

Erica McNally  
Falmouth  
LD 1458

Hello Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and Honorable Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing today as a graduate of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics and asking you to pass LD 1458 An Act To Increase Funding for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. I can speak directly to the impact and success the school has had on my life, opportunities and success here in Maine as well as all the impact on past, present and future students of MSSM. The funding LD 1458 will provide MSSM, will continue to support a strong future for the children and citizens of Maine. I have personally benefited from the education and opportunities provided to me through MSSM and never would have been able to give back to Maine as much as I have without this education. MSSM provided me opportunities for education and advancement that I never would have had in MSAD15 in 1995. The very work I did as a legislative aide for the Maine State Legislature and with Senator Ned Claxton's campaign would never have been possible in my life if not for the early success MSSM provided me. Generations of students and the state have benefited from the education, advancement and opportunities MSSM has provided us. It is imperative we provide the school the necessary funding to keep this legacy of growth, enrichment and success for the state of Maine and the future of our children.

MSSM has received flat-funded appropriations since FY2017, and it is recommended by the Department of Education to remain at this level through FY2025 which is not a sustainable model for the school. It would result in diminished wages for employees, the elimination of additional essential staff positions and threaten the ability for the school to serve Maine's students in the future and for those students to then serve the state of Maine. Virtually every department of the school has seen cuts over the past six years due to the impact of flat-funding. The school has had to re-organize multiple times to make do with limited human resources, including the elimination and reduction of many positions.

A timely and sustained increase in state appropriations to the school is needed to continue to provide the high-quality educational and residential program envisioned in the school's mission, vision and founding statute. MSSM employees are to be commended for their creativity and flexibility in filling gaps that prior funding have left. This goodwill and dedication to the education and well-being of Maine students is to be praised, but not relied upon as a lasting solution. Indeed no educator should have to go beyond innovation and rely on personal resources to maintain the quality of education their students need. Please do not let this school fall into such dire circumstances. No other school in the state of Maine has been asked to operate under such fiscal constraints.

MSSM is one of the most decorated schools in the country, regularly ranked as the best public school in Maine and in 2019 US News and World Report ranked MSSM as the second best public high school in the Country. MSSM graduates contribute significantly to Maine: almost 20% of college MSSM graduates over the last five years attended the University of Maine at Orono. Many MSSM graduates stay in Maine or return to Maine and work in the areas of life sciences, education, non-profit, finance, software development, finance, engineering and politics. MSSM graduates enrich all corners of our state including the Maine State House. This kind of success will not continue without the adequate funding and support of LD 1458.

Thank you for your consideration and please support LD 1458 An Act to Increase Funding for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics.

Sincerely,

Erica L. McNally  
MSSM pioneer class of 1997  
Falmouth, ME