



The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Testimony from Jason Judd, Ed.D., Executive Director, Educate Maine

**In Support Of**

L.D. # 1458: “An Act to Increase Funding for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics”

April 24, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Jason Judd, Executive Director of Educate Maine, a business-led education advocacy organization. I also write today as a 2000 graduate of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of L.D. #1458.

We should all be proud of the school that Maine founded in 1995. MSSM is one of the top high schools in the country. In 2019, U.S. News and World Report ranked MSSM as the second best high school in the United States. The school and its students frequently receive both state and national awards celebrating their academic and co-curricular successes. Almost 100% of MSSM students attend postsecondary education institutions across the globe. MSSM alumni have become a significant part of the Maine economy serving in state and local government roles, leading nonprofits, and working at many of Maine’s largest and smallest employers in all 16 counties. Your investment in the school since 1995 has resulted in thousands of alumni completing their undergraduate and graduate degrees and successfully joining the Maine workforce often in high paying and leadership roles.

I am proud to be one of the alumni who is able to give back to our state thanks to the investment you made in me. In 1998, I was able to join MSSM as a junior. In two years, I was able to take advanced coursework in mathematics, science, and humanities. I learned leadership skills, participated in a range of co-curricular activities, and completed internships at two hospitals. MSSM was able to offer coursework and experiences that my local high school was not. As a result of my attendance at MSSM, I felt well-prepared for postsecondary education. I completed an undergraduate degree at the University of Maine at Farmington, a master’s degree at the University of Southern Maine, and a doctorate from Northeastern University. I owe my success to MSSM.

Maine students need to have the same opportunities that I was given. This bill will help make that happen. The funding will restore needed positions to support students. It will provide funding for wage increases for faculty and staff and help address curriculum, transportation, and building fees. I was lucky to have exceptional faculty and staff at MSSM when I attended,

and this new funding will help attract and retain these dedicated professionals so that students can continue to have supportive adults to help them thrive. In addition, the funding will pay for student room and board expenses so that Maine families are not “scared away” with the \$9,800 sticker price. This small investment will ease the burden for families, attract additional students to the school, and make sure MSSM is accessible to a broader range of students.

As the Executive Director of Educate Maine, I am proud to support this bill on behalf of our board of directors as well. Our business and education leaders strongly support MSSM. Our organization focuses on supporting the future workforce of Maine. The future of the Maine economy depends on the talent that we have in our state. We must prioritize developing young leaders who can join all parts of our economy especially in STEM occupations. As a result, I encourage you to support LD 1458 to provide additional funding for MSSM. Thank you for your time.

Jason Judd, Ed.D.  
Educate Maine