



Mt. Edgecumbe High School

To: Members of the State Board of Education & Early Development
From: David P. Langford, MEHS Superintendent/Director
Date: June 4, 2026
Item: 13D

Standing General Report

Introduction

Mt. Edgecumbe High School has finished the academic year strong. Since July 1, 2025, we have made meaningful progress across multiple areas of the school.

Operational Improvements/early changes

Residential Life:

We have strengthened dorm leadership and systems. While it took time to align expectations, we are now seeing increased student engagement and a more structured, supportive residential life program.

New Residential Principal Hired for 2026-27:



Terrence Shanigan is a Mt. Edgecumbe High School alumnus of the Class of 1989, former MEHS teacher, head coach, and residential staff member, and current MEHS Foundation volunteer, extending a family connection to the school that spans three generations and nearly sixty years. He is Alutiiq from the Native Village of Kanatak, where he served as Tribal Council President, Tribal Court Judge, and Tribal Administrator. Terrence currently serves as the Logistics and Planning Administrator at the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies within the U.S. Department of Defense. His prior service includes serving as Chief of Staff in the Alaska State Senate, as Director of Legislative and Tribal Affairs for the Municipality of Anchorage, and as an Alaska State Trooper. He is a U.S. Navy combat veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He holds a Master of Business Administration from Louisiana State University-Shreveport, graduate certificates from Harvard Business School, and a Bachelor of Science in Education from Valley City State University, with Six Sigma and LEAN Practitioner credentials. He is the parent of a current MEHS senior (Valedictorian, Ariana Wassillie).

Current Vacancies:

- Currently hiring Dormitory Security and Dormitory attendant positions
- Licensed counselor and therapist returning to the dormitory for 2026-27
- Dormitory Dean resigned moving back to Africa/currently seeking applicants

Staffing & Academics:

We have stabilized staffing and expanded academic offerings. Students now have access to a range of courses, including career and technical education pathways. This year, students earned college credits, supporting both college readiness and career exploration.

- 2 teachers are retiring
- 1 moving to a position with Sitka High School
- 2 moving out of state
- 3 non-tenured teachers have resigned, because of enrollment being down for next year we cannot offer them contracts for next year. If positions become available, they will be eligible to reapply
- Teaching positions will be advertised and hired based on enrollment
- UAS adding a mariculture facility and dual enrollment opportunities
- UAS and MEHS exploring the concept of Middle College Concept
- 60 students, grades 10-12 on Superintendent Honor Roll with 3.75 GPA or higher, treated to a steak luncheon with the superintendent and other administrators and guests

Student Highlights

- Students earned top honors in Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) competitions
- Aviation: 1 passed the Private Pilot Written test this week in Juneau at UAS
- 1 passed the Commercial Drone Pilot Lic. Test in Juneau at UAS
- 5 remaining students will take the final exam tomorrow with our local Certified Flight Instructor
- Volleyball: 42 students completed the entire season (Varsity, JV, and C-team or Manager)
- 83 total students involved for at least part of the season
- Cross Country Running finished the Season with 31 runners and 3 coaches
- Wrestling – 45 students both girls and boys
- Girls Basketball - 32
- Boys Basketball - 29
- Cheer - 13
- Music - 55
- DDF - 15
- NYO - 39

- Student Council held meetings every Thursday during the School year with regular attendance of 25 students and at least 1 advisor
- Digital Photography Class had roughly 71 students each semester
- 10 cheerleaders traveled to state cheerleader competition. They did their own fundraising and only a small amount of money was paid by the state.
- 90 students competed in basketball for both boys and girls
- Boys Basketball – 29 students
- Girls Basketball – 32 students
- Boys and girls basketball teams both won Region V tournament
- DDF – 15 Students
- MEHS placed second in the state for Native Youth Olympics NYO: 40 students completed the entire season 61 students involved for at least part of the season
- MEHS won state competition for Ed Rising and will compete in national competition in June
- 13 students competed statewide in Battle of the Books
- The student body president will be attending Columbia University on a full ride scholarship
- 77 seniors graduated this year compared to 85 graduates last year
- 29 current members of the MEHS National Honor Society.
- Students have logged over 400 volunteer hours.
- We renewed the tradition of having a fall induction for seniors.
- Students served at the local elementary school, completed service projects in the community, with local churches, on our campus, and at fundraisers for local charities.
- Students also voted to renew the tradition of awarding a scholarship to a graduating senior this year.
- Music:
 - Choir: 55 Students
 - Guitar: 35 Students
 - Beginning Band: 13 Students
 - Concert Band: 25 Students
 - Jazz Band: 12 (Extra Curricular) Students
 - Pep Band: 31 Students
 - Jazz Band: Semester 1 and 2 combined: 20 Students
 - Region V Honor Band: 2 Students
 - Region V Honor Choir: 5 Students
 - All-State Choir: 1 Student
 - All-State Solo & Ensemble: 1 Student

These accomplishments reflect both student dedication and strong staff support.

New Academic Principal Hired for 2026-27



Dr. Neville Boone is a former United States Marine with several years of experience working with students. Dr. Neville Boone began his career in education in Savannah, Georgia, and later pursued his Doctorate in Education Administration Supervision from Liberty University while working in South Carolina. Soon after completing his degree, Dr. Boone moved to Barrow, Alaska, to serve as an assistant principal, where he worked with students affected by trauma and those living in trauma-informed environments. This is where he became ingrained in Alaskan culture by being culturally relevant and culturally sensitive. Soon after working in Barrow, Dr. Boone elected to serve in an administrative role in Fairbanks, Alaska, in a military community.

“My motto is that every student wants to be heard, loved, and treated fairly. My goal is to prepare an environment that is student-centered, family-oriented, and community-driven.” Dr. Neville Boone

Student Voice

This is the qualitative summary from Paul Reid, Project Coordinator for the Office of Advocacy visiting to gather of the student voice and campus conditions at Mt. Edgecumbe High School to help from the MEHS Improvement Ad Hoc Committee for the State Board of Education. This is driven by a weeklong visit to the campus, interviewing student government students, interacting with students in the residential setting and daily interactions with teaching staff, administration, and support staff on campus.

Teams of 15 students interviewed 8 candidate finalists for Residential and Academic Principal.

Approximately 30 students had a protest about not being involved in recent decision-making. They were listened to and proposed changes were reversed.

Student Experience

When students were asked why they chose to apply to and attend Mt. Edgecumbe High School, there was notable consistency in their responses.

- Heritage of MEHS-most students have relatives and friends who have attended
- Strong academic reputation
- Ability to take classes not offered at their home schools

- The breadth of activities offered in both sports and other school activities
- The competition level in sports
- Academic support

When asked why they continue to stay, many of the same reasons are cited, with emphasis being placed on the relationships they have built with peers and staff.

- Students stay in school for the same reasons
- Students also state repeatedly that Mt. Edgecumbe is a family atmosphere, and that everyone supports students
- Opportunities not available at home
- Love of the Sitka area and the support of the city of Sitka
- Academic rigor
- Lifelong friendships
- Mentoring
- Pride in being an
- MEHS Brave
- College and career readiness and training and support
- Building brighter futures for themselves
- Competitive Sports and activities

Campus Life

Students spend approximately three-quarters of their time on campus in a residential boarding school setting. This environment is where many develop lifelong friendships and a family-centered support system. A recurring theme among students is that their classmates become an extended family and an important source of support.

Students value time with peers during residential free time and have opportunities to engage in enrichment activities such as cultural arts, kayaking, hiking, swimming at the aquatic center, and recreation in the gymnasium, where the basketball court remains highly active each evening.

While budget constraints have reduced some programming compared to past years, a partnership with AmeriCorps is expected to expand student opportunities in the coming school year. Three AmeriCorps positions and one fellow are being funded for next year.

In addition, students have the option to walk to Sitka daily.

Student Retention / Attrition

There has been significant attention on student departures this year. It is important to recognize that all schools experience some annual attrition. This year's rate appears to be approximately twenty-five percent higher than in recent years. More research is required for this increase change in attrition rate.

Average number of students withdrawn per year in May since 2018: 78

Number of students withdrawing to date for 2025-26: 122

2025-26 represents a 36% increase over the 8-year average and represents an 8% increase over the previous high of 94 students withdrawn.

Reasons for leaving:

- 27% Family Hardships
- 18% Homesickness
- 14% Dormitory Issues
- 11% Dismissed
- 11% Distance Struggle
- 1% Moved to higher level of care
- 1% Student Decision
- 1% Academic Decision
- Miscellaneous
 - Wanting to graduate at home
 - Negative media about MEHS
 - Boyfriends/Girlfriends
 - Wanting to play sports at home
 - Unknown

Reasons for leaving vary, and the Ad Hoc Committee plans to conduct a deeper review of contributing factors and trends. The goal will be to identify support and strategies that can reduce avoidable student departures in future years.

Enrollment for 2026-27

Re-enrollment information and forms were emailed to parents Tuesday, April 28, 2026.

213 Re-enrollment packets went out, and we are expecting these students to re-enroll.

Often, if they are not planning to return, parents notify us when exit travel is sent out at the end of March.

Applications as of April 30, 2026:

- 83 incomplete application portfolios
- 106 completed application portfolios
 - 66 Freshmen applications
 - 16 Sophomores applications
 - 12 Junior applications
 - 12 Senior applications

If all current applicants were accepted, 187 new students combined with 213 re-enrollment, would be a student body of approximately 400 for 2026-27. Not all students are accepted, and not all finish the application process.

As of May 8, we have 126 total completed portfolios:

- 77 Freshmen
- 20 Sophomores
- 16 Juniors
- 13 Seniors

We have 77 portfolios that have at least one component submitted.

Current applications are down 37% from previous years but still coming in daily.

We continue to accept students throughout the summer as portfolios are completed and reviewed. Our goal is to ensure we can meet each student's academic needs while also providing upperclassmen applicants with timely information about their path to graduation, including whether they are on track to graduate on time.

Housing and Facilities

Residential housing includes former military barracks dating to World War II, while the academic campus was constructed in 1987. These are aging facilities that require continued investment and care.

Like many public campuses across Alaska, deferred maintenance has created challenges. Encouragingly, funding has been identified for repairs already underway and scheduled to continue through the current and upcoming fiscal years. Increased public attention has also prompted action by the Alaska Legislature to support long-term facility improvements.

Long-term facility improvements include:

- Boys Dormitory venting system and new windows
- New Dormitory roofs

Long-term facility improvements still seeking funding:

- New washers and dryers
- New mattresses
- New bunkbed frames
- Vacuums
- Radios
- Kitchen upgrades and remodel
- Painting and repairs
- New dormitory siding
- Academic roof repairs

Food Service

Food service transitioned to NANA Management Services this past summer. As with many transitions, the change brought early challenges and generated significant negative feedback.

Over the course of the school year, student feedback helped drive improvements. Students now report a much more positive experience compared to the beginning of the year. Meals are prepared in an operational kitchen under the direction of a lead chef focused on quality service. Early logistical issues limited fresh preparation capacity, requiring temporary reliance on packaged foods, but student perceptions have improved substantially since that time.

Significant improvements have been made to food service operations, with a focus on consistency, quality, and student satisfaction. Student participation in meals is up 20% over last year, even with less students.

- Brunch number varies around 400 to 520 per weekend.
- Zero complaints about food at the last student cafeteria food meeting.
- The change in NANA's food manager since January 2026 has led to a significant improvement in both food quality and presentation:
 - Breakfast is up 46% in semester 1
 - Breakfast is up 35% in semester 2 (through March)
 - Lunch was up 10% in semester 1
 - Lunch is up 11% in semester 2 (through March)
 - Dinner is up 16% in semester 1
 - Dinner is up 21% in semester 2 (through March)
- Consideration - enrollment drops from semester 1 to semester 2
- Almost 600 meals were served on graduation day

Staffing and Student Support

Students generally report feeling cared for and supported by teaching and support staff. As in any school system, levels of engagement vary among individuals, however, overall student perceptions of staff relationships are positive. Many staff members are specifically admired and appreciated by students.

Residential Staff

Students report positive connections with the residential support staff provided by NANA Management Services. Staff are described as warm, welcoming, and connected to students. While this may not have been the case early in the school year, student voice has contributed to noticeable improvements. Ongoing feedback systems appear to be supporting continued progress in the residential student experience.

Overall Summary

Despite operational and facility challenges, student feedback reflects that the core strengths of Mt. Edgecumbe High School remain strong: opportunity, relationships, culture, pride, and preparation for the future. Continued attention to housing, food service, retention, and student-centered improvement processes can help build on those strengths moving forward.

Facilities & Capital Investment

The MEHS campus includes buildings dating back to World War II, making infrastructure a key priority. Over the past eight years, approximately \$15 million has been invested through Governor Mike Dunleavy, the Department of Transportation, and the Legislature's Major Maintenance program to address critical infrastructure needs.

We have worked to organize and complete projects tied to this funding and are preparing for an additional investment of 14 million in the upcoming budget cycle. Planned improvements include:

- Upgrades to student housing and residential facilities
- Deferred maintenance and safety improvements
- Modernization of instructional and career-technical spaces

These investments are essential to maintaining a safe, functional, and modern learning environment.

Enrollment & Student Engagement

Enrollment growth remains a focus. While we experienced some mid-year departures, several students have expressed interest in returning. Encouragingly, students themselves are actively promoting MEHS and helping rebuild enrollment through peer outreach and school pride.

Budget & Planning

We have developed the current budget around two enrollment scenarios to maintain both flexibility and fiscal responsibility. This work will continue to be refined throughout the summer to ensure we are prepared to appropriately scale programming and meet student needs.

State Support & Collaboration

The State Board of Education approved an ad hoc committee led by the Office of Education Advocacy to support MEHS improvement efforts.

- Paul Reid recently spent time on campus working directly with staff and leadership
- Deputy Commissioner Morrison provided hands-on support with budgeting and financial planning
- Additional staff from Alaska Department of Education & Early Development are on campus assisting with year-end closeout, management planning, and strengthening inventory and asset systems.

This level of partnership ensures we are well-positioned for future investment and accountability.

Looking Ahead

MEHS is focused on building momentum into the next year. Priorities include:

- Expanding student travel and experiential learning opportunities
- Developing middle college options for dual enrollment
- Continuing to strengthen enrollment and student supports
- Aligning facilities and programs with long-term workforce needs
- New layout and design computer lab, reviving a digital Channel Light News

Closing

MEHS is on a positive trajectory. With continued support, we are strengthening systems, improving student outcomes, and building a sustainable future for this important statewide boarding school.

Mt. Edgecumbe High School recently received a generous grant for technology devices from the Alaska Federation of Natives Navigator Program:

- 30 Devices Apple Laptop (13-inch MacBook Air)
- 30 iPad (11-inch)
- 30 Apple Desktop (24-inch iMac)
- 30 Dell Laptop (14-inch Dell Pro)
- 235 Dell Desktop and Monitor (Dell Pro Micro QCM1250)
- 30 Dell Chromebook (Dell Latitude 3140)
- 30 Wireless Earbuds (organizations, others) Wireless Headphones (organizations, others)

- 30 Wired Earbuds (k-12 students, school)
- 30 Wired Headphones (tribal library, k-12 students, school)

These devices will enable all staff and dorm desktop computers to be upgraded and the creation of a new computer lab for layout and design.

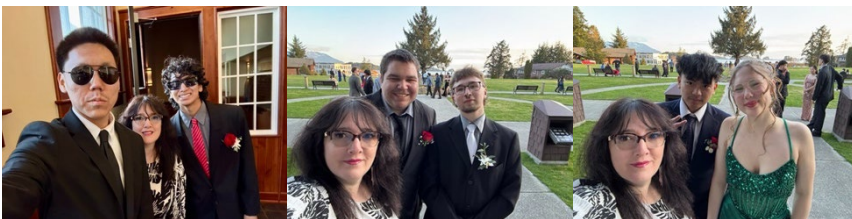
Notable events:

Alaska Airlines brought 20 Staff to MEHS for Prom Princess

“We want to express our immense gratitude and appreciation of MEHS from all of the Alaska Airline volunteers! Our partnership helped make the Prom a special and successful experience for the students. Even with the short amount of time, we had to prepare everything, the event turned out amazing and we all had very full hearts at the end of the day. The meals provided by the chef were wonderful – please pass along our gratitude to the entire kitchen staff as well for feeding us all. And the green room set up was like the cherry on top, providing volunteers with a space to sit and rest and recharge when needed. We had many last-minute questions and items that were needed and everything was provided as expeditiously as possible. Having the shuttle available was also a great benefit to all of us.” – Alaska Airlines Volunteers



2026 Prom



Clean Energy Olympics in April



Duane Craig and Annmarie Sakar competed in the Clean Energy Olympics in April. They had to design the best wind turbine blades, and were judged on how much energy the blades produced, a presentation on their design process, and a test on their knowledge of energy in Alaska.

They placed in the top 3 teams of the southeast region and their turbine blades generated the most power of any team in the southeast! Please tell them congratulations if you see them.

3A Boys Basketball State Championship (1st Championship in the history of MEHS since 1948)

Boys' basketball team won the Alaska State Championship in a triple overtime victory. The championship banner was raised in the gym on graduation day, May 8, 2026



