

Miles Sweet
Scarborough
LD 787

I write in support of LD 787 and LD 1011 for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics in Limestone.

It's one of the places I call home. I'm originally from Central Maine's rural Kennebec Valley, and I was the first student from outside of Aroostook County to visit what would become MSSM more than 30 years ago. At the end of the Cold War, when the bases at Loring and Brunswick closed, all levels of government agreed to invest in an experiment in the pursuit of excellence. The Legislature's school. A place where students from all 16 counties could live together, learn how to collaborate on big projects, and compete in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. It's a place I came back to as a science camp teacher in the summer between becoming the first person in my family to graduate from college and starting my doctorate in chemistry at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar.

On the 25th anniversary of my graduation from MSSM, I was invited back to give the commencement address. Students asked me what had changed. The food is better, the dorms more comfortable, and the technology is beyond anything we might have imagined in the 1990s. But what has remained the same for decades is a commitment to community, the highest standards of learning results, and a grateful appreciation to the people of Maine for their Legislature's school. Parents told me they knew it was a safe place where their children could also find a home, challenge themselves, and unlock their potential. You make that possible.

Ensuring success for generations to come is one of the reasons I moved back to Maine and joined the Board of Directors for the MSSM Foundation, the booster club that helps coordinate fans of the school – mostly family, alums, faculty and staff – who donate money, goods, and time to help enhance that margin of excellence. In recent years, those donors have funded the purchase and installation of a new fume hood in the chemistry lab, supported research, and ensured access to opportunity for students in need through scholarships and grants. As a proud alum, STEM professional, and Mainer, I thank you for the gift of MSSM. The experiment worked, and I hope we can continue working together to keep it going.

Sincerely,
Miles Sweet
Scarborough, Maine
MSSM Class of 1997