

February 12, 2024

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to consider LD2118 and increasing support to The Maine School of Science and Mathematics.

My family moved to Maine from London, UK. When researching schools and communities in Maine, one school kept popping up on our searches. It was MSSM, The Maine School of Science and Mathematics. Trying to research where to live in Maine from 3,000 miles away was a challenging task. But on each of our visits to Maine, we asked everyone we ran into about MSSM. The whole state has heard of this amazing school and is so proud to have such a unique educational offering in our state.

Our middle son is obsessed with Math. We had toured MSSM, and he knew that there was only one place that he wanted to go for high school and that was far away from home in Limestone. He is about six months into his freshman year and couldn't be happier. We have seen him grow more mature and truly be engaged and excited about learning. He has made friends from all over the state from backgrounds he would not have been exposed to at home. This transformation is not unique to him. We hear the same excitement from other first year parents when discussing their own child's journey. It is rare for a school to receive such universal praise from current students, alumni, and parents.

MSSM is a unique gem in the state's educational landscape, nurturing the brightest young minds in STEM. Supporting this institution, and particularly LD 2118, which proposes funding the school using the school funding formula criteria, is not just an investment in education, but an investment in Maine's future.

MSSM attracts talented students from across the state, regardless of their socioeconomic background, providing them with a rigorous and dynamic learning environment. The school boasts impressive results: consistently high graduation rates, exceptional college acceptance rates to top universities, and alumni who go on to lead in STEM fields, contributing significantly to Maine's economy and scientific community. By providing a challenging and supportive environment, MSSM ignites a passion for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, shaping future innovators, researchers, and problem-solvers.

LD 2118 proposes a sustainable funding solution for MSSM, ensuring the school can continue its vital mission. Currently, the school operates under a flat funding model, hindering its ability to attract and retain top talent, expand its curriculum, and provide essential resources for its students. Funding based on the school funding formula, as proposed in LD 2118, would provide a more equitable and predictable funding stream, allowing MSSM to better serve its students and maximize its impact on Maine's future. The administration, teachers, staff, and leaders at MSSM do so much for the school, but so many activities are done on a shoestring budget. The school could expand in countless ways with the proper funding.

Investing in MSSM is not just about supporting individual students; it's about nurturing the state's intellectual capital and fostering economic growth. By providing opportunities for young minds to flourish in STEM fields, we pave the way for innovation, attract businesses and industries, and ensure Maine remains competitive in the global knowledge economy. Supporting LD 2118 is an investment in a brighter future for Maine, one fueled by the ingenuity and talent nurtured within the walls of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jeff Burch, Cape Elizabeth