

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee and members of the E Committee, my name is Deborah McGann and I live in Presque Isle. I am here to testify in support of LD 2008: "An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics and Clarify Sending School Administrative Unit Obligations"

As an alumni parent, former MSSM staff, and current Executive Director of the MSSM Foundation, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to speak with you today about the Foundation.

Since its establishment just over 30 years ago—even before MSSM opened its doors—the MSSM Foundation has worked tirelessly to enhance the educational excellence MSSM provides to some of Maine's most talented students.

Our alumni are now stepping forward. Graduates from our pioneer classes, after investing years in their own education and careers, are now positioned to give back to the institution that transformed their lives. They are demonstrating their gratitude, not only through financial contributions but also by volunteering their expertise on the **Foundation Board**, where they now hold key leadership positions.

The results speak for themselves. With alumni at the helm, the Foundation has achieved remarkable growth. Our program expenditures have increased fivefold—from a three-year average of \$33,000 to \$190,000 annually. The centerpiece of this growth is the Penguin Fund, an annual giving program that now provides nearly 2% of the school's operating budget.

This is just the beginning. Many of our graduates have spent as much as a decade in post-secondary education and are only **now** reaching their peak earning years. Yet, in this past year, over 10% of our alumni and their families contributed to the Foundation—an extraordinary participation rate that reflects the profound impact MSSM has had on their lives.

However, private philanthropy cannot do this alone. While the Foundation is confident in our ability to continue growing support, we cannot replace State investment. The margin of excellence that makes MSSM a nationally recognized institution depends on adequate state funding.

We respectfully urge this Committee to vote "Ought to pass" on LD2008 amend legislation and increase state funding for MSSM so that together—through the partnership of public investment and private philanthropy—we can ensure this vital educational resource continues to serve Maine's students and prepare them to contribute to our state's future.

Thank you for your consideration.