

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 Candace Nielsen Position Alumni Current community
of residence Wasilla Current employer & position The
Aleut Corporation, Director of Regional Strategy and Policy

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

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

I have been interested in serving on the Advisory Board for some time, but I haven't been able to commit the time. I am in a better position now as my kids are older and in school full-time. I also have a child interested in attending MEHS in the near future and would like to be more attuned with recent status of the school - challenges & opportunities.

2. In your opinion, what special interest, perspectives, talents and/or capacities could you bring to the MEHS Advisory Board? I am an active follower of Mt. Edgecumbe and enjoy seeing all the exciting work that students today and alumni are accomplishing all the time. I value connection and collaboration, and would bring a perspective that prioritizes clear communication, shared goals, and making sure decisions reflect the needs and values of the communities MEHS serves. I also have a strong passion for Cultural Heritage and think it is important to keep cultural identity and sense of belonging at the center of the student experience. Additionally, I have a skill for engaging with high school students, I would be ready to listen, contribute where helpful and stay focused on what will best support students in the long term.

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3. Are you, or have you ever been, directly associated with MEHS? If so, in what capacity? I am a proud MEHS Alumni - Class of 2010. During my time at MEHS I was a very involved student. A few of my positions included - Student Council President, National Honor Society Co-President, and the President of Future Educators of Alaska. I received the Student of the Year in Service from Alaska Association of Student Government in 2009 for my work advocating for Mt. Edgecumbe. One of my favorite moments was advocating in Juneau for the swimming pool that I am so happy to see come to fruition!

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? My vision for MEHS is that it continues to serve as a critical bridge for students across Alaska, especially those from rural communities by expanding opportunities like I had as in being a Senior Editor for The Channel Light Newspaper, and completing my drivers safety course and obtaining my drivers license. I also envision maintaining a supportive environment that may not be available in their homes. As a public, state-supported residential high school, MEHS plays a unique and important role. It helps level the playing field by providing students with access to rigorous academics, extracurricular activities, and career exploration opportunities, while also fostering independence, leadership, and cross-cultural relationships among students from across the state.

5. To what other boards, commissions, etc., have you been appointed? Are you currently active on any boards, commissions, etc.? I currently serve as a Director on the Birchwood Behavioral Health Board. This position is appointed through the churches that are affiliated with the entire chapter of the Alaska Baptist Resouce Network. I have served on the board for 3 years now and have been able to participate in some great changes leading to a more positive experience for the clients that are served through the residential facility in Anchorage.

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

based off my experience at MEHS and how that shaped my understanding of the impact MEHS can have on students' lives and gave me a lasting commitment to the school's success. Since then, my professional work with Aleut communities has allowed me to build strong relationships across the region and has fostered my expertise in organizational decision-making, along with experience in collaboration, strategic planning, and program development.

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

In addition to my professional and lived experience, I want to share my genuine commitment to the long-term success of Mt. Edgecumbe High School and the students it serves. As an alum, I carry a strong sense of responsibility to give back in a meaningful way, and I see this opportunity as a way to stay engaged in supporting future generations of students.

I also bring a collaborative and solutions-oriented approach. I understand that advisory boards are most effective when members are prepared, engaged, and willing to work through complex issues thoughtfully and respectfully. I am committed to showing up, doing the work, and contributing in a way that is constructive and grounded in the best interests of students.

Signature *Candace Nielsen* Date 4/3/26