

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT 20

Searsport • Stockton Springs

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19 January 2022

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

From: Chris Downing, Superintendent of Schools RSU # 20 – Searsport and Stockton Springs

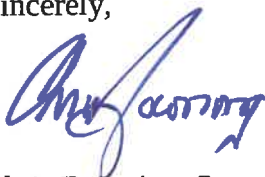
RE: LD 1389: AN ACT TO IMPROVE MARITIME EDUCATION IN MAINE

RSU 20 has worked with Maine Ocean School from the beginning of the concept and will continue. As an educator with 40 plus years of experience, we need to learn from past experiences, review our current practices and plan for the future. Maine Ocean School meets the three facets and should be provided alternatives to continue. RSU 20 and Maine Ocean School have traveled the path together while maintaining our lanes per statutes.

We are interested in continuing to work with Maine Ocean School and the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee and its representatives to investigate the option for the School's Ocean-Themed Alternative Program. An integrated model would entail future conversation around how to support the programming with existing resources, additional resources, and within the structures allowed the two entities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be available for further discussions and look forward to our continued educational cooperation with Maine Ocean School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Downing".

Chris Downing, Superintendent of Schools – RSU # 20

January 19, 2022

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

I am writing to you today in support of LD1389 - An Act To Improve Maritime Education In Maine. As the Assistant Dean of Lifelong Learning and the Hutchinson Center at the University of Maine, I have interacted with Maine Ocean School since its inception, helping to provide educational opportunities for students at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast. In light of the past successful collaborations with the Maine Ocean School, we are interested in discussions regarding the Hutchinson Center as a possible site for educational and operational purposes, as well as exploring collaborations on programming such as Early College and Research Learning Experiences.

I understand the School has been asked to revisit its model for providing marine-based education to high school students. The staff at the Hutchinson Center and at the University of Maine have discussed an alternative model with Board of Trustees members. While there is much to be worked out, the timing for this revisit is amazingly coincident with our own rethinking for the Hutchinson Center's mission and business model. We are willing to have additional conversations with the School Board and other stakeholders to consider how our restructuring efforts could be complementary. Further, should the Committee be amenable to creating a study group to consider alternative models, the Hutchinson Center would be open to further discussion on the matter.

Public education in this area is more important now than ever as the marine trades represent a \$2.9B annual economic impact for Maine and the biggest obstacle for growth that boat builders, boatyards, and marinas face is finding sufficient workforce. The importance of this sector and need for lifelong learning will certainly be at the forefront of discussions as we rethink the Hutchinson Center. I anticipate the curriculum and program that has been developed by Maine Ocean School will play a large role in addressing the needs of the marine trades and could be an asset to the Hutchinson Center's new mission and business model.

Sincerely,



Patricia Libby
University of Maine
Assistant Dean Division of Lifelong Learning and Frederick Hutchinson Center
patricia.libby@maine.edu
207.581.4891

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is David Fredrick Hall IV, although I just go by Noah. I am a freshman in my second semester at the University of Southern Maine, with a major in Political Science. I spent my summer working at the Monhegan Boat Line, a ferry service that runs out of Port Clyde, and to Monhegan Island, and still work there when I find the time, typically on weekends.

Let me cut to the chase. I've written three testimonies so far, and of those three testimonies, I was able to read them in front of you all, twice. The final time was over Zoom, during my senior year, as the Class President. Though I regret not being able to read this one to you all, I hope that won't affect your will to read it.

I joined the Maine Ocean School in October of 2018, during its first year. Since then, I have been introduced to dozens and dozens of incredible people. People whom I never would have met otherwise. People like Capt. Mike Flanagan, Capt. Michael Ames, Representative Scott Cuddy, Almon "Bud" Rivers, Congressman Jared Golden, and so many more. Suffice to say that Maine Ocean School helped me enhance my network.

Aside from those outside of the everyday activities, I was privileged to be taught by the two beloved teachers, Andrew Doak and Megan Begley. A teacher is typically defined as someone who helps others to learn. This definition is by far the largest understatement when it comes to these two wonderful people. Time and time again, under the stress of the pandemic, situations in their personal lives, along with the typical issues one would face in a teaching position; these two were able to overcome these challenges, and surpass any highschooler's expectations. I speak for my fellow graduates when I say that they were by far, the two favorite teacher's any of us have had.

Speaking of fellow graduates, I must say, the peers that I went to school with, were of the highest quality, and exhibited what are arguably the best qualities humanity is capable of: strong work ethics, knowledgeable, experienced, but most importantly, they were good people.

Look, folks, I could go on, on, and on about this, but I would like to cut it short here to let you guys look at others' testimonies. For any further questions, you can email me at davidfhalliv@gmail.com .

For these reasons, I ask for you to vote in support of LD 1389. Thank you.

January 19, 2022

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Maine State Legislature

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Felix Duggin, and I am writing on behalf of the Maine Ocean School. If I am speaking totally truthfully, the Maine Ocean School has and continues to change my life. The school is filled with some of the most talented and inventive people I have ever met (teachers and students). I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be around them and learn from them. Furthermore, I believe that it is wonderful and important to have a public school based in the marine industries that have been so prominent in Maine for such a long time, as it allows for students to come (from all around the country, in some cases) for a specialized education related to something they are interested in. Take myself for example; I was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, and my family moved to Maine primarily so I could go to the Maine Ocean School. This ocean-based education does not only draw students from different places, it improves the quality of education received by those students. By basing the lessons and classes around something the students are interested in, they are more likely to retain information and actually learn during their time at the school.

During my time at the Maine Ocean School, I have experienced numerous interesting and fun things, and I have been greatly impressed by the knowledge and work ethic of those around me. Everyone I interact with is extremely intelligent and experienced, and it drives me to be better along with them.

This is why I am in support of LD 1389 and the continued operation of the Maine Ocean School, so that it might continue to better the lives of students like myself.

All the best,
Felix Duggin

January 19, 2022

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Educational and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Larkin Kjellberg, and I am a sophomore and Vice President of the Student Council at Maine Ocean School, and I am from Sandwich, New Hampshire, which means I attend the school virtually. My passion has always been marine biology, specifically marine mammals, so Maine Ocean School was always on our radar. During the pandemic, many of my dreams were stifled, but in the summer after 8th grade, we heard that the Maine Ocean School was going online and accepting out-of-state students. We were overjoyed and started the application process that day.

Maine Ocean School has opened my world up to so many opportunities, such as sailing on the schooner Roseway and giving me connections that will help me further my dreams. Through the school, I also met my best friend, and I hope that the school will continue to be able to provide the same kind of education, connections, and friendships they gave me.

I urge the committee to continue to support the Maine Ocean School, so they can keep this wonderful school open and allow other students a chance to further their education and keep working towards their dreams, just like me.

Please vote in favor of LD 1389: An Act To Improve Maritime Education In Maine.

Respectfully,
Larkin Kjellberg

January 19, 2022

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Maine State Legislature

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Hannah Mellor, I am a Senior from Stockton Springs, as well as the President of the Student Body for the Maine Ocean School.

To give you some perspective, the beginning of my first year as a freshman at Maine Ocean School (and, really, middle school) was difficult. I refused to talk to other peers or staff members unless I was spoken to, I kept my head down, and I was *always* a follower. I avoided leading a group project at all costs, and I tried to only elaborate on issues, never voicing my own opinion.

Even just by the end of my freshman year, Maine Ocean School had made a tremendous difference in my levels of confidence. It was that year I was told I had “leadership abilities,” that I was “able to see the strength in others and could utilize my team well.” That single comment made a life-changing impact on how I held myself, and how I continued to hold myself. It was later that day I applied to an Early College course at the Hutchinson Center.

From there, it only got better. Each year after that, my confidence levels continued to rise. I continued to take Early College courses that I continued to do well in, and I continued exposing myself to growth-based opportunities. I took high school courses that I never would’ve taken before, like engineering, that opened my eyes to a whole new realm of science that I *love*.

It was Maine Ocean school that taught me that learning was more than just walking into a classroom just to take a seat, listen to lectures, and write notes. Maine Ocean School taught me that health class isn't just about learning the anatomy of the body, it's about learning how to calculate calories so you can better manage your eating habits; Civics isn't just about learning about human's place in government, it's about learning your own personal biases to make unbiased decisions that are better for people as a whole; Science isn't just about biology, it's about problem solving and finding sustainable solutions to real world problems; and Math isn't just about learning how to calculate the slope and area of a circle, it's also about learning how to create and manage financial aspects of a potential business.

Maine Ocean School taught me that it's better to question areas I don't understand rather than to simply write down what I'm told. Maine Ocean School taught me that it's better to take chances and believe in what I'm capable of rather than to stay in the same safe box preventing personal growth. Maine Ocean School taught me that there are educators who care about your growth, educators willing to take the steps to make sure you get the learning experience you deserve.

When I began my journey at the Maine Ocean School I was not performing to my potential, my transcript can vouch for that. However, with exposure to hands-on activities and real world experiences, I have reached that potential as a strong student. Maine Ocean School provided me with tools I would not have otherwise been provided with anywhere else. These tools gave me the incentive to become a strong leader, the incentive to develop a strong work ethic, and that exposed me to a group of reliable, local marine workers.

That opportunity would not have been given to me anywhere else.

In conclusion, please vote in favor of LD 1389, An Act to Improve Maritime Education in Maine, so that future students may also receive the same opportunities that I did.

Jan. 18, 2022

I spent my professional life on the water. Two years in the U.S. Coast Guard, two and half years on an ocean going tugboat. Forty three years with the Sandy Hook Pilots, thirty four years as a Pilot in New York Harbor.

Maine has a long and distinguished maritime history; it must continue. The students of today are the future of us all.

The Maine Ocean School is an important part of that process. We must support LD 1359 to help maintain what we have and ensure Maine's maritime future.

Thank you,

Capt. F. E. Reil