



January 13, 2022

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee.

We respectfully submit this annual report for your review. The report follows the required format based on our legislative statute (Title 20-A, Chapter 312-A, §8235). In summary, it has data from the 2019-2020 Academic year, highlighting student performance, and includes budgetary details. The information directly addresses concerns raised by the Committee in previous sessions, specifically, enrollment, financing (based on the charter funding model of our legislation), and details of our status as a state board. In addition, the Committee will receive our most recent audit, presently in review, when complete.

What cannot be captured in the pages of this report are the authentic and inspirational student learning experiences we have facilitated over the last year that address the Committee's interest in the breadth and depth of the curriculum. For example, our students have participated in community speaker events with current maritime professionals, contributed to local environmental clean-up efforts, and conducted species sampling at the shore among other learning experiences. While operating in unprecedented times related to the Covid-19 pandemic, Maine Ocean School staff have provided students with a consistent and welcoming learning environment where students may explore their interests and prepare for future employment and educational opportunities. We have made access to hands-on, real world learning experiences and training more equitable to students throughout the state through in-person and virtual learning. We also continue to implement the Committee's feedback to ensure our programming matches the rigor and caliber expected of Magnet schools in Maine.

We look forward to working with your Committee during the work session scheduled for January 20, to review LD 1389, an *Act to Improve Maritime Education in Maine*. In preparation for your action on this bill, we have explored options that would allow for an alternative program, new oversight, a new structure, and new and alternative funding models for the School. We have started conversations with the local RSU 20, the UMaine Hutchinson Center, and Maine CTE Director to strategize how we might continue to make our ocean-themed educational program available to Maine's high school students. Continued discussions, however, will only be possible with the passage of LD1389. We would like to work with this Committee to realize the true potential of the long-term academic and economic benefits Maine Ocean School has to offer to our current and future students as an entry level pathway for supporting relevant ocean-themed economies for [Maine Economic Development Strategy for 2020-2029](#) and [2020 recommendations](#) from the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee. Thank you for your time and consideration, we look forward to discussing the future of Maine Ocean School with you further in the upcoming work session.

Respectfully,

Melissa Landon, Ph.D., P.E.
Chair, Board of Trustees