

Daniel Pope  
South Berwick  
LD 1458

Dear Members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee:

I am writing in support of 'LD1458 - An Act to Increase Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics'. My daughter, Pipsa, is a sophomore at MSSM. Our family was so excited when Pipsa discovered information about MSSM two years ago and decided to apply. She had struggled to find the rigorous academic engagement in science and math at her local middle school and MSSM became a wonderful alternative. Upon attending she was quickly challenged and engaged academically like she never had been before, a welcome change. She would return home on breaks bursting with new knowledge to share and excited about what she would learn next.

However, despite this positive change we've debated sending Pipsa back each year. The school has so much promise but is so underfunded. We hear about staff departures who aren't always replaced due to budget constraints. We hear about maintenance issues in the building that aren't fixed due to lack of funds. And we see declining enrollment with a concern that the school might drop below a critical threshold in the future if there isn't change.

MSSM has had remarkable success on a national scale in what it achieves and where it sends its graduating students but the current flat funding isn't sustainable. We urge you to support LD1458 to ensure the future of this special school and hopefully expand the reach of this opportunity to a growing set of young students.