

TO: Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

DATE: January 26, 2026

RE: LD 2008, n Act to Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics and Clarify Sending School Administrative Unit Obligations

My name is Cherie Galyean. I am a resident of Bar Harbor and a parent to a child currently at Maine School of Science and Mathematics. I am writing in support of LD 2008.

My son started at MSSM this year as a sophomore. While he enjoyed his freshman year at our local high school, it became clear that he was not being challenged academically. He came home each day bored with his assignments and frustrated with his fellow students who seemed disinterested in learning.

His first five months at MSSM have been revelatory for all of us. He has absolutely blossomed there. For possibly the first time in his life, he is being appropriately challenged in school. He currently has all As, but he is working extremely hard for them. He has found all his teachers to be supportive and encouraging while upholding a high standard. He enjoys the freedom that dorm life has brought and it has raised his level of independence. While home for winter break, he off-handedly said “I am running low on clothes. I think I’ll do some laundry,” which possibly marks the first time such a statement has been made by a teenage boy.

As you might expect, I would love to see every child who would like to attend MSSM to be able to do so. By requiring sending districts without a high school to support attendance at MSSM and providing additional funds to students with financial need, LD 2008 would help with this goal. Although my family is able to afford the room and board costs and would not benefit from this assistance, I am keenly aware that the costs would be a barrier for most Maine families. No child should lose out on this high-quality public education because of family finances. Most especially, I strongly support the one-time stipulation for funds for infrastructure upgrades for the MSSM dorms. While the school has done the best it can to steward its buildings, the stress of decades of use is showing.

The truth is that the state has flat-funded MSSM for over a decade—an absolutely untenable situation given inflation and rising student enrollment. Despite their best efforts to stretch their limited dollars, the cracks are beginning to show. This funding is needed to keep MSSM a thriving, positive, challenging place for Maine students like my son. I know that an investment made this year will be paid back at least tenfold with the economic impact these bright, determined, and dedicated students will have on the state.

Thank you for your time and service.