

**LD2118, As Amended  
Testimony in Support  
February 13, 2024  
Robert J. Constantine, MSSM Executive Director**

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and the members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Rob Constantine and I am the current Executive Director of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. I am happy to be here today to voice my support for LD2118, as amended.

MSSM draws students from across Maine - providing a unique and unparalleled educational opportunity that our students would not have experienced without the School. We offer a rigorous academic curriculum with many classes taught at the college level. At the same time, we establish an intentional learning community at our residential Limestone campus that welcomes students as they are and meets them where they are - fostering connection, encouraging risk, and inspiring inquiry. Some of our students are here today to share how MSSM has impacted their academic careers.

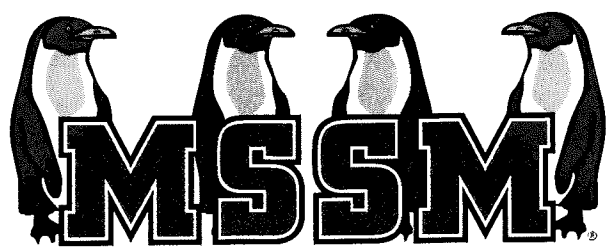
Upon completing their studies, MSSM students consistently exceed Maine and national scores on the SAT and go on to study at some of the best higher education institutions. In the last five years, 50 MSSM graduates have chosen to study at institutions right here in Maine, including 30 at the University of Maine. Our alumni, some of whom are here today, make important and significant contributions to Maine as entrepreneurs, outstanding employees, educators, and community leaders. It is clear that MSSM is an invaluable resource in Maine's educational system and STEM landscape.

While we work to provide an excellent experience, the nature of our funding has presented real challenges for MSSM. With no increases in our annual appropriation, normal operating increases like lease, utilities, and food have led us to reduce our spend on positions by roughly \$500,000 over the last five years. We have had to raise our room and board costs - now at \$10,300 - making access more challenging for many Maine families and maxing out our tight financial aid budget. We have been forced to reduce our expenditures on our STEM summer experiences by over \$100,000. For next year, we are already modeling eliminating three positions and not hiring one planned addition.

The net impact of these challenging decisions has been to limit MSSM's, and Maine's, potential. We opened the 2023-24 school year with 104 students - below our desired number and below our capacity. Our student body is less geographically distributed throughout the state. We have cut back our summer experiences by two weeks and reduced the number of Maine students we serve during the summer by approximately 140. We are at the limits of our ability to find cost savings that will not negatively impact our students and Maine's youth.

LD2118, as amended, addresses our static funding and allows us to focus on our future to enhance our impact. I am excited to be working with our governor-appointed Board of Directors on developing a forward looking strategic plan for MSSM. LD2118 secures our operations and addresses access for the next couple of years - allowing us to turn our focus to the exciting work of identifying and investing in initiatives that ensure our curricular relevance in a rapidly changing STEM environment, create opportunities for students to do real STEM work that contributes to Maine institutions and communities, build rich partnerships that foster Maine's STEM economy, and enhance our ability to encourage young people to explore STEM fields - all while also securing the School's financial future.

Thank you for your time today and for your service to the State of Maine. We look forward to welcoming you to our campus in Limestone someday! I'm happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.



Maine School of Science and Mathematics

# Maine School of Science and Mathematics

## 2023-2024 School Profile

Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) was founded in 1995 by the Maine Legislature as a public, residential magnet serves talented and highly motivated high school students from across the state. For the 2023-2024 school year, MSSM serves 104 students in grades 9-12.

MSSM's academic year is divided into semesters with an additional January term providing opportunity for accelerated, specialty courses, and internships.

### Academic Rigor

Advanced Placement courses are offered at MSSM in Calculus AB and BC, Statistics, Chemistry, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, and Physics C: Mechanics and Electricity & Magnetism.

MSSM students are motivated, talented, and hard-working. In 2019, they took 59 Advanced Placement tests and demonstrated their mastery of college level material by achieving a mean score of 4.0 on the tests.

Most courses at MSSM are taught at the college level using college textbooks and curricular materials. MSSM has an agreement with the University of Maine at Presque Isle allowing students to receive college credit for a majority of MSSM courses that are taught at or beyond the AP level.

### Dual-Enrollment Courses

Algebra II / Trigonometry	French I
Applied Genetics & Biotechnology	French II
Art History I	Honors Composition
Basic Design	Introduction to Literature
Before Calculus BC	Introduction to Programming
Biological Processes	Linear Algebra
Calculus BC	Macroeconomics
Creative Writing I	Multivariable Calculus
Early American Literature	Sociology
Early British Literature	Spanish I / Spanish II
First Year Seminar	US History

**Rob Constantine**  
Executive Director  
constantiner@mssm.org

**Erica Jortberg**  
College Counselor  
jortberge@mssm.org

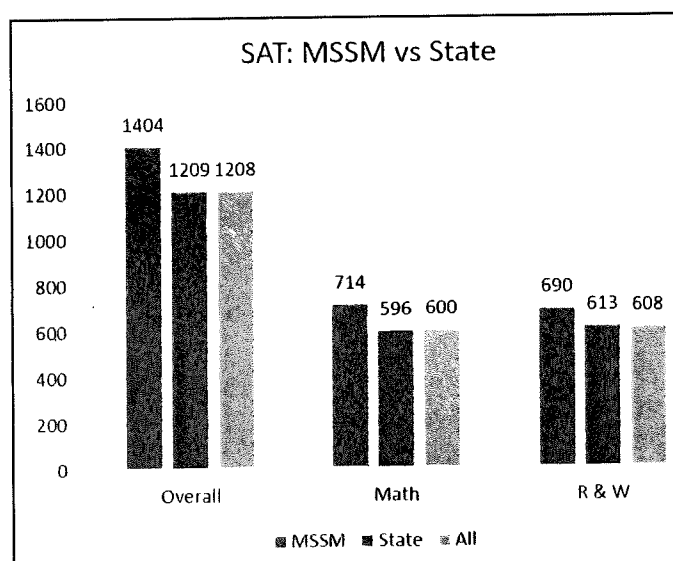
**Heidi St. Peter**  
Registrar  
stpeterh@mssm.org

**MSSM's Niche.com ranks:**

**#1 Best Public High School in Maine**

**#1 Best Public High School Teachers in Maine**

**#1 Best College Prep Public High School in Maine**



## A Learning Community

MSSM is located in the town of Limestone (pop. 2,300) in a rural area near the northern tip of Maine, less than two miles from the Canadian Border. The nearest city, Bangor (pop. 33,000), is a three hour drive from MSSM, and the biggest city in our state, Portland (pop. 66,000), is almost six hours away. With these longer drive times, it is difficult for MSSM students to make college visits. Therefore interviews are most commonly completed via video conferencing.

Activities at MSSM range from Astronomy Club and Art Club to VEX Robotics and Key Club. MSSM requires two hours per week of community service from students, such as tutoring, assisting faculty, or serving as residential assistants. To emphasize academic collaboration over competition, MSSM records neither GPA nor class rank. The school's small size, residential nature, and cooperative academic environment combine to create a very tight-knit community of scholars.

MSSM typically offers the dedicated student athlete an opportunity to engage in sports. Varsity teams currently include soccer, cross country, track, Nordic skiing, and volleyball.

### Matriculation Summary: Classes of 2022 & 2023

Arizona State University-Tempe  
Bates College \*  
Boston University \*  
Bowdoin College \*  
Brown University  
Colby College \*  
Columbia University in the City of New York  
Dartmouth College \*  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Daytona Beach  
Maine Maritime Academy  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Oberlin College  
Pomona College  
Reed College  
Rice University \*  
Rochester Institute of Technology \*  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
Skidmore College  
University of Maine \*  
University of Massachusetts-Amherst  
University of New England  
University of New Hampshire-Main Campus  
University of Vermont  
Wellesley College \*  
Wentworth Institute of Technology \*  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
\* indicates multiple matriculations

## Distinctive Academic Features and Awards

⊙ Admission to MSSM is highly competitive. In addition to their academic ability (measured by grades, teacher recommendations, a writing sample and test scores) our students are selected on the basis of maturity, motivation, and ability to contribute positively to the residential environment.

⊙ In 2023-2024, the student teacher ratio is 9:1.

⊙ The academic year typically includes a January term which gives students the opportunity for intensive interdisciplinary classes, research opportunities, and internships.

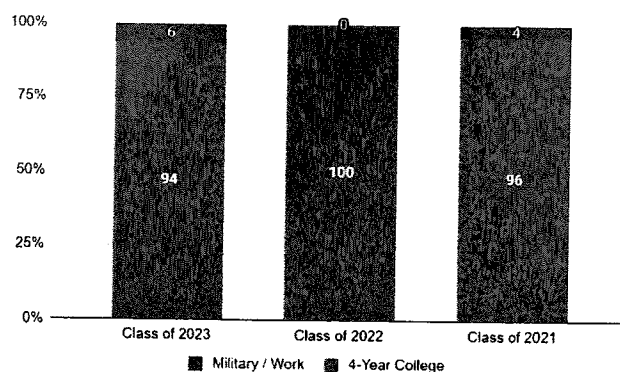
⊙ 92% of faculty hold advanced degrees. Many have significant private sector experience and have studied extensively in their fields.

⊙ The MSSM math team consistently places first in the Maine State Math Meet.

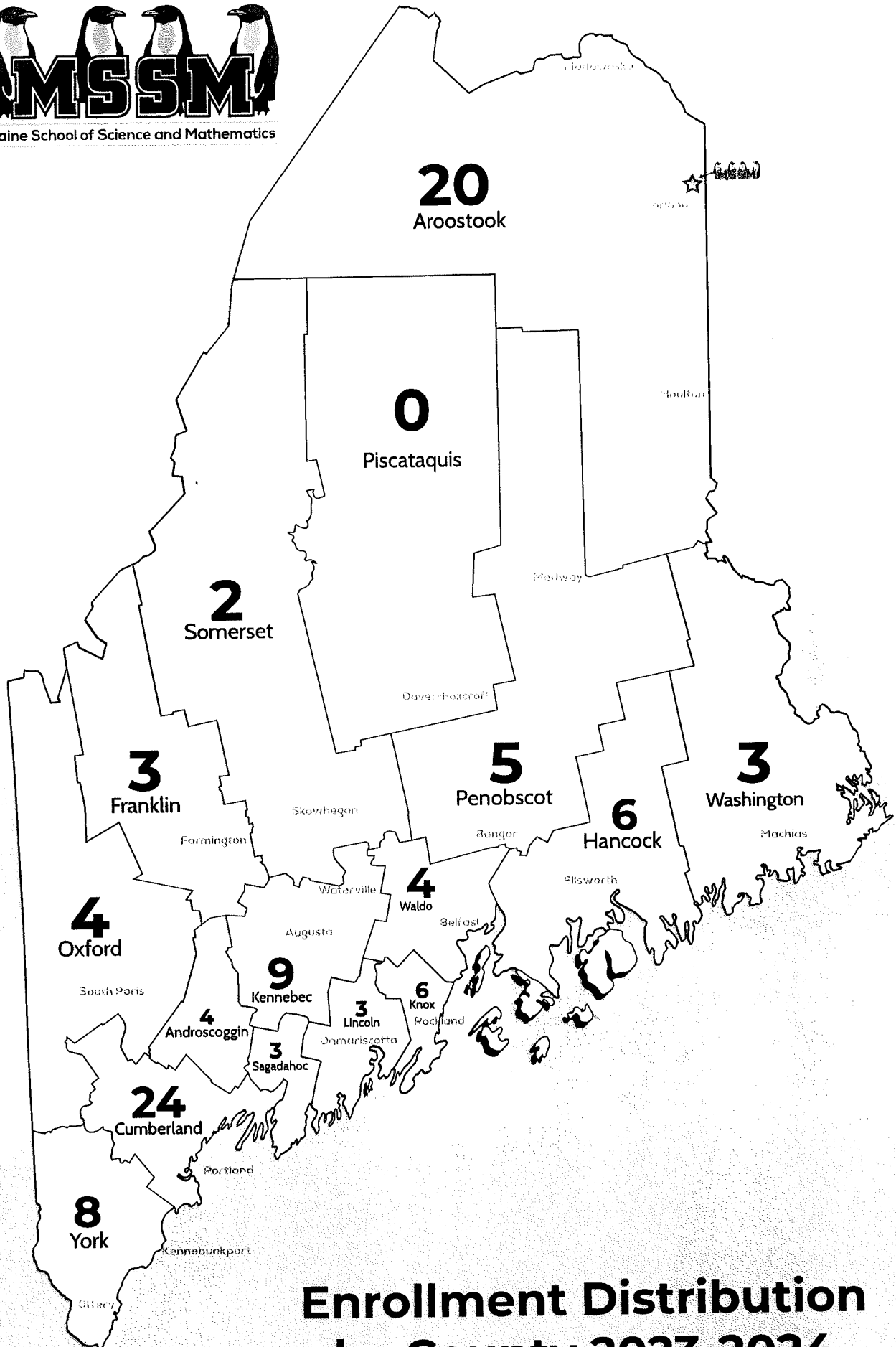
⊙ MSSM requires two years of world language and two years of social sciences.

⊙ Out of the 25 members in the class of 2024, 10 received recognition in the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program

Post-Secondary Plans

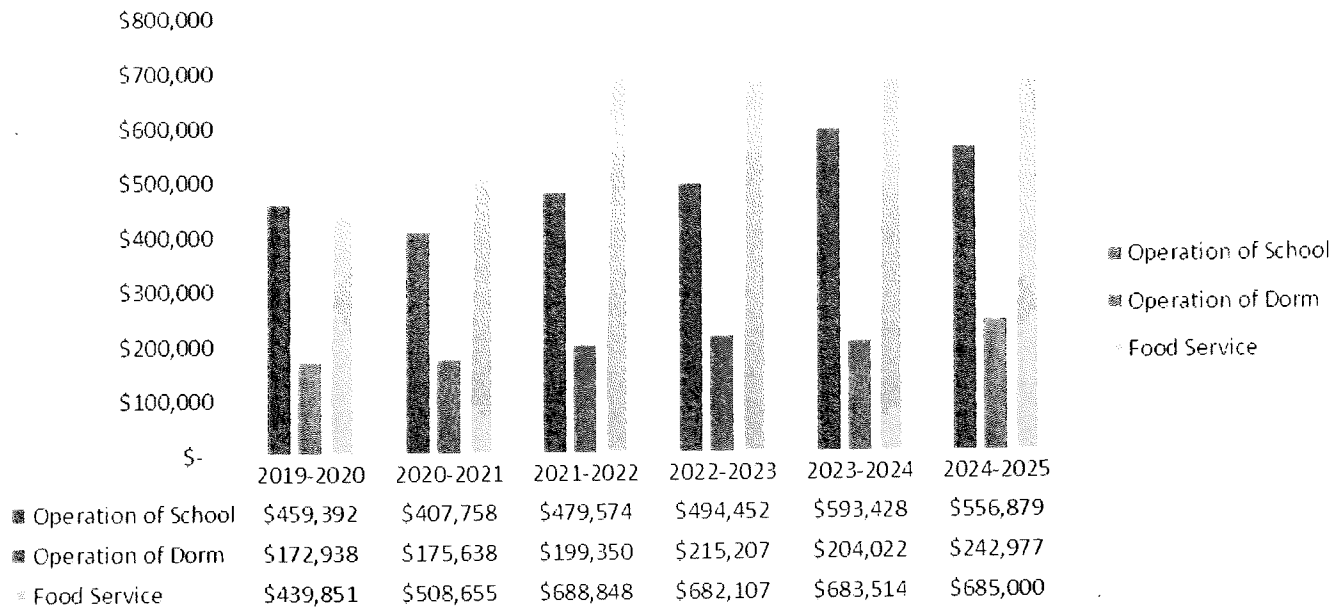


Grade	Range	Grade	Range
A+	97-100	C+	77-99
A	93-96	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	F	Below 70
B	83-86	I	Incomplete
B-	80-82	W	Withdrawal



## Enrollment Distribution by County 2023-2024

## Increased Expenditures



## Payroll Decreases

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Academic Support	\$181,698	\$178,355	\$164,966	\$206,949	\$197,231	\$169,608
Admissions	\$143,125	\$151,868	\$166,988	\$132,739	\$123,618	\$78,461
College Counseling	\$59,500	\$59,258	\$60,907	\$68,242	\$69,237	\$68,725
Executive Director	\$182,518	\$179,983	\$218,850	\$229,771	\$264,611	\$277,065
Health Services	\$70,144	\$63,252	\$66,444	\$103,180	\$99,884	\$93,518
ICT (Computer Technology)	\$141,402	\$140,560	\$144,938	\$139,671	\$141,054	\$143,464
Operations	\$249,687	\$232,066	\$177,573	\$181,839	\$184,585	\$164,403
Public Relations	\$35,807	\$35,540	\$34,416	\$20,739	\$22,875	\$23,115
Special Ed	\$28,247	\$27,970	\$28,663	\$29,093	\$49,643	\$5,000
Athletics	\$36,104	\$24,205	\$35,761	\$32,116	\$38,587	\$22,412
Student Activities	\$20,367	\$14,099	\$19,785	\$20,415	\$20,703	\$3,000
Teachers	\$1,463,391	\$1,287,505	\$1,209,750	\$1,231,956	\$1,224,224	\$1,244,542
Trafton Expenses	\$54,598	\$54,307	\$56,846	\$51,877	\$58,667	\$66,729
Transportation	\$29,205	\$28,198	\$19,501	\$13,404	\$14,992	\$15,312
Operation of Dorm	\$123,228	\$110,392	\$116,748	\$116,261	\$108,513	\$121,378
Residential Life	\$304,055	\$302,994	\$298,713	\$239,163	\$202,342	\$214,655
<b>Subtotal Payroll Budgets</b>	<b>\$3,123,076</b>	<b>\$2,890,553</b>	<b>\$2,820,850</b>	<b>\$2,817,415</b>	<b>\$2,820,768</b>	<b>\$2,711,386</b>
					Difference from 19-20 to 24-25	-\$411,690