

Department of Education
& Early Development

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500
Main: 907.465.2800
TTY/TDD: 907.465.2815
Fax: 907.465.4156



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

MEMORANDUM

To:	State Board of Education & Early Development	Date:	May 11, 2023
Thru:	Acting Commissioner Heidi Teshner	Telephone:	(907) 269-4583
From:	Suzzuk Huntington, Superintendent/Director Mt. Edgecumbe High School	Subject:	Agenda 16D. Mt. Edgecumbe High School Standing Report

Note from the Superintendent

It continues to be an honor to serve as Mt. Edgecumbe's superintendent and as the Division Director for MEHS. The learning curve continues to be great, with so many programs, opportunities, offerings, and supports. My goal this year has been to establish positive relationships with the many different groups that are all important to this comprehensive, and yes I'll say it, unique and proud institution. There have been many times that I considered myself knowledgeable about a particular process, financial system, and area of need only to rediscover that I had not realized it is not only connected to but integral to a number of other processes, systems or areas of need. It reinforced the concept that this first year is an orientation year - and that observing and monitoring not only helped with establishing positive relationships but also in allowing our school to run as smoothly and efficiently as currently possible. Stepping into change too soon could have resulted in ripple effects that might have been difficult for many to clean up. Sometimes it felt like I was not doing enough, but I often reminded myself that the relationship comes first. As I remember Board Member Salaktuna Sandy Kowalski stating numerous times in her work preparing for Tribal Compacting: we need to go slow to go far.

I feel good about the year, about establishing the tone of my leadership and getting to know students, staff, administrators, families, and members of the greater Mt. Edgecumbe community. I look forward to guiding our school through articulating our processes and improving our transparency next year. I look forward to the reflections that come with that articulation as our staff determine what processes continue to serve our school well and where we might need refinement.

COVID and Health Update

As a residential school, we continued to maintain responsibility for testing our students for COVID-19 when they present with cold-like symptoms throughout the year. They worked to keep our student body cared for and focused on the reprioritization of learning.

- At the start of the school year, students were in isolation rooms for the first month of school, with the peak shortly after Labor Day with 13 students.
- In October we had one case, one in early December, and one right before Christmas Break (which required the student to stay on campus when dorms were technically closed).
- January through March, we had one or two cases now and then (totalling 5).
- Beginning April 13, we had a surge gaining 1-3 cases daily basis, but no more than 9 at any given time. We were able to get rooms and beds cleaned in a timely manner to manage the process.
 - Went from 18 to 14 to 10 beds this school year
 - Reassigned Ivy 106, 201, 202 this school year (2 beds each room)
 - HH Apartment (4) kept open
 - Ivy Apartment (12) not used as student dorm rooms but as secondary team room

Current Enrollment

Of 412 students, 69 withdrew for a retention of 83.2%. This is comparable to our COVID years and below the pre-pandemic retention rates.

- Of the 69 withdrawn students, 35%, or 24 students, were dismissed. This is well above average.
- Of the 24 students dismissed, 63%, or 15 students, were dismissed for substance abuse. Most, but not all, also had a substantial discipline log.

*Years indicate the **start** of the school year*

Monthly Withdrawal Count								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Start	434	439	436	441	434	420	435	412
Deferred or WD before school started						27	16	0
Aug	2	2	1	0	0	6	5	0
Sep	5	4	6	3	3	12	13	4
Oct	7	2	6	8	4	8	4	6
Nov	7	3	3	0	8	7	21	16
Dec	1	2	0	3	1	2	2	5
Break	21	14	22	28	30	8	14	8
Jan	*6	3	5	2	*5	5	3	7
Feb	6	2	2	7	6	9	9	2
Mar	1	6	2	5	-	7	3	7
Apr	0	1		2	-	2	1	2
May	0	0		2	-	1		1
Total	*56	39	47	60	*57	67	75	69

*2015 +1 student in January, *2019 +2 students in January

*Years indicate the **start** of the school year*

Student Retention Rates & Reason for WD								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Ret %	87.3	91.1	89.2	86.4	87.3	84.2	83.1	83.4
Homesick/ Student dec	6+8	5+4	0+17	3+1	3+0	5+0	12+0	7+0
Family/ Personal	16	23	20	42	48	43	44	34
Medical	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	4+2^
Dismissed	7	4	8	11	5	10	14	24
Dismiss %	1.61	0.91	0.83	2.49	1.15	2.58	3.38	5.83
Other*	17	1	2	2	0	*36	*20	0
TOTAL Withdraw	56	39	47	60	57	94	91	69

*I combined reasons that were inconsistent over the years to make the data easier to read.

^Students whose safety needs cannot be met in our residential setting but require a therapeutic residential setting comprise the majority of our Medical withdrawals. This year a new situation emerged, with two students continuing as day students to finish off the year.

Admissions Update (as of 5/11/23)

- Submitted applications (must have parent, student statements): 226
- Completed applications (must have all components): 128
- Returning students: 259, including day students
 - So far, 5 students have officially notified MEHS that they do not intend to return
 - Capacity: female dorm beds: 226, male dorm beds: 172
 - Open beds available: female dorm beds: 85, male dorm beds: 75

Maintenance Projects Status Update

Campus Wide Restroom Upgrades

- Girls Restroom Academic Building - Construction begins May 2023 - \$223,000 contract
- Gym Restrooms - Construction begins May 2023 - \$495,885 contract
- Heritage Hall & Ivy Hall Restrooms - insufficient funding, prioritized the other projects
- Each contract was well beyond anticipated maximum, new totals were approved

ADA Campus Upgrades

- Entries/exits at Cafeteria, Boys Dorm, and Girls Dorm
- Canopy and new chairlift in the breezeway (between Boys Dorm and Cafeteria)
- Construction begins May 2023

Master Plan

- Phase 1 wrapping up: key metrics, projected needs, public engagement
- Phase 2 being adjusted: conditions, assessments, Deferred Maintenance needs
 - budget shortfalls
 - shift from visualization to more comprehensive condition assessment on site

Heritage Hall Windows

- Design phase complete
- Advertise and award phase in progress
 - anticipating delays due to extremely limited bidding pool in Sitka
 - contract labor availability and material/equipment worldwide long lead time - delays

Kitchen Ventilation Upgrades

- Design phase complete
- Advertise and award phase in progress
 - anticipating shortages in materials/equipment which may cause delays
 - anticipating delays due to extremely limited bidding pool in Sitka

Pool Update

The pool was shut down in March after a leak was discovered during routine maintenance.

- February 27: maintenance discovered a serious plumbing leak in one of the primary pump lines
 - requires large plumbing team, reached out to company in Juneau
 - limited to one public swim per day
 - kept the contract swims and MEHS class & recreational swims open
- March 7: attempted repair did not work and made the leak worse
 - pool shut down completely (swim class switched to PE)
 - initiated search for parts (size and type of pipe used made it difficult and slow)
- April 17: repair initiated
 - discovered the piping flange was cracked about halfway around the circumference
 - could have resulted in damage costing several hundred thousand dollars, we were lucky
- April 20: repairs complete, began refilling pool

- April 24: confirmed no leaks or problems, working to bring temperature and pH to normal
- May 5: State inspector scheduled (earliest available)
- May 9: Passed inspection: Pool open, back to normal hours

A Few Student Highlights



Mt. Edgecumbe High School, graduating class of 2023



Occupational endorsements, dual credit courses, in partnership with the University of Alaska Southeast
 left: Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) right: Welding



Girls Basketball, 2nd Place at State
 MEHS Standing Report



NYO State Champions



All-State Solo and Ensemble
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Colton Paul breaks world record in Scissor Broad Jump in NYO



NYO travels to first ever invitational tournament in Juneau



Region V Music Fest



Recreational Activities include clubs, hikes, outings, and many other activities led by Rec & AmeriCorps staff



Beginning in February, students earned Rec Points for participating in activities including sports, dance groups, and rec activities scheduled on the weekly rec calendar. Those who earned enough points went on a Whale Watching Cruise.



Students weigh bags for charter two bags at 50# each



Dorm staff send off students leaving on charters, evening of graduation



150+ students get through security for each Alaska Airlines charter