

April State-Wide Teleconference
April 6, 2023 at 7pm

In Attendance

Suzzuk Huntington - Superintendent
Miranda Bacha - Academic Principal
Andrew Friske - Residential Principal (via Zoom)
Alex Weissberg - Residential Dean of Students
Rachel Sorokin - Behavior and Mental Health Coordinator
Chohla Moll - Cultural Integration Coordinator
Kristen Homer - Nurse Practitioner/Clinic Manager (via Zoom)
Rosie Palof (taking minutes) - Home to School Coordinator

Suzzuk

Welcome

Kristen Homer

1. Student Health continues to provide comprehensive primary care services to MEHS students. We are evaluating urgent issues and doing preventative health, along with helping our students that have chronic diseases.
2. Nurses have been focusing on updating meningitis vaccinations for our seniors who will be graduating in May. There are a few different options for meningitis vaccines, and some are required by colleges. Emails did go out to eligible seniors. Please reach out if you want to know more. 907-966-3264
3. Nurses are looking ahead to the summer when students go home. Nurses work closely with the Behavioral Health Clinic along with Cora Kuhns and myself to ensure students have refills on medications prior to returning home. They will have at least a month's supply and a plan for getting refills.
4. Students are welcome to schedule a sports physical at Student Health this spring so they are all set for next school year, and avoid the rush in the fall.
5. Student Health medical records are part of the SEARHC Health Records System. Many of the regional corporations (ANTHC) are connected to the same health record. Bethel is not a part of that system, so if you need to access your student's health records over the summer I have included the website. A SEARHC Health Records request can be found at <https://searhc.org/health-records-request/> If you have any questions about accessing your students records over the summer you can call SEARHC Medical Information Department: 907-966-2411.

If you have any questions about your child's health or services they have received through Student Health please feel free to reach out to me directly at (907) 966-3205. Nurses can be reached at (907) 966-3264.

Chohla Moll

Hello! We have a lot of fun things that have happened just in this last month.

1. We had six different performances at the Pioneer Home in the month of March. All of our dance groups performed for our elders. Our Sugpiaq group did it twice. They wanted to perform twice and they had to learn new songs and have a completely separate set list. It was super joyful every time we went, and students want to do it regularly. We even have some students that are looking into volunteering. Some met elders from their communities and we are looking into how students can have regular visitations.
2. We also had a cultural exchange with some folks at the local Herring Workshop. It happened on March 26, at Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Ka Hidi (our local clan house here in Sitka).
3. We have also had quite a few folks in our classes. Last month we had Sitka Tribe of Alaska Resource Protection Staff in the classrooms. The scientists worked with students to talk about subsistence food safety. They looked at clams and shellfish. They talked about how they monitor harmful algal toxins to make sure the food is safe for local residents. The same group also talked to students about herring. We have had some really neat cultural interactions within our science classes this month.
4. NYO State Qualifying Competition is happening right now! It started Wednesday and continues on tonight, and we will have Senior Night tomorrow. (Please see Image 1 for a list of the events.) I am trying to make enough NYO balls for each senior for Senior Night. It is all being streamed on Facebook Live.

What are we looking forward to?

5. April 11th - We have a Cultural Banquet happening next week! Celebrating all the students and their cultural learning and leadership this year. That's going to be pretty exciting to have all those awards happen to recognize our dance groups and our language students.
6. April 14th & 15th Fish skin tanning/sewing workshop
7. May 10th The Senior Awards will include MEHS Dance Group performances. We had some students who really wanted their parents to see all their amazing hard work that they have been putting into learning their songs and dances.

8. We had a really fun spontaneous Yup'ik dance practice. We had participation from visiting parents. They taught our students new songs.
9. The Supiaq group is working on filming a music video. Stay tuned.

Rachel Sorokin

We are continuing to provide a safe and welcoming space for students to receive support and counseling as needed. We have one or two members of the Wellness Team in the dorms at all times. We strive to provide a safe and welcoming space for all of the students.

1. We continue supporting students in Commitment to Clean program which includes weekly one-on-one meetings with students. Those check-ins have been very important to students.
2. Residential Wellness Team members are currently beginning training in an evidence-based tobacco cessation program provided by the American Lung Association--INDEPTH and N-O-T. We hope to pilot a program this year, or start up next year.
This program has been used and is successful in other schools across Alaska. When completed with the training program, the Wellness Team members will be able to facilitate individual and group meetings with students.
3. We are collaborating with Child Advocacy Center/Sitka Tribe of Alaska who are honoring Child Abuse Prevention Month. There will be a free screening of We Breathe Again at the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi that will be offered to students and the community. The film addresses healing and the issue of suicide and substance abuse prevention among Alaska youth.

Looking to the Future:

4. There are not that many weeks of the school year left, so we hope to be here and show support to the students to get them ready for the summer.
5. We want to strengthen and formalize our current prevention programs. We want the families and students to know what we have to provide for them.
6. We plan to continue to add prevention programs that are aligned with the cultures represented in our school. This could include more partnerships with organizations outside of our community.

Thank you for allowing us to work with your children.

Alex Weissberg

What happened last month?

1. Student Council put on a lock-in. At 11:30pm we invited everyone in the dorms to come down to the gym to participate in different activities. They earned tickets towards a raffle. There were awesome prizes.

What are we looking forward to? The end of the year is always very busy.

2. Upcoming UCC Activities
 - a. Easter Egg Hunt - April 9th Students helped fill Easter Eggs and made bags of candy to deliver to each student in the dorms. The hunt will be in the woods or the gym, weather depending.
 - b. Triathlon - April 15th However the pool is currently not open. We may need to get creative. Perhaps we will go kayaking instead of swimming.
 - c. Saturday Garage Sale - April 29th Students can sell items that they don't want to bring home to other students and staff, and also the Sitka community.
 - d. Barbeque - May 6th UCC organized a barbeque. We are hoping for nice weather!
3. Prom - April 8th, 8-11pm. We do offer students rides to go to restaurants before Prom. Staff drops students off all over town. Let students know!
4. Fine Arts Banquet - April 18th
5. Sports Banquet - April 25th
6. Sunset Dinner Whale Cruise w/ Allen Marine - April 29th The Healthy Braves Challenge, which has gained a lot of popularity, (thank you Ms. Trish!) allows students to earn points by participating in different activities. Students who earn 20 points by participating in activities can get a ticket to go on a sunset dinner whale cruise.

Examples of activities that earn points:

 - i. Dance groups are 10 points
 - ii. NYO is 10 points
 - iii. A cold dip is 1 point

Things to Know

7. 30 Day Major Policy - Seniors cannot walk if they get a major in the last 30 days of school. This is to discourage poor behavior at the end of the school year.
8. Rides to Post Office - It is amazing how much stuff students have accumulated over the year. It is important that students box up their things to mail home what they can't bring on the plane. The post office has agreed to stay open an hour later for us.

Questions/ Comments:

Parent Q/C: Polar dipping should be worth more points as a traditional Lingit activity.

Answer: Thank you for your feedback.

Parent Q/C: When is the last day of school?

Answer: Last day of classes is May 10th

Graduation is May 11

School closes on May 12th at noon.

Suzzuk Huntington

There was an email sent out today about travel. We have two charters that leave for Anchorage. Anyone going to Anchorage and beyond will be on those charters late at night, 11pm or so.

The Southeast students will have seat fare on different flights.

The State pays for students to arrive in the fall and to go home in the spring.

Parent Q/C: How much are prom tickets?

Answer: \$15 for individuals and \$25 for couples

Miranda Bacha

1. April 1st was Saturday School. We got lots of great feedback from students. They got to choose what classes they would like to take. There was Mexican cooking, sushi making, karate, ukulele, guitar, egg painting, printmaking, and paper Japanese sword making (to name a few).
2. This week we had MAP Testing and AK STAR testing.
3. Tribal Health Scholars: 8 students attended. People were impressed with the MEHS presentation.
4. NYO - We went to Juneau. MEHS earned 1st place overall for high school teams. Colton Paul was Outstanding Male Athlete overall at the traditional games.
5. April 8th - Prom
6. It is time to start registering for next year.
 - a. April 10th - Juniors will register for classes
 - b. April 11th - Sophomores will register for classes
 - c. April 13th - Freshman will register for classes
7. April 11th - AK Science Assessment

8. April 11th - Cultural Banquet
9. April 13th - Job Corps presentation for students
10. April 14th - Workkeys Test. It is an important test if students want to go to AVTEC or technical fields at UAA.
11. April 18th - 11th graders will take the ACT
12. April 21st - Senior Sneak - Starrgavin and movie
13. April 25th - Athletic Banquet
14. May 11th - Graduation
15. Ground School- Students at MEHS are learning to fly a plane before they even set foot in a cockpit. Our aviation ground course is the first step toward becoming a licensed private pilot.
Yesterday, Scott Woodcock, a certified flight instructor from the Sitka Coast Guard Airbase visited and gave our students his suggestions for their final week of preparing for their practice test. Students who pass the test will get to go to Anchorage to take the exam.
16. We added our Cultural Integration Coordinator, Ms. Moll, this year. She is doing a great job. Teachers are asking for her, welcoming her, and integrating culture into the classrooms. We are going to continue that work.

Rosie Palof

I wanted to reintroduce myself. I am Rosie Palof, the Home to School Coordinator. The majority of my job is tutoring students in the StAR Center.

1. We are looking for student tutors in the current sophomore and junior classes. Students that have a passion for teaching, or an individual subject should apply. It is a great opportunity to not only get paid, but to support their peers, while solidifying their knowledge in their chosen subject, AND it is an opportunity to work on their resumes.

Andrew Friske

It has been fun sitting at home watching all my colleagues do a great job on Zoom.

1. Esports is finishing up. They are ranking pretty high in the State.

2. Basketball and Cheer just finished. We had over 125 student athletes participating in those sports.
3. We have been gathering herring eggs like crazy.
4. We had Hoops and Herring BB Tournament hosted by our local youth organization. It involved students from all over the state and included 80 of our braves.
5. Prom - It has been 3 years since AK Airlines has helped. In the past they have sent up to 60 volunteers to help with hair, nails, dresses, you name it. They will be back this year. You will not want to light a match outside my office the night of prom with all the hairspray.
There is "prom energy" in the dorms. We will be trying to live stream. You can see your kids and say hi.
6. Easter Egg hunt
7. Whale Watching has been a good incentive for students to participate in recreation activities.
8. And then we have graduation which is amazing, bitter sweet when they all leave.
9. Please encourage students to ship their things early. We provide boxes. Please, encourage students not to wait until the last minute.
10. Girls basketball team was second in state this year. We have 3 seniors on the team. Many will be coming back. Next year will also be a strong team.
11. MEHS does a great job creating opportunities for students here and around the state. We are fortunate. Let the legislature know.
12. If you don't receive a Rec email every week, reach out. Ms. Trish does a great job. We have lots happening on campus every week. If your student says they have nothing to do, they are lying to you. And we are always open to suggestions if there is something your students would like to do.

Questions/Comments

Parent Q/C: Can we add a camera to the second court?

Friske: Yes! We already have one coming in the mail. We have had more events than ever in the gym this year, mostly through basketball which is great. It involves almost half our kids in one way or another.

Parent Q/C: Where are regions next year for basketball?

Friske: Here! We will be hosting the 2A, 3A, and 4A tournament together. It will be the biggest basketball tournament ever held in Southeast Alaska. We will host it along with Sitka High because we don't have enough gym space for all the games, but all the championship games and MEHS games will be at Mount Edgecumbe. It will be the second week of March.

Suzzuk: Good thing we have that second camera in route. We also have shot clocks that will be running soon.

Suzzuk

1. Part of what we are trying to do is make information from teleconferences more accessible in addition to minutes.
2. Admissions (for new students) - We have been receiving applications. Applications accepted until June 15 at 11:59pm. This is a hard deadline. Acceptance letters begin mid-May and continue all summer.
3. We may have parent Teleconferences in the summertime. They will cover topics like enrollment and packing. It will be with the summer staff.
4. Re-enrollment (for returning students) will come through soon through school messenger. Don't stress, or reapply. Notifications will be coming soon.
5. Book Challenges - We had some books challenged in the last few months, and initiated a process for us to review those. We have one deep dive going on now. Once that process continues we will have the Advisory Board and School Board approve the protocol for reviewing challenges. We are making sure parents feel heard and can contribute to how things are going. That is one area that has been difficult to navigate, but we want to make sure all perspectives are ready and available while having a protocol and process.
6. Exit Travel
 - a. Parents can make changes to travel plans between April 24 - May 5. This has to go through our travel agency: CTM. They handle all State travel.
 - b. Luggage limitations are very important. We have to keep students supervised at all times. We want them to keep track of their luggage. Mail boxes ahead of time!
7. Advisory Board
 - a. next meeting May 4th, Zoom, 3pm
 - b. We have 2 terms up this year. The application notifications went out a while back. The window has closed. There were 8 interested applicants.

8. State Board of Education has 2 unanticipated vacancies. They are looking for applicants for who are interested to submit a letter of interest to the [Commissions and Boards Committee](#).
 - a. A seat for the 4th Judicial District (Interior & Bethel regions)
 - b. A seat for the Public At Large
 - c. Each term would be the remainder of a 5 year term

9. NYO - State qualifiers happening NOW - Facebook Live

Thank you for trying the zoom and joining via phone.

Parent Q/C: "...I had the pleasure of meeting some of you when I was there a few weeks ago. I wanted to take a minute to say thank you so much. You guys do a great job. I don't want to get emotional, but as a survivor of boarding schools it is important that you guys keep doing the great work you are doing."

In response to Kristen's presentation there is more the school can do to connect with the regionals better to coordinate cultural activities more inclusively across programs. I think that would be really helpful. I am willing to help make connections in the Bristol Bay Region.

Huntington: We have been working on that. One of the things we have done that hasn't been highlighted yet is Tribal Resource and Career Fair last week.

Moll: There were 27 different organizations that came from all over Alaska to introduce them to opportunities in our tribal organizations, the university system, corporations.

Huntington: At the beginning of the year training with residential staff focussed on blending many of those topics: resilience and being trauma informed through a cultural lens.

Moll: City of St. Paul is sending representatives coming to confirm their students are being supported in the ways they should be both culturally and academically.

Huntington: AHEC has been partnering with us. We definitely have lots of pieces and relationships. It is very helpful to hear that feedback and that reinforcement to know that we are on the right track, and who to contact to strengthen our cultural connections. And to make sure that we don't take that for granted. We love to know who else we should connect with.

Thank you and goodnight.

Image 1

MEHS State Qualifying Meet - Schedule of Events

*****Open to Teachers, Students, and Staff - Public can come and watch as well - will be live-streamed for parents**

Day 1: Wednesday April 5th

4:30pm Kneel Jump

5:00pm Wrist Carry

6pm Dinner Break

7pm Alaskan High Kick

Day 2: Thursday April 6th

4:30pm Scissor Broad Jump

5:15pm Dinner Break

6:15pm Eskimo Stick Pull

7pm One Hand Reach

7:45pm Two Foot High Kick

Day 3: Friday April 7th

4:30pm Indian Stick Pull

5:15pm Dinner Break

6:00 Senior Recognition

6:45pm One Foot High Kick

8pm Seal Hop

