



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET MILLS  
GOVERNOR

PENDER MAKIN  
COMMISSIONER

February 13, 2024

Senator Rafferty, Senate Chair  
Representative Brennan, House Chair  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

LD 2118, An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics Using the School Funding Formula Criteria, requires the Commissioner of Education to annually determine the total cost for providing essential programs and services for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics for students from Maine in the same manner that total costs for providing essential programs and services for school administrative units are determined under the essential programs and services school funding formula.

The Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) currently receives state funding in accordance with Title 20-A §8202 which outlines tuition; room and board; and funding. Section 2 of this statute indicates that all Maine resident students may attend the school free of tuition charges and free of the cost of room and board. Additional funding for these students may be provided by the State as the Legislature deems appropriate. Title 20-A §15689-A outlines targeted funding priorities and allows the Commissioner of Education to disburse funds. In their current form, these statutes provide more funding per Maine student than an allocation resulting from an EPS calculation would. In addition to the statutory funding, MSSM students have received an average of \$132,687 each year in the past three years for Aspirations funding. This amount has provided an average of 92 students and average of 961 credits per year.



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The per pupil cost for MSSM is approximately \$35,000 per year. The average per pupil cost for Maine SAUs is approximately \$11,000 annually, according to the 2022-23 tuition rates. The current in-state cost for a UMaine student living on campus with a full meal plan and course load is \$22,000 per year. The Maine School of Science and Mathematics is one of the components of the "purple sheet" used by the school finance team to calculate the total cost of education in the State of Maine. As such, MSSM receives an allocation "off the top" of EPS and their funding isn't subject to the census requirements of other Maine schools. In addition, due to the nature of EPS funding requiring a state and local share MSSM would need to be treated as a charter school within the funding formula since the students are residents of multiple municipalities and a single local share cannot be determined.

The Department will be available to provide additional information on LD 2118 and respond to any questions during the upcoming work session.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Gravelle".  
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Paula Gravelle  
Director of School Finance