

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: Doug Walrath

Position: Parent Representative

Current community of residence: Nome

Current employer & position: Bering Strait School District, NACTEC Director

Previous employer & position (relevant to serving on the MEHS Advisory Board) Blaine County School District #61 (ID), Technology Education Teacher

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

My son is currently enrolled as a MEHS Freshman and my daughter, now in the 8th grade at Anvil City Science Academy, is completing her application to attend MEHS next year. From PreK through middle school I have been actively involved in my children's education, whether coaching sports, assisting in Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts activities, or serving on parent advisory boards. Now, as my children are/will be distant in high school, this seat will provide a unique opportunity to be involved behind the scenes in their secondary years.

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

I bring to this position the lens of a single parent, one seeking strong female leaders in my children's lives. I was a middle school teacher for nine years, having completed my National Board Certification (2004), and have served as residential program administrator for the past 17 years. I know variable term residential programming inside and out, and believe those insights would be of value on the MEHS Advisory Board.

3. Are you, or have you ever been, directly associated with MEHS? If so, in what capacity? Other than my son attending as a Freshman this year, I have no prior affiliation with MEHS.

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?

Having led the NACTEC residential program since 2009, I have seen firsthand the value of residential programming and the impact from independent life skills gained. Students self-confidence grows as they learn to overcome the adversity of the unknown when stepping away from the comfort of daily routines. A more diverse curriculum and higher expectations for academic, and social outcomes alike helps develop well-rounded young adults. Locally I have heard from employers that MEHS graduates are better prepared for the workforce. I support all such efforts for similar outcomes and believe my children will likewise benefit.

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 Anvil City Science Academy, a grade 5-8 charter school, on the Academic Policy Committee for five years; the last two years as President of the APC. I was also appointed to the Workforce Development seat on the Bering Strait Development Council (ARDOR) over the past 5+ years. From 2010-2026 I have served on the UAF-Northwest Campus Advisory Council. In 2014-2016 I served on the parent advisory board for the Kawerak Head Start program.

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

For the past 17 years I have served as Director of the Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center. Running a variable term residential training program for many years has me uniquely qualified in understanding ALL of the ins and outs of residential programming. Whether it be seeking program funding, grant reporting, hiring/overseeing/supervising staff, counseling students through homesickness, counseling parents/grandparents/guardians through homesickness, being called in to address students concerns in the evenings, weekends, or overnight hours, and maintaining the student dormitory. I've done pretty much everything it takes to run a residential program. Such insights would seem valuable in this position.

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

My philosophy of education and vision for what it could be to help students from rural Alaska be exposed to so much more than can occur locally in rural districts can be viewed at www.nacteconline.org. There is a four-minute video produced by Wells Fargo with "A Day in the Life of a NACTEC Student". The student testimonial might be something of consideration for a similar MEHS production, which could be used to access funding via State of Alaska education tax credit contributions.

Scroll a bit further down on the home page and you'll find two virtual tours, one of the student dormitory (NACTEC House) and the other of the main CTE shop, each embedded with video clips, making them rich resources for students to learn about variable term residential programming in Nome. This too might be a future consideration for MEHS for similar purposes as NACTEC uses for student recruitment. I've got tons of ideas and the practical application of successful implementation and usage thereof, as well as the experience of failure in some cases. I feel sharing my own residential programming experience on the MEHS Advisory Board can benefit students statewide, whereas NACTEC's reach is local across Bering Strait School District and Nome Public Schools.

Lastly, I would note, as I understand Advisory Board meetings have been hosted via Zoom in recent years, there's no substitute for in-person meetings. I believe for optimal impact the Advisory Board would be better served with boots on the ground at MEHS at least once or twice a year. I share much less excitement for Zoom/GoogleMeet meetings. If that's the sole format moving forward, I can honestly share my own contributions are much more limited in such formats and you might consider another parent representative who feels more comfortable in the Zoom world.

I appreciate the time of all involved in selecting new Advisory Board members and support your decision. Best of luck to all!

Signature  Date 3-4-26