

November State-Wide Teleconference  
November 3rd, 2022 at 7pm

In Attendance

Suzzuk Huntington - Superintendent  
Alex Weissberg - Residential Dean of Students/Co Athletic Director  
Rachel Sorokin - Behavior and Mental Health Coordinator  
Kristen Homer (via phone) - Health Clinician  
Tracy Dupee - Dorm Contractor  
Rosie Palof - Home to School Coordinator

Alex Weissberg

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Sport Update
  - a) Wrestling
    - i) Hosted wrestling tournament in Sitka with Sitka High  
(1) Teams from around Southeast Alaska attended
    - ii) 12 wrestlers currently in Anchorage for ACS Tournament
    - iii) Approximately 48 students in wrestling
  - b) Volleyball regionals were this week
  - c) E-sports
    - i) Defending State Champions for E-Sports
    - ii) League of Legends Team is strong
  - d) Honor Music Festival
    - i) 7 representatives went to Haines
    - ii) More students than any other school in Southeast
    - iii) Students sent in auditions and we invited to attend
    - iv) Music program has grown in the last few years
  - e) Alaska Association of Student Government (AASG)
    - i) 13 students went to Wasilla

Kristen Homer

Nurse Practitioner and Manager of Student Health

- 1) Vaccination clinics
  - a) 300 flu shots
  - b) 200 Covid Boosters Oct14th
- 2) No Covid on campus for 6 weeks
- 3) Positive RSV on campus
  - a) Teenagers are low risk
  - b) Can cause fever, cough, runny nose, and congestion
  - c) When a student has a fever they are in sick bay during day, and their room in evening to decrease spread
- 4) Influenza A on campus
- 5) If you talk to students encourage hand washing, wipe down surfaces, wear masks to keep illness from spreading through campus

- 6) MEHS is working with SEARHC dental
  - a) A number of students have had wisdom teeth out
  - b) It used to be done in two large clinics
  - c) More regular dental visits
- 7) Sports physicals for wrestling and basketball
  - a) Encourage potential basketball players to schedule physicals with Student Health

### Questions

Parent: Were Covid boosters approved for younger age groups?

Kristen Homer: The booster is approved for 12 years and older.

Parent: Thank you for the update on the clinic. Personal follow up to come in email.

Parent: When students need to go to the hospital are they sent to an IHS hospital?

Kristen Homer: The Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium is an IHS facility and open to the entire population of Sitka. They see beneficiaries and accept medicaid. Student health is part of SEARHC.

### Tracy Dupee

- 1) Halloween
  - a) Haunted ship
  - b) Staff decorated campus
    - i) Held haunted tours on campus
- 2) Trick or Treating
  - a) 300 students took part
  - b) Community was very receptive of our students
  - c) Feedback says students were very respectful and community was happy to have them back after Covid
- 3) Thanksgiving
  - a) Students will be off of school 24th and 25th
  - b) Dorms will be open
    - i) Activities planned
  - c) Make sure traveling students send travel information to student travel email [studentdepartures@mehs.us](mailto:studentdepartures@mehs.us)
  - d) Annual Thanksgiving Feast at Centennial Hall on 23rd
    - i) Students will eat with extended families
  - e) On Thursday the cafeteria will host a Thanksgiving Meal
    - i) Many students will get checked out by community members on this day
- 4) Winter Break
  - a) Dorms close December 16th
    - i) Students need to travel out of Sitka by the 16th
  - b) Dorms open back up January 7th
    - i) Students need to be back before school starts on the 9th of January

- c) Make sure to send travel information to student travel email [studentdepartures@mehs.us](mailto:studentdepartures@mehs.us)

### Questions

Parent: Do Students have Spring Break?

Alex Weissberg: There is no Spring Break.

Parent: When can students travel for winter break?

Tracy Dupee: Last day of classes is the 15th. Students should travel once classes are out, since the dorms close the next day.

### Rosie Palof

- 1) Introduction
  - a) New Home to School Coordinator
  - b) Started Oct 12
  - c) Very excited to be at MEHS
- 2) StAR Center
  - a) Space on Upper Campus to study and work with tutors and sometimes teachers
  - b) Quiet place to work
  - c) Open Sunday-Thursday 2:30-8:30pm
- 3) Tutorials also take place in the StAR Center
  - a) Parents and Teachers can sign students up for tutorials
  - b) Students on the tutorial list comes in for 1 hour Monday-Thursday during assigned times
  - c) Students attend all week, or until they finish assignments specified by teachers
    - i) Seniors during 5th period
    - ii) Juniors and sophomores during 1st period
    - iii) Freshmen come in **Sunday**-Thursday 4-5pm
  - d) Tutorials is designated study time to get caught up on missing assignments or ask for further help on topics they are struggling with

### Questions

Parent: How do students know the StAR Center is there? Are they oriented to it? Do you reach out to them?

Rosie Palof: We have flyers in the dorms and RAs are well versed in directing the students to the StAR Center. Every week a list is posted in the dorms of who has to attend for tutorials. RA's may reach out to students who have tutorials individually to remind them to go.

Alex Weissberg: Students don't need to schedule time with tutors. They are welcome to drop by at any time to get help or work there.

Suzzuk Huntington: There are many opportunities for students to come in. Since the StAR Center opened late this year there may be confusion about how it works, or when it is available. Please communicate with your students about using this resource now that it is up and running fully.

Alex Weissberg: RA's are good resources if students are confused about tutorials or the StAR Center.

Parent: Is the information about the StAR Center on the MEHS webpage?

Alex Weissberg: Not at this time. We will make an effort to include it soon. Thank you for pointing that out.

Rosie Palof: I will include the StAR Center's flyer that is in the dorms with the minutes from this meeting.

Parent: If a student is struggling in a class or failing, are they automatically in tutorials?

Alex Weissberg: Students get assigned to tutorials by teachers or parents. Teachers refer students based on teacher discretion. If they think the student will benefit from that time they will be put on the list. Not all NCs (no credit) result in a tutorial.

Alex Weissberg: Reminder that the end of the trimester is approaching. Students will be stressed. The StAR Center will be available. Even if students don't need help, but just need a quiet place to study, the StAR Center is a good place to focus.

#### Rachel Sorokin

- 1) Behavioral and Mental Health Coordinator (new position)
- 2) Introduction
  - a) Past teacher at MEHS
    - i) Literature, Freshmen Success, Study Skills, Special Education
- 3) Working with wellness team
  - a) Small groups working on healthy relationships and communication
    - i) Developing skills to get along with roommates
    - ii) how to live together in small space
- 4) Checking in on students with mental health needs
  - a) Weather
  - b) Homesickness
    - i) Creating feelings of connection and support
- 5) Trimester almost done
  - a) The last two weeks giving students skills to make the final push
- 6) Great group of students
  - a) Looking forward to school year

#### Questions

Parent: How are students doing?

Rachel Sorokin: It is really rewarding working with students. The Wellness Team consists of two more members. There are some students that visit the wellness team on a regular basis, and some who just need a couple visits to get some extra support. The Wellness Team promotes independence by giving students skills and strategies that they can use now and in adulthood. There are students who require more support than The Wellness Team is equipped to provide. They are referred to a higher level of therapy.

Parent: Asks for email.

Rachel Sorokin: [rachels@mehs.us](mailto:rachels@mehs.us)

Parent: Student missed bus to go trick or treating. Are there any options for them to get into town?

Alex Weissberg: Other town options are

- Bus to Seamart
- Town leave

*Suzzuk Huntington encourages student to touch base with her to receive some extra candy, and also promotes students asking an adult in the moment when there is confusion. The MEHS staff is very willing to make students feel included.*

Parent: What spiritual resources are available to students? (Specifically YoungLife)

Rachel Sorokin: There are lists of churches and service times posted in the dorms, and announcements made when YoungLife van comes to pick up students. These events are treated like other optional community events the students have access to.

Parent: Is Seamart the only store students have access to?

Alex Weissberg: During town leave they can go to any store.

*Parent asked for an update on the cafeteria and expressed the importance of three meals a day that are appetizing to students. Alex Weissberg commented that on a personal note, he has eaten every dinner in the cafeteria since he started working at MEHS, and enjoys them. Suzzuk Huntington elaborated further:*

#### Suzzuk Huntington

- 1) Thank you for asking.
- 2) Last spring a lot of work was done concerning the cafeteria
- 3) All inspections done in schedule
  - a) Last spring an oven was bad
  - b) It was fixed
- 4) Meetings held regularly with students
  - a) Online form, not working now, but it was last year so students can give feedback anonymously
    - i) Mrs. Huntington is working on fixing it
- 5) We are encouraging students to say something in the moment
  - a) Working on recreating form

- 6) Trying to gather information about how many cafeteria meals are getting eaten
- 7) Quality of food is high
- 8) Post on social media were not intended to go out publicly
  - a) Not food from this cafeteria in the posts
  - b) It was not intended to circulate
- 9) Main goal is to make sure students are eating
  - a) Each meal has 2 options
    - i) One vegetarian option
    - ii) One protein plate option
  - b) In addition
    - i) salad bar at lunch and dinner
    - ii) Fruit bar at breakfast
- 10) Distributing menu to students and staff every week
  - a) This menu is posted on website
  - b) go to campus life menu and click on food options
- 11) Non-cafeteria options
  - a) Friday-Free Food Sub Serving
    - i) Mr. Fish makes home cooked meal
  - b) Recreation staff makes meals with students in dorm kitchens
  - c) Culture Room has meal gathering (cultural food)
  - d) Students cook own meals
    - i) Seasmart runs
- 12) Sending out menu each week
  - a) opportunity to reply
  - b) Only reply to date is asking for the menu
- 13) Impressed with food quality, but we will continue to work to keep it up and improve
- 14) Meet with food manger monthly

*Several parents commented on positive experiences eating at MEHS.*

Parent: Is there a way to show students how the cafeteria staff is working to create quality food?

Parents are concerned about students spending money on take out.

Suzzuk Huntington: We are concerned, but we don't want to overstep. There are days that deliveries are not allowed Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. (Restaurants know the schedule.)

Snacks are available every night. The goal is to address this in a non-overpowering or domineering way.

*Parent commented that they thought it is up to parents to encourage students to eat cafeteria food, and save money.*

Suzzuk- We are beginning to look into programs that allow us to serve local foods. It is a matter of finding the right partners. With such a large student body it is hard to make that food go very far. One consideration is to have culturally themed meals.

*Mr. Weissberg asks for further questions.*

Parent I challenge you to bring fluent speakers from indigenous communities in on a weekly basis to show students that there are languages that they can maintain and support.

Suzzuk Huntington-

- 3) Awesome! We will accept that challenge!
- 4) Currently MEHS offers
  - a) Japanese
  - b) No chinese
  - c) Spanish
    - i) in person this year
  - d) Virtual Sign language
  - e) 4 years ago started offering Tlingit
    - i) For dual credit (high school and college)
  - f) Beginning Yup'ik
  - g) Both for world language courses
  - h) Working towards adding Iñupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yupik by partnering with Northwest Campus
  - i) Looking for Athabascan teachers
  - j) Students were asking for Iñupiaq
- 5) We had a local culture bearer and current staff member proposed language and leadership club
  - a) Should start soon
  - b) Focus on language revitalization
  - c) Goal to permeate this campus with our languages
- 6) We began pledge doing the morning pledge in Yup'ik last month
  - a) A student offered to teach it
  - b) Started on Indigenous Day
  - c) Not fluid yet
  - d) Students and staff can follow along pretty well
  - e) The hope is to rotate through many indigenous languages, but to stick with each one long enough to really learn it
- 7) Any offers and suggestions welcome
- 8) Expecting indigenous language on campus to grow through this new student lead group.
- 9) One plan is phrase of the week

*Parent offers to come help teach Yup'ik, and another expresses the importance of language for their son.*

*Alex Weissberg closes the meeting, thanking parents for their questions, and by iterating that we are all available on our phones and emails.*

Thank you



