



April 22, 2021

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Maine State Legislature

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee.

My name is David Hall. My son, Noah Hall (David F. Hall IV), is a senior at Maine Ocean School and I am happy to say he is excited to wake up early every morning and drive an hour to school. He has been at the Maine Ocean School since October, 2018, after transferring from Medomak High School as a sophomore. After three years at Maine Ocean School, Noah is about to graduate and his high school experience has been one of a kind, engaging and an incredibly positive learning experience. Maine Ocean School has encouraged Noah to pursue his passions, develop his leadership skills, embrace his love of the ocean, and become a lifelong learner.

Smaller class sizes have been beneficial for Noah as a student. The student to teacher ratio personalized each class and learning experience. With smaller classes, Noah was able to pursue his interests, frequently participate in hands on learning experiences, and figure out his own learning style. The small community at Maine Ocean School also helped me feel connected. Working on the water, I have difficult hours and the teachers have all been great at communicating. Interacting with Noah's teachers has helped me understand his struggles and achievements rather than using grades as the only indication of his learning. Miss Kristie, in particular, has made herself available on weekends and well after normal working hours to help me figure out Google Classroom, ask questions about assignments, and address any of my concerns.

The supportive environment at Maine Ocean School has been incredible for Noah; he has blossomed as a learner and become much more interested and involved with school. He even became the class president this year and was excited to attend meetings, plan a yearbook, and find new ways to share his experience at Maine Ocean School with anyone who was interested in the school. His grades have improved because he cares about the school and feels that his success contributes to the school's success. For Noah, the "Ocean School" is the possibly the best part of Maine Ocean School. Growing up on the water, Noah was able to explore tidepools and islands, learn to SCUBA dive, and spend much of his childhood in the water. Maine Ocean School has encouraged Noah to pursue this passion and find new interests. With his love for the ocean, the school's curriculum is much more interesting than a typical high school. Noah



A public magnet high school for marine science, technology, transportation, and engineering

is able to research sharks, conduct population counts of green crabs, and even take part in designing and racing a drill powered canoe.

Throughout Noah's three years at Maine Ocean School, the school has found a powerful balance between hands on learning, classroom discussions, and independent projects. Even with COVID, Maine Ocean School has maintained this balance and the kids have been able to do field work and collaborative projects, while also transitioning into virtual learning when needed. Last spring, when other schools struggled, Maine Ocean School seamlessly transitioned to an online platform. In the fall, following all precautions, they reopened and have stayed open all year. They have allowed students flexibility in moving between virtual and in-person learning.

Overall, as a professional mariner with a bachelor's degree in marine biology and more importantly as a father, I am so grateful Noah has had the last three years at Maine Ocean School. I cannot speak highly enough about the school, the teachers, and the experience he has had. Noah is so proud of his school and I am so thankful of the support, hard-work, and attention the teachers have given to help Noah become the student and the person he is.

In conclusion, I encourage you to vote in favor of LD 1389.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Hall