

Department of Education & Early Development

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THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

MEMORANDUM

To:	State Board of Education & Early Development	Date:	October 9, 2025
Thru:	Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D. Commissioner	Telephone:	(907) 465-2802
From:	David P. Langford, Superintendent/Director Mt. Edgecumbe High School	Subject:	Agenda 8.D Mt. Edgecumbe High School Standing Report

Current Enrollment

- **Applications**
 - 212 fully completed application portfolios
 - 84 incomplete portfolios (parent/student minimum questions submitted)
 - 222 application starts not completed
- **New Students**
 - 173 new students accepted
 - 6 accepted students declined after beginning enrollment (their spots were immediately offered to other applicants)
- **Returning Students**
 - 275 re-enrollment packets issued
 - 235 completed and returned
- **Total Enrollment**
 - 402 fully enrolled dorm students (403 available beds)
 - 13 Sitka non-dorm students (10 returners, 3 new)
 - **415 total students currently enrolled**

Travel

- MEHS provided transportation for 387 students.
- Over 80 students required rebooking due to weather disruptions.

Senior Class Hike – August 31, 20225 Mt. Edgecumbe High School, Sitka, Alaska

Tradition Continued

The Senior Class Hike is one of Mt. Edgecumbe High School's most cherished traditions. Each year, seniors look forward to hiking their volcano namesake, Mt. Edgecumbe, a 14-mile round-trip journey that challenges students while fostering camaraderie.

From the moment they arrive as freshmen, students anticipate this event. For many, it represents the culmination of their high school journey, a symbolic climb marking resilience, teamwork, and pride in their MEHS community.

Community Concerns and Commitment

With changes in staffing, budgets, and programs this year, there was initial concern among students, families, and alumni about whether the hike would continue. Seniors immediately began asking: *"Will we have the senior hike?"*

Thanks to the determination of faculty, staff, and community partners, the answer was a resounding *yes*. Veteran teacher Matt Hunter, alongside fellow senior class advisors, organized the effort. Superintendent David Langford, administrators, staff, and Sitka community members joined together to make the tradition possible.

Support and Partnerships

The success of the hike was only possible through generous support:

- Allen Marine: Provided two round-trip cruises to Fred's Creek at a 50% discount (\$2,250 vs. \$4,500).
- Alaska Coach Tours: Donated transportation to and from the harbor at 6:00 AM and 6:30 PM, saving hundreds of dollars.
- NANA Food Services: Supplied sack lunches at no cost, purchased additional supplies, and kept the cafeteria open late to provide a warm dinner when students returned. This saved the school at least \$1,000 compared to prior years' food costs.
- MEHS Staff & Advisors: Purchased and assembled breakfasts and snacks using student activity funds.
- Community Members: Residential staff, academic staff, Principal Miranda Bacha, and local volunteers, including Colton Holmes and Paul Fitzgibbon, who provided their own boats for safety backup, as chaperones.

The Hike Experience

On Sunday, August 31, eighty seniors and chaperones embarked on the hike. Some reached the summit, others turned back partway, but the spirit of the event was collective: they did it together, as a class.

Despite sustained 60–70 knot winds at the top—common at the summit—most students successfully reached the peak. A smaller group explored the crater and rim. All returned tired but filled with pride, laughter, and lasting memories.

Summary

The 2025 Senior Class Hike was not just an adventure but a reaffirmation of MEHS's commitment to tradition, community, and student experience. It exemplified how the Sitka community, school staff, and students work together to uphold what makes Mt. Edgecumbe High School unique.

Route: Fred's Creek to Mt. Edgecumbe summit via Mt. Edgecumbe Trail (14 miles, 3,200 ft elevation gain, round-trip).

Staffing Updates

New Hires

- *Dormitory Principal:* Nicole Ritzinger, with a STEM background from the University of Alaska Anchorage. Plans are underway to expand STEM and robotics at MEHS.
- *Activities Director:* Ryan Gluth, long-time MEHS coach, seamlessly transitioned into AD duties.
- *Reading Teacher:* Sara Lorenz, who will attend the Anchorage Reading Conference with Dr. Miranda Bacha.

Open Positions

- Dormitory Dean
- Special Education Teacher

Professional Development

- Dormitory Principal Nicole Ritzinger will attend the State Health & Wellness Conference in Anchorage.