

To the Honorable Members of Maine's Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee,

It is with tremendous pride in the school that we serve that we as members and officers of the Board of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics write in support of LD 1458 - An Act to Increase Funding for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM).

Our Board consists of a diverse group of Maine professionals with specialties in mathematics, science, technology, education, and more. We include both an alumnus and current student of the school as well as parents of multiple current students and alumni. We hail from various corners of the State and most everywhere in between. What we share is a passion for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) and our belief in the tremendous potential that this school offers the good citizens of the State of Maine.

We dedicate our time and energies to the MSSM Board because we have seen, heard, and in many cases experienced firsthand the incredible impact that this unique living and learning environment provides to Maine's next generation – a generation that we endeavor to see thrive in their educations and in their careers without any feeling that they need to leave this great State if they hope to achieve their potential (now or in the future).

We also share a deep concern that there are those, especially in the most rural areas of Maine, who would excel in the MSSM environment if they only held belief that this unparalleled experience was financially attainable for them and their families. While MSSM tuition is free to Maine residents, inflation has inevitably led to rising room and board costs which are assuredly a deterrent to those students who might most benefit from the nationally recognized academic and experiential education that the MSSM provides. We need your help to ensure that no Maine student is left behind due to such social determinants.

We also share deep concern that MSSM, having been flat-funded since fiscal year 2017, has not been afforded the same year-over-year financial opportunities that other publicly funded schools have experienced. While some might assume flat funding would allow the school to at least operate at the same high level, rising costs have necessarily resulted in program cuts, salary freezes, and even position eliminations. The MSSM, its faculty and staff, and most importantly, the current and future student body need your support to ensure that the MSSM and the students and families impacted by the school can continue to thrive as have those MSSM families and alumni who have gone before them.

We serve the Maine School of Science and Mathematics because we are passionate about the value it brings to the citizens and future of Maine. We are asking you to partner with us by supporting appropriate funding for this incredible feather in Maine's cap.

Thank you in advance for your support of LD 1458.

Sincerely,

Yoosuf S. Siddiqui, Chair
Easton, ME

Marian Reagan, Vice Chair
Kennebunkport, ME

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