon*! We now have a shared plan as we move from choosing our characters to making them.

This project will support our **field-trip fund**. Donations of fabric, old sheets, fuzzy blankets, cotton or polyester stuffing, old pillows, wheels or old bicycle tires, and other useful materials are welcome.

Family reminders

Please continue to **review and sign agendas nightly**, check assigned homework and IXL practice, and return school Chromebooks the next day when they come home. Please send a healthy snack and a lunch when needed. Contact me with any IXL or internet-access concerns.

Thank you for supporting our classroom community! Ask your child to share a folk tale's lesson, a math strategy, or something they learned about Cranberry Day. **Have a wonderful weekend!**

Elliot King, M.Ed. • Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School
eking@mvpcs.org