



Testimony by Jason Judd, Ed.D., Executive Director, Educate Maine

In Support of LD 787, An Act to Clarify Residency Requirements for and Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics

Thursday, March 27, 2025, 1:00 P.M.

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Jason Judd, the Executive Director of Educate Maine. Our organization is a business-led nonprofit focused on increasing education attainment for Maine people to meet the demands of our economy. I am writing to express my support for LD 787, An Act to Clarify Residency Requirements for and Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. I am writing on behalf of Educate Maine and as a proud graduate of MSSM.

I grew up in Somerset County. I had positive school experiences throughout my childhood. As I began high school, I quickly realized that I needed additional coursework in mathematics and science that my school could not offer. As I transitioned to MSSM as a junior, I realized the school would offer me so much more than challenging classes in mathematics and science. It would change my life in two short years and prepare me for success in postsecondary education and in the workforce. I discovered a love of reading and writing, pursued a variety of co-curricular pursuits including speech and debate and student senate, and was able to participate in two internships in emergency medicine at nearby hospitals. These experiences raised my aspirations and deepened my love of learning.

As I transitioned to college, it was clear that MSSM prepared me well for the rigorous demands of college coursework. I was able to take upper level classes as a first-year student and adjust easily to the residential living environment. I had learned the skills needed to live away from home and challenge myself academically. As I found my calling to teach, I was able to use the wonderful student experiences I had at MSSM to grow as an educator. I embraced hands-on education, championed the connections to real world applications, and used research-based practices to inform my teaching. MSSM also helped me understand the importance of lifelong learning; I've earned a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate since graduating from the school. I now join a variety of MSSM alumni who are giving back to the State of Maine through building businesses, serving in the legislature and state agencies, working in laboratories and universities, and contributing to the economic development of Maine.

It is clear that MSSM develops leaders. In my role as Executive Director of Educate Maine, I work closely with Maine employers. I often hear about the need for more STEM workers who have important technical and soft skills. MSSM is an essential part of the strategy for Maine to increase the number of STEM professionals. I strongly encourage you to support this bill and others to make sure MSSM can continue to develop future leaders. Thank you for your time and consideration.