

Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board – Applicant Questionnaire

The Alaska Department of Education is pleased that you are potentially willing to serve on the Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) Advisory Board. In an effort to assist current MEHS Advisory Board members, the Department of Education and the Governor's Office in making the best selection possible for the vacant seats, we are encouraging you to complete the following questionnaire and return it with your letter of interest and detailed resume. Please attach additional sheets as needed.

Name Blossom Teal Olsen

Position: Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board, Sitka Seat.

Current community of residence: Sitka, Alaska

Current employer & position: Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Community Navigator

Previous employer & position (relevant to serving on the MEHS Advisory Board)

State of Alaska Department of Public Assistance

1. What prompted you to consider applying for the vacant MEHS Advisory Board seat?

I am applying to the MEHS Advisory Board because I currently have a child attending MEHS. I also graduated from MEHS in 2000 and worked at MEHS for 9 years (Residential Advisor, Home/School Coordinator, Cultural Room Coordinator).

2. In your opinion, what special interest, perspectives, talents and/or capacities could you bring to the MEHS Advisory Board?

I believe my long history of attending MEHS, working at MEHS and now having a child attend MEHS would bring a unique and valuable perspective. I have an extensive background in human services, casework and school board experience. I served on the Sitka School District School Board from 2020-2023 and have been an active member of my community. After I worked for MEHS, I administered all the financial assistance grants for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, so I hold an understanding of federal & state funding.

3. Are you, or have you ever been, directly associated with MEHS? If so, in what capacity?

Yes, I have been directly associated with MEHS. I attended MEHS all four years of my high school career (My hometown is Kotzebue, AK). In 2006 I was hired as a Residential Advisor, I was hired as the Home/School Coordinator in 2009 and from 2013-2015 I was the MEHS Cultural Room Coordinator.

My niece Macy Kenworthy graduated from MEHS in 2014, and my daughter Teslin Twitchell currently attends MEHS with her two cousins (Lindsey Swanson, Zoey Swanson).

4. What is your vision of the role of MEHS and how a public support residential high school fits in the larger educational scheme for the State of Alaska?

I believe MEHS serves a vital role in bringing educational excellence to our rural communities. I have first-hand experience in the challenges that school districts face with funding, staff retention, cultural/tribal partnerships & educational training opportunities. Nationwide we are experiencing economic hardship and political unrest, I believe MEHS provides a service that has been proven cost effective. My vision is to uplift and protect Mt. Edgecumbe High School's long-standing history of excellence by listening to its current administrators, educators, students & parents. My focus would be the budget issues and finding ways to stabilize and protect the quality of services provided to its students.

5. To what other boards, commissions, etc., have you been appointed? Are you currently active on any boards, commissions, etc.?

I have served on the Youth Advocates of Sitka, Greater Sitka Arts Council, Island Institute, Sitka Community Land Trust and the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum.

I was appointed to the Sitka School District School Board in 2020 and then ran for public office and was elected to a school board seat. I was elected by the SSD School Board to serve as SSD School Board President in 2022.

I currently am the Vice President of the Sitka Fine Arts Camp, which is a nationally recognized K-12 summer camp.

6. In your opinion, what makes you uniquely qualified for the vacant seat for which you are making application?

I believe I am uniquely qualified to fill the Sitka seat because of my family history. I am Inupiaq from Kotzebue, AK, and I was adopted by a non-native person. I am extremely thankful to my mother for keeping me connected to my biological family and cultural traditions. My sister was also adopted, she is Athabascan and kept her family ties. It is this unique family dynamic that has allowed me to translate the many cultural differences between the western world and Rural Alaska, and I bring that to every seat I am elected to. It has always been vital to me to make all students and families feel welcome and safe & heard at their school. My children are also Tlingit & Haida, my husband currently serves on the Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Council. I currently serve as the Community Navigator; it is my job to know what is going on in Sitka.

7. If interested, please provide any additional information that you believe might be helpful to reviewers of your application.

Quyana, Gunalchéesh , Háw'aa, Thank you for your time!

Signature *Wasson Teub-Olsen* Date 3/20/25