

# Mt. Edgecumbe Ad Hoc Committee Background and Recommendations

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## Background

The Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development established the Mt. Edgecumbe Ad Hoc Committee (the Committee) to provide recommendations to the Board regarding opportunities to strengthen and improve Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS).

The Committee engaged a broad range of stakeholders, gathered and reviewed relevant information, and considered various options and factors related to the future direction and continued improvement of MEHS.

The Committee was composed of individuals representing the following stakeholder groups and entities:

- **Alaska State Board of Education:** Kimberly Bergey
- **MEHS Advisory Board:** Douglas Walrath
- **MEHS Alumni:** Dorothy Chase
- **Parent of an MEHS Student:** Kristen Donath
- **Parent of an MEHS Student:** Gretchen Kelly
- **Student Government Representative:** Kady Cross
- **Student Government Representative:** Ilana Kalke
- **Tribal Representative:** Joel Isaak

Mr. Paul Reid, Office of Education Advocacy, and Dr. Susan McCauley, DEED Educational Consultant, facilitated the Committee's work.

The Committee convened on the following dates: June 17, July 8, August 12, and September 9.

To inform the Committee's work, surveys were made available to MEHS students, parents, and staff. The following numbers of respondents completed the surveys:

- Students: 186 respondents
- Parents: 65 respondents
- Staff: 14 respondents

For purposes of organizing and facilitating the Committee's review and discussion, survey responses were grouped into the following five categories:

- **School Culture:** Comments related to the social, relational, and learning environment at MEHS.
- **Student Engagement:** Comments related to student participation, involvement, and connection to the broader school community.

- **Communication:** Comments related to communication among MEHS staff, students, and parents.
- **Academics:** Comments related to the academic programs, instructional practices, and educational experience at MEHS.
- **Residential Life:** Comments related to the residential experience at MEHS, including dormitory and cafeteria operations and experiences.

## Recommendations

Based on its review of stakeholder input, survey responses, and information gathered through its deliberations, the Committee identified the following areas for continued attention and improvement at MEHS. The recommendations are intended to provide direction for strengthening the student experience, improving communication and consistency, and supporting the continued development of MEHS programs, services, and operations.

### I. Communication

#### A. Communication with Students

**C-1. Rules and Procedures.** Establish clear and consistent communication among staff, contractors, and students regarding applicable rules, policies, and procedures, including dormitory expectations and off-campus procedures.

**C-2. Student Input.** Establish appropriate avenues for students to provide input and feedback regarding school rules, policies, and procedures that directly affect their school and residential experiences.

#### B. Communication with Parents and Families

**C-3. Teacher-to-Parent Communication.** Evaluate current teacher-to-parent communication practices and develop a written, school-wide protocol that defines when parent contact is required, expected response and notification timelines, approved communication methods, and staff responsibilities for communicating academic, behavioral, attendance, health, or other significant student concerns.

**C-4. School-to-Parent Communication.** Evaluate current school-level communication practices and develop a written, school-wide protocol that defines which information must be communicated to families, the appropriate communication method and timeframe for each type of communication, and the staff member or office responsible for ensuring that required notifications are made.

**C-5. Positive Communication.** Strengthen proactive communication with parents about student successes, academic accomplishments, and positive contributions to the school community.

**C-6. Two-Way Communication.** Ensure that communication practices provide appropriate opportunities for dialogue between school personnel and parents, including through phone calls, messaging, and other interactive communication methods.

**C-7. Timely Communication Regarding Significant Student Matters.** Establish clear expectations for timely parent communication regarding off-campus activities; student activities involving travel; significant student health concerns, including clearly identified school points of contact for medical

concerns and needs; and when a student is experiencing academic, behavioral, social, or other challenges that may require additional support.

**C-8. Extracurricular Activities.** Provide timely and consistent information to parents regarding extracurricular activities, including schedules, travel plans, expectations, and opportunities for parents to participate in or support activities.

**C-9. Rural Communication Infrastructure.** Ensure that communication practices and expectations take into consideration potential limitations in telecommunications and other infrastructure affecting students and families in rural communities.

## II. Residential Life

### A. Dormitories

**RL-1. Dormitory Rules and Expectations.** Ensure that dormitory rules, policies, and expectations are clearly communicated, consistently understood, and consistently implemented across all levels of the organization, including students, dormitory staff, and administrators.

**RL-2. Student Input on Dormitory Policies.** Provide meaningful opportunities for students to offer input and feedback when dormitory rules, policies, and expectations are being developed or considered for revision.

**RL-3. Wi-Fi and Device Access.** Review policies governing Wi-Fi and personal device access between lights-out and morning hours to ensure that they appropriately balance student needs with expectations for adequate sleep, academic readiness, and a healthy residential environment.

**RL-4. Dormitory Facilities and Maintenance.** Continue efforts to improve the quality and condition of dormitory facilities and strengthen responsiveness to both long-standing and intermittent maintenance concerns.

### B. Food Services

**RL-5. Cafeteria Services.** Continue recent efforts to improve the quality, variety, and overall student experience associated with cafeteria meals and food services.

**RL-6. Meals for Students Participating in School Activities.** Establish reliable processes to ensure that students participating in school-sponsored activities have appropriate access to meals that accommodate their activity schedules.

### C. Safety and Student Well-Being

**RL-7. Student Health and Well-Being Supports.** Review and strengthen the system of supports available to students, with particular attention to proactively addressing students' mental health and emotional well-being.

**RL-8. Response to Student Safety and Well-Being Concerns.** Review and clarify procedures for identifying, communicating, documenting, and responding to student safety, health, and well-being concerns across academic and residential settings, including clear roles and responsibilities for staff.

## III. School Culture and Student Engagement

**SC-1. Peer Mentoring and Relationship-Building.** Explore programs, structures, and other opportunities that facilitate meaningful peer mentoring and relationship-building between upperclassmen and younger students.

**SC-2. Staff-Student Relationships.** Prioritize professional learning, programs, and structures that support staff in developing trusting, consistent relationships with students and ensure that these efforts include both academic and residential life staff.

**SC-3. Student Withdrawal and Retention.** Establish a process for gathering and reviewing information from students who withdraw from MEHS and, when appropriate, their families, in order to identify patterns, concerns, or opportunities to strengthen student retention.

#### **IV. Academics**

**A-1. Post-High-School Readiness.** Increase the intentional and proactive focus on preparing students for life after high school by developing a clear, grade-level progression of experiences, expectations, resources, and opportunities that support readiness for college, career training, and the workforce.

**A-2. Parent Involvement in Academic Planning.** Establish meaningful opportunities for parents to participate in student academic planning, including course selection, graduation requirements, scholarship requirements, career and technical education opportunities, and post-high-school planning.